

Activities for Preschoolers at Home – Issue #1

ASCY

Affiliated Services
for Children & Youth

PLANNING AND SCHEDULING THE DAY

Like all of us, children do well when the general flow of their day is somewhat predictable. A rigid schedule isn't necessary or recommended, but establishing a usual order of events can be helpful for everyone. Plan your day in chunks rather than hours and minutes.

- Getting started – time devoted to breakfast, getting dressed and other usual morning routines.
- Indoor time for play - children can choose their own play experiences from options you offer such as colouring, play dough, an art experience. You will find play inspirations for (categories we offer)
- Snack
- Outdoor activity
- Lunch
- Calming, reading and resting time
- Snack
- Indoor time for play

You may choose to offer a different variety of play experiences in the afternoon than morning. If there is a baby or toddler in the family that sleeps better in the morning or afternoon, offer arts, crafts, Lego and other types of play with small parts during that part of the day, and experiences such as dress-up, pretend play, music, dance, exercise, when the younger child is awake and taking part.

For young children, visuals such as photographs can help them to know what to expect and what is coming next. Some suggestions for visuals are photographs of the child and family engaging in activities or images found online or cut from flyers, magazines or the visuals could be arranged on a timeline. Remember that flexibility is important! Having visuals will help your young children to adjust if the usual routine is not possible. For example: "Today it is raining so we have time for more indoor times and you can choose more play activities"; or "the Weather Network says it will stop raining this afternoon. Maybe we could do two indoor playtimes this morning and save outside for after quiet time. What do you think?"

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Going on a Math Walk

Go for a math walk inside or outside.

Choose something you want to look for such as:

- Finding numbers
- Look for patterns, some examples include the rectangles of sidewalk sections, a pattern of bricks or tiles, a pattern on the heat register covers
- Look for certain shapes
- Record how many times you find your chosen shape or number on a clipboard or paper using a tally system
- Record how many birds you hear and how many birds you see
- Compare if there are more or less of those you hear versus those you see

Before or after you have completed your math walk you can add some more intense physical activity such as:

Let's jump on two feet 5 times, let's turn around in a circle 2 times, let's stand on one foot and count to 10, count how many times you can jump over a crack in the sidewalk or a piece of string inside, etc.

Activity adapted from ESSO Family Math training.

EARLY LITERACY

Dear Zoo (a storybook for ages 2-5)

Click here to hear the story together:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rudDGRQ9QGA>

Story stretcher ideas with items from around the house:

- Use favourite stuffed animals that children may have on hand to recreate the story
- Use a cardboard box or other crates, containers and baskets to act as the animal cages
- Create labels that say, 'From the Zoo' to add to the animal cages
- Use any plastic animals you may have to tell the story

Activities you can do indoors

Retelling stories in their own words helps children to develop their vocabulary, recognize and understand the concepts of beginning, middle and end of a story, and expands their imagination. Have your child tell you the story using the props from around the house or using the printed characters. To print the animal characters from the story you can go to the website below:

[http://www.kizclub.com/storypatterns/dearzoo\(C\).pdf](http://www.kizclub.com/storypatterns/dearzoo(C).pdf)

- Print and cut for children to use to retell the story in their own words
- Have your child draw pictures of their favourite animals to create their own storybook
- Look at pictures of animals and talk about the different sounds they make

QUIET ACTIVITIES

Calming Jar

Fill half of the jar (or bottle) with water and half with oil (baby oil, vegetable oil or mineral water). Add a few drops of food coloring of your choice. Mix them together, add glitter or small items if you'd like.

Bubble solutions

- 6 cups water (distilled is best but tap water is fine)
- 1/2 cup Dawn dish detergent if you have it; if not dish detergent.
- 1/2 cup corn starch
- 1 Tbsp. baking powder
- 1 Tbsp. Glycerine

To make un-poppable bubbles, start with 3 cups of distilled water and mix in 1 cup of dish soap. Then, add 1/2 cup of corn starch and stir everything together. Make sure to stir the ingredients slowly so you don't cause any small bubbles.

What to use for bubble blowers:

Use kitchen utensils to experiment with creating bubbles, e.g.: potato masher, whisk, spatula with holes, egg beater. Look in your craft room for pipe cleaners to create a shape.

Build a Pillow Fort!

Get the pillows, chairs, sofas, and sheets together, make some popcorn and have a movie night. Quiet spaces with pillows, blankets under tables, in large boxes are a great place to have some private space to rest, hug a snuggly toy, look at books, and listen to music.

Melting items in ice cubes

Melting plastic insects (or any other small toy item) in ice is a fun activity to introduce children and preschoolers to the science concepts of solids (frozen) and of liquid (melting).

How long does it take for something to melt? Watch the clock to find out. Does the ice cube melt faster/slower when placed outside?

ARTS AND SENSORY ACTIVITIES

No-Cook Dough

- 3 cups flour
- 1 cup cold water
- 1 cup salt
- 2 teaspoons oil
- Food coloring or powdered paint

Mix it all together in a bowl...keep kneading it until it's just right. You can even add a touch of vanilla or peppermint to make it smell wonderful!

Cooked Dough

- 2 cups flour
- 2 cups water
- 4 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Food coloring or powdered paint

Mix all ingredients in a saucepan. Cook the mixture over low heat until it starts to look a bit dry. Remove the mixture and place it on a table or counter top. When it's cool to the touch, you can knead it until it's just right!

GOOP is an amazingly fun **play material** that **acts as both a liquid and a solid interchangeably**. If you handle it quickly, it appears solid. You can pick it up and even form it into a ball, but if you handle it slowly **the Goop turns to a liquid** right in your hands!

Materials

- Corn starch
- Water
- Food coloring (*optional*)

Method

- Begin by pouring the desired amount of corn starch into a large bin or container.
- **Slowly** add water to the container and mix, slowly adding more water and mixing until the desired consistency is reached.
- Start with a **cup of water**, but you can use more or less to explore with varying consistencies.
- Add food coloring to the surface of the goop if color is desired. The colors will swirl into the **goop slime** as kids play, creating a marbled effect!