

Let's Play At Home!

Remote learning guidance for Networks and affiliated providers

Thank you for all that you do to support our city's youngest learners! The *Let's Play At Home!* document offers play-based activity ideas that can help Network staff and affiliated providers plan remote learning with families. Based on what you learn through your check-ins with families, we encourage you to share a few activities with them. You can use the ideas as they are written, or as a starting point to create your own activities that are meaningful, age-appropriate, and responsive to families' needs. All the activities are optional, and should supplement the support you're already offering providers and families. If you have a system that works for your families, please continue using it.

Ways for Networks and affiliated providers to connect with families:

- Call on the phone to check in with families and see how they are doing. See [Suggestions for Checking in With Families/Caregivers About Remote Learning](#) for guidance.
- Set up a video call (Hangouts, etc.) to smile and make eye contact. Include children in the call.
- Send a message with some ideas for activities that families can do together.

Everyday ways to suggest families play together:

- READ together - Any book, magazine, recipe, etc. will do!
- TALK & SING together - Talk about your interests. Sing your favorite songs!
- PLAY together - Laugh, dance, play hide & seek or peek-a-boo, go for a walk, and more!

Sample Daily Routine



- Wake up routines (for example: dress, teeth, stretch)
 - Breakfast
 - Reading together
 - Play
-



- Lunch
 - Quiet/rest time
 - Music & Movement
-



- Play
 - Wake up routines (for example: dress, teeth, stretch)
 - Breakfast
 - Reading together
 - Play
-



- Dinner
- Bedtime routines (for example: bath, teeth, stories)

Activity Suggestions - Families!

Choose one (or more) activity prompts to share with families each day, and have fun!

Activities are suited to children of all ages, unless otherwise noted.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Create a cozy hiding place by placing a sheet over a table or box.

Babies: Invite them to crawl inside or use your hands or other objects to hide your face for Peek-a-boo.

Older children: Invite your child to explore the space and play Peek-a-boo. What other ideas does your child have for playing in this space?

STORYTIME

Set aside a quiet time to tell your child a story. Try this prompt!

“When I was your age, one thing I loved was...”

ART/WRITING

Babies: talk about some of your and your child’s favorite people.

Older children: make a list of favorite people and invite your child to draw a picture for someone on the list.

SENSORY

Find or make a tube. Have your child look through both ends and describe what they see. They may also want to make noise by speaking into the tube.

MATH/MANIPULATIVES

Make a **Plunker Toy** - Using a coffee can or other container with a plastic lid, cut an X shape in the center of the plastic lid. Have your child help find items to push through the hole (check size to avoid a choking hazard).

Babies: Remove the lid and let them drop items into the container and dump them out. After adding items, replace the lid and show babies how to shake or roll the toy to make noise.

MUSIC

Feel free to suggest a few fingerplays or songs familiar to the children in your program. Share the words and movements with the families.

MOVEMENT

Dance to your favorite music.

Activity Suggestions - Feelings!

Choose one (or more) activity prompts to share with families each day, and have fun!
Activities are suited to children of all ages, unless otherwise noted.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Babies: make a silly face and laugh along with your baby. Offer your baby a mirror and then copy the face your baby makes. Try making other faces and labeling the feelings such as happy, excited, sad, mad, scared, confused, etc. Continue as long as your child is interested.

Older children: take turns making faces to act out different feelings and see if you can guess what the other person is feeling. Talk about why you might have different feelings.

STORYTIME

Set aside a quiet time to tell your child a story. Try this prompt!

“One of my favorite memories of you is...”

ART/WRITING

Babies: invite your baby to crumple or tear scrap paper into pieces. If needed, make a small tear to start. If desired, offer tape or the sticky side of contact paper and allow your baby to explore what happens as they pat items down and then lift them back up. Share in your baby’s excitement during this activity.

Older children: invite your child to crumple, tear or cut scrap paper (using child safe scissors). Have your child arrange the pieces of paper onto another piece of paper or cardboard and then glue or tape them in place to make a collage. Talk about how creating something makes each of you feel.

SENSORY

Go on a texture scavenger hunt. Find something soft, hard, bumpy, rough, smooth or sticky.

Babies: hold your baby and talk to them as you look for different textures. Allow them to feel and explore the textures as desired. Some babies might not want to touch certain textures (just like some grown ups) and that is ok!

Older children: talk with your child about how each item feels and which ones they like or don’t like. Which items are soothing to the touch? Do you both like the same things or different things?

MATH/MANIPULATIVES

Babies: Offer baby 2 or 3 containers to explore. Stack containers for your baby to knock down. Play peek a boo by hiding a smaller container underneath a larger container. Hide a scarf or piece of cloth under a container and then play peek a boo when the baby finds it.

