

Tips for Preschool Families in creating learning opportunities during everyday routines.

Mealtimes

- Ask children to help with setting the table for the family meals, or even their own meal. Children will need to ensure each person has the correct utensils and the amount they put aligns with the number eating. This also supports sorting and classifying skills important for later math development.
- Your child can also assist with meal preparation. For example: ask your child to get a cup of flour, or a TBSP of sugar. Give them a plastic knife to slice a banana. Show your child the printed recipe and read it like you would a book as you prepare the dish. (encourage your child to track the words with their finger as you read/identify the printed letters and numbers they recognize.)
 - Go to your local library online or in person and borrow a recipe book for kids! These recipes are easy to follow and come with both words and pictures for each step!
- During the meal, discuss foods, what is being eaten, where the food comes from (e.g., eggs come from chickens, cereal comes from plants). When applicable, show the child the packaging or label with the printed name of the food.
- Use tongs/serving spoons at the table and encourage your child to serve themselves. Encourage your child to count out the serving size as they fill their plate (great for fine motor development and 1 to 1 correspondence counting).
- Involve your child in clearing up after meals. Encourage them to put their plate on the counter and throw away their napkin, etc.

“Work” Time/Routines

- Have your child dress themselves; it helps his/her fine and gross motor skills. (Balancing to put on pants, using fingers to pull up zippers)
- Create a routine/schedule together. Example: When I am working, you will be working too.
- Engage in a “planning time” at the beginning of the day to review the scheduled plan. Ask your child: “What will you do today?”
- At the end of the day, engage in a “reflection time”: remind your child of the plan they made that morning and ask, “how did your plan go today?”. This is great for language development and memory/recall as well as problem solving!
- Create a schedule using photos or drawings with your child that includes lots of unstructured play time while you are working.

- Include a morning song that denotes it is time to start “working” and a song, so your child knows it is lunch time, break time, and time to end the “work” day.
- Organize their toys so the child knows where they belong and help them clean up at the end of their “work” day.

Anytime

- Singing anytime with your child will support their language development.
- Read books regularly and ask your child to predict what might happen and discuss why.
 - Allow your child to ask questions; touch and interrupt as much as possible (don’t worry if you only get through the first two pages).
 - Talk to your child about the front, back, binding and pages of the book. Always tell your children who wrote and illustrated the book. Ensure you have a variety of books available for your child to explore on their own as well.
 - Use any new vocabulary words you learn from the book during the day. This is the best thing you can do to support your child’s reading skills and development.
- Ask your child to find 5 red things in your house or 3 blue things, etc.
- Help your child create a simple survey for family members when making your grocery list. How many want red apples vs. green apples. Use pictures so your child can make check marks after talking to everyone in the household.
- Ask your child to help sort laundry, ask your preschool child to separate out all the whites, blues, reds etc....
- When laundry is finished, ask your child to match up socks, find all the towels, take all Luz’s clothes to her room etc....
- Whenever a problem is encountered, ask your child “what can we do to fix it?” Provide time for them to test out their ideas and build upon them when applicable.
- Make time to talk about feelings. Check in with child throughout the day and ask, “How are you feeling now?”
- Have a dance party! While dancing repeat movements to make a pattern (clap, spin, clap, spin)
- Specifically acknowledge all the awesome things your child can do. “Wow, you matched all the red sock. That was so helpful!”
- Notice what your child is interested in and provide opportunities to explore those interests. If your child really enjoys playing with cars, help them build a track for their cars using chalk (outside) or books (inside) and pick up books from the library or online on different types of vehicles.

Outside

- Read the signs in your neighborhood when walking or driving in the car.
- Tell your child when you are turning left or right in the car so they can feel what left and right means.
- When in the car, have your child search for the letters of his/her name in the different signs they see. Have them search for letters in other family members/friends’ names.

- Go outside a lot, plan short walks, and visit the playground so your child has lots of opportunities to develop and use their large muscles, play with them.
- Take your child on safe outings when you can such as; beach, park, hike, lake, open-air market, farmers market, a drive around the city, drive through parties etc.
- Ask your child open ended questions about what they are observing. Build upon the conversation and introduce new concepts as the opportunity presents itself.
- Encourage your child to experiment with their physical ability and discover new skills.
- Look for every opportunity to practice positive (and safe) social interactions with new people.
- Go for a nature walk and collect rocks. Once home sort rocks into two piles, big and small.
- Go on a shape hunt. Allow children to take picture of items indoor/outdoor of shapes in their environment.
- Challenge them to balance along a line or curb.
- Using sidewalk chalk, draw a picture message to a neighbor.