Older children: Find a variety of clean, empty containers with lids. Invite your child to match lids with containers, explore nesting and stacking, sort them in different ways, line them up from big to small, etc.

MUSIC

Share a song about feelings that is familiar to children in your program. For example, sing and act out “If You're Happy and You Know It” during your morning meeting or during a check in with families. Include a variety of feelings such as sad, mad, scared, excited, silly, sleepy, etc.

MOVEMENT

Play different types of music and invite children to move their bodies to show the different feelings that they have while listening to the music. Dance with your child, holding them if they like, to share the experience.

Activity Suggestions - Caring For Others

Choose one (or more) activity prompts to share with families each day, and have fun!
Activities are suited to children of all ages, unless otherwise noted.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Babies: Gently touch your baby's face and stroke their hair and let them know this is a "gentle touch." Have your baby touch your face and hair and explore how they can use a "gentle touch" too.

Older children: Suggest a scenario such as, someone fell down and hurt themselves or someone is feeling sad because they miss their friends. Invite your child to act out what they would do to help the person. Join in their play and take turns being the helper and the one who needs help.

ART/WRITING

Babies: Offer your baby a chunky crayon or non toxic marker and some paper and let them scribble as much or as little as they like. Talk to them about what they are drawing: "You made dots on the paper" or "You made long lines up and down."

Older children: Create a card by folding a piece of paper in half. Invite your child to make a picture for someone they care about using crayons, markers, etc. Offer to write down words in any language. This is a wonderful way to support your child's learning.

MATH/MANIPULATIVES

Make Homemade Blocks using recyclable materials like tissue boxes, diaper wipe boxes, diaper boxes, clean, empty cereal, pasta or other boxes. Cover with scrap paper if desired and tape shut.

Babies: Build a small tower at your baby's eye level and encourage them to knock it down. Act surprised when the tower falls and share in their delight. Repeat as long as your baby is interested.

Older children: Challenge your child to build towers as big as they are. How could they build a place that is special to them? What other materials could they use to build with?

SENSORY

Babies: When it is time to wash hands, spend some extra time helping your baby rub their hands together and making lots of soap bubbles. Allow your baby to splash in the water and play with the bubbles.

Older children: Partially fill the sink or a container with warm water. Invite your child to squeeze in some dish soap and offer them a clean dishcloth or sponge. Let them help wash some plastic dishes or bath toys. Let them know how happy you are that they are helping you keep things clean.

STORYTIME

Set aside a quiet time to tell your child a story. Try this prompt!

"I had so much fun with you when we did _____ together!" Fill in the details and invite your child to add more details if they can.

<Network staff can include link to read aloud about Caring for People>

MUSIC

Sing and act out "Frere Jacques/Are You Sleeping" or another familiar song.

MOVEMENT

Play Follow the Leader: Ask your child to copy what you do and then take turns being the leader and follower. Be sure to choose actions that your child can already do or is learning to do, such as clapping hands, rolling over, jumping, walking backwards, skipping, etc.

Activity Suggestions - My 5 Senses - Touch

Choose one (or more) activity prompts to share with families each day, and have fun!
Activities are suited to children of all ages, unless otherwise noted.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Offer your child some pieces of fabric or clothing items with different textures, such as soft, silky, stiff and stretchy.

Babies: Allow your baby to explore how each item feels. Talk about the textures. Place the item on your head as if it's a hat, and then let it drop to the floor.

Older children: Invite your child to use the items to play dress up. What will they pretend to be when dressed up? What could their character do? Where would they go? What other props do they need?

SENSORY

Fill a small container with water and add a small plastic toy or food coloring, if desired. Freeze till solid then place in a bowl, sink or bathtub with warm water. Allow your child to explore the sensations of warm and cold. Notice how the ice becomes smaller as it warms up.

Babies: Offer containers to fill and dump. Monitor closely to avoid a choking hazard as the ice becomes smaller.

Older children: Offer scoops, tongs or other containers to catch the ice.

MATH/MANIPULATIVES

Babies: Find items with different textures, such as a bumpy teething ring, a soft stuffed animal, a metal bowl, etc, for your baby to mouth and touch. Partially hide items one at a time under a pillow case or piece of cloth and have your baby uncover them. Talk about how each item looks and feels.

Older children: Find pairs of several familiar objects, like hair brushes, sponges and balls (make sure they are very different from each other). Join your child in touching, looking closely at and describing each item. Hide one of each pair and place one of the hidden items in a bag or pillowcase. Invite your child to feel the item in the bag without looking. Can they guess which item is in the bag? What other items could you play this game with? Try the game without leaving matching items in sight for an additional challenge.

ART/WRITING

Babies: Place a few spoonfuls of hair gel, liquid soap or non toxic shaving cream into a resealable freezer bag. Add food coloring, paint or glitter if desired. Squeeze out excess air and seal tightly. Tape bag to a high chair tray, table or even the floor. Invite your baby to poke, pat and find other ways to make marks.

Older children: Tape a piece of aluminum foil to a table or use a baking sheet. Add a few spoonfuls of hair gel, liquid soap or non toxic shaving cream and add food coloring, paint or glitter if desired. Invite your child to explore the fingerprint using their hands, a paint brush, cotton swab or other object. To make a print, pat a piece of paper on top and then pull it off.

Activity Suggestions - My 5 Senses - Sight

Choose one (or more) activity prompts to share with families each day, and have fun!

Activities are suited to children of all ages, unless otherwise noted.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Offer different size boxes to explore, including one big enough for your child to fit into if possible. Allow your child to use the boxes in different ways.

Babies: Engage in games of peek a boo as they hide in the box or as you hide behind the box. Cut out doors and windows for them to open and close.

Older children: Ask your child what they want to create with the box. Invite your child to draw or indicate where they might want you to cut out openings such as doors or windows. Offer a child safe flashlight or other safe light they could bring into their structure, such as battery operated tea lights. What other props do they need?

SENSORY

Fill clear plastic bottles with water and add food coloring or fill see through colored plastic bottles with water. Seal tightly and place on a sunny window sill or shine a flashlight through the bottle to create colorful shadows. Use a piece of white paper or fabric to create a background for the shadows.

Babies: Show your baby the colorful shadows and encourage them to try and catch the colorful light. Describe their actions as they block the light or see it reflected on their bodies. Let them explore the bottles up close as well.

Older children: Offer a child a safe flashlight and invite your child to shine it at different angles to explore making shadows with the bottles as well as with other household objects.

MATH/MANIPULATIVES

Babies: Poke a hole in a piece of cardboard. Poke the tip of a scarf, clean dish towel or colorful ribbon through the hole and invite your baby to try to pull it through the hole.

Older children: Create lacing cards. Cut pieces of cardboard into different shapes and color or paint if desired. Punch holes around the edges and give children shoelaces or pieces of ribbon to use for lacing. Can you find those same shapes in your home?

ART/WRITING

Crayon resist: Offer your child crayons to color on construction paper. When they are done, offer a paintbrush and shallow container of water and invite your child to paint over their picture with water. Talk about how the colors look different once the paper becomes wet.

STORYTIME

Set aside a quiet time to tell your child a story. Try this prompt!

Look for items in your home and tell your child the story of how you came to own them.

<Network staff can include a link to a read aloud related to the weekly topic. Be sure and choose books in a language familiar to the child and family. See next page for a few suggestions>

MUSIC

Shadow Dancing: dim the lights and place a lamp so that it projects your child's shadows against the wall, curtains or blinds. Play music and join your child in making shadows while dancing.

MOVEMENT

Move like the animals: try hopping like a bunny, jumping like a frog, galloping like a horse, flapping like a bird, walking like a crab (with back to the floor, lift belly up and crawl using hands and feet), or crawling like a bear (bend over and crawl using hands and feet). What other animals can you and your child pretend to be?

Activity Suggestions - My 5 Senses - Taste

Choose one (or more) activity prompts to share with families each day, and have fun!

Activities are suited to children of all ages, unless otherwise noted.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Babies: Pretend cooking - Offer some metal or plastic bowls, some mouthable items for filling and dumping. Add a baby spoon or wire whisk for stirring if desired. Talk with your baby about what they are doing and model how to pretend to eat something as you “cook” together.

Older children: Create a pretend kitchen - gather kitchen items, such as plastic bowls, measuring cups and spoons, pots and pans, muffin tins or other familiar items. Add playdough, paper or short lengths of string or yarn to use as pretend food. Invite your child to fix something tasty to eat and join them in “cooking” something together.

MATH/MANIPULATIVES

Babies: As your baby begins to try new foods, keep track of which ones your baby likes or dislikes. Allow your baby to use their hands as well as a spoon as they experiment with new tastes and textures. Sometimes it takes many tries before babies accept new foods.

Older children: Experiment with tasting new fruits and vegetables. Draw two columns on a piece of paper and label one column **Likes Now** and the other column **Not Yet**. Try different fruits and vegetables and invite your child to glue an image or drawing of the food in the column that matches their preference. Try this again over the next few weeks and see if their tastes change.

SENSORY

Babies: Make different flavors of oatmeal/porridge to try. Allow your child to explore the textures with their hands and to finger paint with a bit of porridge on their high chair tray.

Older children: Do a flavor scavenger hunt. Help your child find food items that are sweet, sour, salty, bitter and savory. Consider using fruits, vegetables, crackers, and condiments. Which flavors does your child like best? Which ones do you like best?

ART/WRITING

Create a collage of favorite foods- cut out a variety of images from circulars, magazines, or labels from food containers. Tape a piece of contact paper, sticky side up to the table or offer glue, tape and a paper plate or other piece of paper. Talk with your child about their favorite foods and let them stick on or glue whichever items they choose.

STORYTIME

Set aside a quiet time to tell your child a story. Try this prompt!

“My favorite meal ever was...” (remember to include not only what you ate and how it looked and tasted, but other things that might have made the meal special, like who you were with, or a special holiday).

<Network staff can include a link to a read aloud related to the weekly topic. Be sure and choose books in a language familiar to the child and family.>

MUSIC

Sing “I Like to Eat Apples and Bananas” with your child

MOVEMENT

Pretend your child is a pizza. Have them lie down on the floor and pretend to stretch them like dough as you massage them with your hands. Then pretend to spread tomato sauce on them by rubbing your hands over them. Pretend to sprinkle some cheese on top by gently running your fingers over them. Drop on some other toppings like pepperoni or vegetables by lightly tapping them with your hands. Lift them up and pretend to put them in the oven by placing them on a sofa or bed. When the “pizza” is done, lift them back up and place them on the floor and pretend to take a little nibble. What other familiar foods could you pretend to make... a sushi roll, burrito, dumpling?

Activity Suggestions - My 5 Senses - Taste/Smell

Choose one (or more) activity prompts to share with families each day, and have fun!

Activities are suited to children of all ages, unless otherwise noted.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Babies: At your next meal, act out dramatic and silly facial expressions and gestures as you smell and taste your food. Exaggerate how good something smells, how sweet, sour, spicy something tastes. Later, pretend something is yucky or stinky and join your baby's laughter and encourage them to mimic your expressions or make their own.

Older children: Have a pretend picnic with your child and invite some favorite toys or stuffed animals to join you. Invite your child to set out cups and plates and offer a small container of water so your child can practice pouring into the cups. What else would your child like to have on their picnic? Talk about what the foods might smell and taste like as you "eat" together.

SENSORY

Mystery scents: Take some cotton balls and moisten or rub each one with a different but familiar scent using items like toothpaste, shampoo, lotion, lemon juice, soy sauce, vinegar, vanilla, cinnamon or other spices, essential oils, etc. Place each cotton ball in a small plastic container or resealable bag and seal securely. Poke some holes in the container and invite your child to shake it to bring out the scent. Let your child sniff each one and see if they can guess what the scent came from. Then show your child the actual items and see if they can match the scent to the item.

**Be careful to avoid any potential allergy or asthma triggers for your child.*

MATH/MANIPULATIVES

Babies: If your baby is eating finger foods, count out how many pieces of food you offer them and let them practice feeding themselves. Use words like "more" "all gone" "a lot" and "a little" as the amount of food changes.

Older children: As you prepare a meal, invite your child to help you prepare, measure and stir ingredients. Notice the different scents- which items have stronger scents, which don't really have a scent? Do things smell different after they are prepared?

MUSIC

"The Splendid Senses"

(sung to the tune of "The Bear Went Over the Mountain")

My (nose) is made for (smelling).

My (nose) is made for (smelling).

My (nose) is made for (smelling).

So I can (smell) my world.

Continue with the following: ears...hearing, eyes...seeing, mouth...tasting, hands...touching.*

*5 senses songs: <https://www.nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/senses-songs.ht>

MOVEMENT

Play "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" with your child. Try doing it slowly and then going faster.

STORYTIME

Set aside a quiet time to tell your child a story. Try this prompt!

"Let's pretend we are in a beautiful, secret garden...(add details about what you might see and smell there as well as how you could play together there)"

<Network staff can include a link to a read aloud related to the weekly topic. Be sure and choose books in a language familiar to the child and family.>

ART/WRITING

Homemade scratch and sniff paint recipe: mix 1 tablespoon of school glue with 1 teaspoon of water. Add 1 or more teaspoons of colored gelatin powder or drink mix and stir. Offer your child a piece of paper or thin cardboard and invite them to explore the paint with their fingers or a brush. Let the paint dry and then have them scratch and sniff their creation.

Activity Suggestions - My 5 Senses - Hearing

Choose one (or more) activity prompts to share with families each day, and have fun!

Activities are suited to children of all ages, unless otherwise noted.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Babies: Show your baby pictures of different animals and then mimic the sounds and actions each animal makes. Invite your baby to join in and make their own sounds and actions.

Older children: Invite your child to create a pretend pet store. What types of animals might you find there? Take turns being different animals as well as playing the role of pet store owner or customer.

SENSORY

Babies: Collect and clean several small clear plastic bottles. Partially fill each bottle with small items, such as bottle caps, spare buttons, costume jewelry, marbles, etc. Secure lid tightly with glue or duct tape. Have your baby explore the different sounds each container makes.

Older children: Use plastic, metal or cardboard containers and invite your child to partially fill each container with items such as spare bottle caps, buttons, costume jewelry, marbles, etc. Consider making a container with only soft items, like cotton balls or pom poms. Close the lid and explore the different sounds each container makes.

MATH/MANIPULATIVES

Babies: Offer your baby a small collection of household items to manipulate and explore, such as a metal bowl or cake pan, baby jar lids, mason jar rings, napkin rings, plastic links, etc. As your baby drops items into the container or dumps them out, comment on the different sounds items make as they land.

Older children: Invite your child to create chimes by tying old keys, spare silverware, canning jar rings or other metal objects to a colander, wooden spoon handle or other object. Have them experiment with different string lengths and placement of objects as they shake or strike the chimes to make sounds.

MUSIC

Sing and play songs that are soft, loud, fast and slow. Use your body to make music as well by clapping, tapping, stomping, etc. as you sing or move to the music.

MOVEMENT

Use your homemade shakers when you dance to your child's favorite music this week. Invite your child to tap different body parts with their shaker while dancing.

STORYTIME

Set aside a quiet time to tell your child a story. Try this prompt!

"Listen for the sound of a bird chirping outside and tell the story of what you imagine the bird is saying."

<Network staff can include a link to a read aloud related to the weekly topic. Be sure and choose books in a language familiar to the child and family.>

ART/WRITING

Babies: Offer your baby a thick crayon or non toxic marker and invite them to make a drawing. Show them how to make dots on the paper by tapping the crayon on the paper. Talk about the sound it makes as the crayon hits the paper How else can they make marks?

Older children: Homemade kazoo: Invite your child to roll a piece of plain paper into a tube and secure it with tape. Invite them to decorate the tube. Offer your child a piece of wax paper, and ask them to cover one end of the tube with it. Help them secure it with a rubber band so that the wax paper fits tightly over the top. Invite your child to speak into the tube and see what happens. Try singing or humming into the tube for more fun.

Activity Suggestions - Sounds All Around

Choose one (or more) activity prompts to share with families each day, and have fun!

Activities are suited to children of all ages, unless otherwise noted.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Babies: Offer your baby some rattles, shakers or other baby safe musical instruments and join them in making music as you sing some favorite songs together.

Older children: Invite your child to create a stage by adding a small rug or bathmat to their play area. Offer a spoon, hairbrush, paper towel tube or other object to serve as a microphone. Invite your child to put on a show by singing their favorite songs or doing a dance. What other props would your child like to add?

SENSORY

Try sitting quietly with your child and listening to all the sounds you can hear. Notice sounds that are nearby and sounds that are far away. Can you hear sounds in nature? If you can, try this both indoors and outdoors.

Babies: Notice sounds that your baby responds to and name and point to what makes the sound. See if you and your baby can make similar sounds.

Older children: Invite your child to name the sounds they hear. If you can go to a park, try sitting quietly and just listening for awhile. Try collecting some natural items and see how you can use them to create sounds in different ways.

MATH/MANIPULATIVES

Sing and act out fingerplay songs that involve counting, such as 5 Little Ducks/5 Patitos* or other familiar fingerplays in the families' home languages.

*See the next page for lyrics in English and Spanish.

MUSIC

Create a kitchen music band by offering your child pots, pans, bowls, aluminum pie plates, spoons, tongs, whisks, etc. and invite your child to join you in making music together. Explore different ways to make sounds and try making music that is soft, loud, fast and slow.

MOVEMENT

Play Freeze Dance: Put on some music and dance with your child. You can hold your baby on your hip as you dance together. Every so often, pause the music and freeze in place. Try freezing in a silly pose to make your child laugh!

STORYTIME

Set aside a quiet time to tell your child a story. Try this prompt!

"Listen to or sing a song from your childhood together and tell your child a story about the first time you heard the song or how the song made you feel."

<Network staff can include a link to a read aloud related to the weekly topic. Be sure and choose books in a language familiar to the child and family.>

ART/WRITING

Offer your child crayons, non toxic markers or other drawing materials and different types of paper or cardboard. Play different types of music in the background while they explore the materials. Talk about how the music makes you feel and how you might draw differently depending on the type of music.

Activity Suggestions - Plants

Choose one (or more) activity prompts to share with families each day, and have fun!
Activities are suited to children of all ages, unless otherwise noted.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Babies: Offer your baby some shopping bags or baskets and a variety of items that they can use to fill the bag and then dump out, such as plastic keys, old wallets, small toys, etc. Talk to them about what they are doing and pretend you are shopping together.

Older children: Invite your child to create a pretend fruit and vegetable stand or plant store. Use boxes or tables for counter space. Collect some real or pretend items to “sell” as well as shopping bags or baskets. Make up pretend shopping lists and cut up paper to make pretend money. Take turns being the customer or sales person.

SENSORY

Babies: If your baby is eating solids, let them feel a whole fruit or vegetable. Talk about how it looks and smells. Have them watch as you puree or cut up the food so that they can see how it changes. Serve them a portion as a puree or finger food and talk about how it tastes.

Older children: Find a dried bean. Have your child dampen a paper towel, fold the bean into the wet paper towel, and seal it up in a plastic bag. Each morning check on the bean to see if it is sprouting, and talk about what you both notice.

MATH/MANIPULATIVES

Take a walk outside to look and talk about all of the things you see in nature. If you can, try and collect some leaves, twigs or other items from nature.

Babies: Use as many words as you can to describe each item and invite your baby to explore how the items feel, smell or sound.

Older children: Invite your child to help describe the items, using as many words as you can, as they explore how the items feel, smell or sound. See how many ways you can sort the items- by color, shape, size, etc.

MUSIC

Sing and act out a song about growing things, such as: “Oats, Peas, Beans and Barley Grow.” See lyrics on the next page.

MOVEMENT

Babies: Hold your baby and slowly go around in a circle while you sing Ring Around the Rosie. See lyrics on the next page.

Older children: Invite your child to pretend they are flowers or trees and that their feet are planted in the ground. How would they move if a strong wind came blowing by? If a nice warm rain came down on them? If the sun was shining on them? Add a flashlight and invite your child to bend toward the light as they would if they were plants/flowers.

STORYTIME

Set aside a quiet time to tell your child a story. Try this idea!

“Let’s plant a pretend garden where I am the gardener and you are the garden.”

Tell a story about planting a garden together with your child, while “enacting” it in a back or full body massage - surveying the ground, turning the soil, planting the seeds, smoothing the surface, feeling the warmth of the sun and droplets of rain, etc.

<Network staff can include a link to a read aloud related to the weekly topic. Be sure and choose books in a language familiar to the child and family.>

ART/WRITING

Find a plant, indoors or outdoors, that your child can safely touch. Talk about the colors, shapes and smells you both notice as you look closely at the plant. Invite your child to draw what they see as they look at the plant. If you have crayons or markers see if you can find colors that match the plant. Look for simple shapes that your child might notice and recreate. Allow your child to be creative and explore their own ideas. Accept any scribbles, marks, lines or shapes they make as part of the creative process.

Activity Suggestions - Bringing the Outside In

Choose one (or more) activity prompts to share with families each day, and have fun!

Activities are suited to children of all ages, unless otherwise noted.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Create a tent by placing a sheet over a table or box. Add pillows or a blanket, and favorite play materials.

Babies: Invite them to crawl inside and explore using the space to play with their toys or a game of peek a boo. Pretend it is bedtime and read or sing to your child before taking a pretend nap together.

Older children: Invite your child to explore the space and decide what they need for a camping trip: a flashlight, snacks, books or art materials? Play some sounds from nature and join them in a pretend outdoor adventure.

SENSORY/SCIENCE

Pretend Mud Playdough (see next page for recipe)

Babies: Make the playdough in advance and offer a bit to your baby to explore while sitting on your lap or seated in a high chair. Pending any allergies, the playdough is safe to taste if your baby puts it in their mouth. Join your baby in squeezing, pounding and poking the dough. You can also put the dough in a resealable bag for your baby to explore.

Older children: Invite your child to help you make the playdough and then let them freely explore it. Consider adding natural items you have collected or other props that interest your child to expand their play. Offer tools or a resealable bag if your child is sensitive to certain textures.

MATH/MANIPULATIVES

While you prepare a meal, clean and set out a few fresh or canned fruits and vegetables or even kitchen items for your child to explore.

Babies: Offer your baby some items they could safely explore by touching, smelling and mouthing. Use as many words as you can to describe the items and how you use them for cooking.

Older children: Invite your child to explore the different items and to describe how they are the same or different. Invite them to try sorting them into different groups, such as color, size, type of item. What else can they sort?

ART/WRITING

On your next walk together, collect an assortment of leaves and twigs or find some natural items in your own home, such as leaves from plants, dried herbs, cinnamon sticks, etc.

Babies: Invite your baby to feel the different items and to crumple or drop them into a bowl. Offer your baby a piece of paper with sticky tape or glue on top and invite your baby to create a collage. Let your baby dump, drop or sprinkle the natural materials on top of the paper and then pat them to make them stick.

Older children: Offer your child glue or tape and a piece of paper and invite them to create a collage using the natural materials you have collected together. Allow your child to be creative and to explore their own ideas. Talk to them about what you see them doing and ask them to tell you about their creation.

Activity Suggestions - Animals

Choose one (or more) activity prompts to share with families each day, and have fun!
Activities are suited to children of all ages, unless otherwise noted.

<p style="text-align: center;">DRAMATIC PLAY</p> <p>Gather an assortment of toy animals, homemade animal puppets or use images of animals from books or magazines. Talk about what each animal looks like, where it lives, the sounds it makes, what it eats, and what it likes to do.</p> <p>Babies: Exaggerate the animal sounds and encourage your baby to try making their own sounds and movements. Be silly and join in your baby’s laughter.</p> <p>Older children: Invite your child to think about what animals they might want to pretend to be. Encourage your child to act out their ideas and follow their lead. What animal sounds and actions do they come up with? What do the animals like to do together?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SENSORY/SCIENCE</p> <p>Babies: Offer your baby some pretend mud playdough from last week and talk about how an animal might make tracks walking in the mud, while you make prints using your fingers or any plastic animals you might have.</p> <p>Older children: Collect some props such as plastic animal toys, pieces of yarn or ribbon, twigs, leaves, rocks or shells and aluminum foil. Offer your child the pretend mud playdough from last week and invite them to explore the materials in any way they like. If interested, you could explore making birds nests or other animal habitats and use aluminum foil to represent water.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">MATH/MANIPULATIVES</p> <p>On your next walk together, ask your child to help you look for different animals. Try counting one type of animal you see, such as dogs, birds, squirrels, etc. Vary the game by looking for different animals and naming the characteristics of the animals you see, such as big or small dogs; black, brown or grey squirrels; pigeons, songbirds, or seagulls.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ART/WRITING</p> <p>Babies: Listen for animal sounds or play some recordings of animal sounds and make a picture</p> <p>Older children: Offer your child an assortment of recycled materials, small paper bags or paper plates, glue or tape, crayons, markers, or paint and invite them to create animal puppets. Have images of real animals handy as a reference but allow your child to follow their own imagination. Use these puppets for dramatic play and story time.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STORYTIME</p> <p>Set aside a quiet time to tell your child a story. Try this idea!</p> <p>Make up a story together about your child’s favorite animals and how they get ready for bed at night.</p> <p><i><Network staff can include a link to a read aloud related to the weekly topic. Be sure and choose books in a language familiar to the child and family.></i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MUSIC</p> <p>Sing and act out an animal fingerplay*, such as “Five Little Squirrels”, “Little Bird” or “Old MacDonald” OR choose another song about animals. *See next page for lyrics.</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">MOVEMENT</p> <p>Animal Action: Try listening to “Animal Action” (you can find a link on the internet) or another song about animals and act out the movements along with your child. Invite your child to think of other animal actions to try out and follow their lead in acting them out.</p>

Five Little Squirrels

Five little squirrels sat up in a tree; (Hold up five fingers)
The first squirrel said, "Well, what do I see?" (Point to thumb)
The second squirrel said, "I see a dog!"
The third squirrel said, "I see a frog!"
The fourth squirrel said, "Let's run into the shade!" The fifth squirrel said, "I'm not afraid!"
Then RUFF went the dog, and away the squirrels ran, One, two, three, four, five!

[Erikson Institute: Math at Your Fingertips](#)

Little Bird

One little bird with lovely feathers blue (*Show one finger*)
Sat beside another one, then there were two. (*Show two fingers*)
Two little birds singing in the tree; another came to join them,
Then there were three. (*Show three fingers*)
Three little birds wishing there were more; along came another bird,
Then there were four. (*Show four fingers*)
Four little birds glad to be alive, found a lonely friend,
Then there were five. (*Show five fingers*)
Five little birds picking up sticks; along came a helper,
Then there were six. (*Show six fingers*)
Six little birds looking up to heaven; another bird joined them,
Then there were seven. (*Show seven fingers*)
Seven little birds just as happy as can be.
Seven little birds singing songs for you and me!

Old MacDonald Had a Farm*

Old MacDonald had a farm
Ee i ee i o
And on his farm he had some cows
Ee i ee i oh
With a moo-moo here
And a moo-moo there
Here a moo, there a moo
Everywhere a moo-moo
Old MacDonald had a farm
Ee i ee i o

Old MacDonald had a farm
Ee i ee i o
And on his farm he had some chicks
Ee i ee i o
With a cluck-cluck here
And a cluck-cluck there
Here a cluck, there a cluck
Everywhere a cluck-cluck
Old MacDonald had a farm
Ee i ee i o

Old MacDonald Had a Farm cont.

Add other verses such as:
Ducks... quack-quack...
Pigs... oink-oink...
Horses... neigh, neigh...
Tractor... vroom, vroom...

*Note: the sounds in this song are the English versions but the song can be sung using animal sounds and names from whatever language the families are comfortable using.

Activity Suggestions - Land and Water Animals

Choose one (or more) activity prompts to share with families each day, and have fun!

Activities are suited to children of all ages, unless otherwise noted.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Invite your child to pretend to be a water or land animal. What props do they need to create a home for the animal? A piece of fabric on the floor could represent water and pieces of paper could be lily pads, a box or table covered with cloth could be a dog house, barn or cave, a collection of pillows could be a nest...

Babies: Invite your baby to move in and out of the habitat as they explore animal actions and sounds.

Older children: Invite your child to think about how the animal eats, sleeps and plays. How is it the same or different for your child?

STORYTIME

Set aside a quiet time to tell your child a story. Try this idea!

Make up a story together about a land or sea adventure with your child and their favorite animal.

<Network staff can include a link to a read aloud related to the weekly topic. Be sure and choose books in a language familiar to the child and family.>

MATH/MANIPULATIVES

Offer your child a basket or other container and a collection of small items, such as plastic eggs, large buttons, bottle caps, or other items they could pretend are eggs or acorns.

Babies: Invite your baby to put the items in the container and to dump and fill as desired. Use math words like in, out, full, empty, a lot and a little as you talk to your baby about what they are doing.

Older children: Invite your child to pretend they are birds adding eggs to a nest or squirrels hiding acorns.

Encourage them to count items as they add them to the container. For an added challenge, offer your child some tongs, tweezers or children's chopsticks to transfer the items to the container.

ART/WRITING

Gather a collection of images of animals that live on land and animals that live in water. Images can come from books, magazines or homemade drawings. Offer children paper, tape, glue, drawing materials and scissors, if appropriate. Talk about what each animal looks like, where it lives, the sounds it makes, what it eats, and what it likes to do.

Babies: Invite your baby to choose some images and to create a collage of animals. Offer crayons or markers if your baby wants to add their own marks to the collage.

Older children: Invite your child to make a book about land and water animals. Fold sheets of paper in half and staple them together to make a book. Invite your child to add images to the book as well as their own drawings or writing. **Note:** *Writing may be in the form of scribbles, lines, marks on the paper, and/or letters.*

SENSORY/SCIENCE

As you prepare a meal or snack, invite your child to imagine what they might want to eat if they were an animal. What animals eat fruits, vegetables, grains or meat? For example, a rabbit eats carrots, a lion eats meat, a bird eats grains, a squirrel eats nuts, a horse eats apples, a goat eats anything, etc. Invite your child to pretend they are an animal as they come to the table and to try and imagine they are different animals as you offer a variety of foods. See if your child is willing to try some new foods

MUSIC

Sing and act out an animal fingerplay*, such as "Los Pollitos"/ "The Baby Chicks" OR another animal fingerplay. *See next page for lyrics.

MOVEMENT

Create an animal obstacle course. Talk with your child about how different animals move and what items you could use to create an obstacle course. For example, what items could you

this way!

use to hop on like a frog, go over like a horse, go under like a snake, go through like a mouse and around like a dog? Take turns creating obstacle courses for each other.

Los pollitos

Los pollitos dicen: “pío-pío-pío”,
Cuando tienen hambre;
Cuando tienen frío.
La gallina busca
El maíz y el trigo,
Les da su comida,
Y les presta abrigo.
Bajo sus dos alas,
Acurrucaditos,
Duermen los pollitos,
Hasta el otro día

[Zero to Three Resources: Songs, Rhymes, and Fingerplays in English and Spanish](#)

The Baby Chicks

Baby chicks are singing “pío,pío,pío,”
“Mamma we are hungry,”
“Mamma we are cold.”
Mamma looks for wheat,
Mamma looks for corn,
Mamma feeds them dinner,
Mamma keeps them warm.
Under mamma’s wings,
Sleeping in the hay, Baby chicks all huddle,
Until the next day.