



CHAMPAIGN COUNTY
REGIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION

March 13, 2020

Dear Parents,

First, know that the RPC Early Childhood Education Program (RPCECE) has your child's health and the health of your family in mind. We are cleaning, disinfecting, and washing hands and taking every precaution to stay healthy.

Still, if your child is unable to come to school for any reason, we want to be sure that your child continues to practice skills and engage in learning wherever they are. To help with that, RPCECE staff would like to provide resources for you to use outside of the school.

Research shows that long periods of screen time, TV, iPads, phones, videos, etc. is not a positive way for children – particularly preschoolers to learn. Preschool brains and bodies need to move, play, and interact with people and the environment around them.

Attached are just a few suggestions and ideas on how to keep your child engaged with learning at home. For more ideas you can also go to [Parent Tip Sheets from the Illinois Early Learning Project](#) or [National Association for the Education of Young Children for families](#) or [PBS Kids](#)

We have attached additional activity ideas for you and your child.

No matter the reason for absence from school, be sure your preschool child continues to learn in a hands-on, play-based way.

Please don't hesitate to contact us through your child's school phone number with questions, comments, concerns.

Christy Martin, MED
Child Development Services Manager



Early Childhood Education Program

1776 E. Washington St. Urbana, IL. 61802
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Hide and Seek

Primary Objectives

- 4. Demonstrates traveling skills
- 20a. Counts

Why It's Important

Finding new ways to encourage your child to practice her counting skills keeps her interested in math concepts. It also teaches her the many ways that math skills are used throughout the day.

Materials

Small objects (rocks, paper clips, beanbags, seashells, etc.); small bucket, box, or basket for collecting objects

What You Do

1. Invite your child to explore the collection of objects. Encourage her to count the number of objects she sees.
2. Explain that you will use the objects to play a game of Hide and Seek. Ask your child to cover her eyes, or have her stand in an area of the room that is blocked from view, while you hide the objects for her to find. *You counted five objects. I'm now going to hide all five objects for you to find.*
3. After you have hidden the objects, offer your child the basket. Encourage her to hunt for each object and place it in the basket when she finds it. Explain that she should count the objects as she finds them so that she will know when they are all found.
4. Once she has successfully collected all of the objects, you may hide them again or make the game more challenging by increasing the number of objects. If you are using more than five objects, count them together as your child finds them.
5. Look for simple experiences throughout the day that will provide your child with more practice counting.

Parent Feedback

My child enjoyed this
activity.

Please circle one....



Comentarios de los padres

Mi hijo / a disfrutó esta
actividad.

Por favor encierra en un
círculo ...



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RPC EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM
(a Head Start Program)
PARENT IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION

Parents: Please complete using a pen only, if possible one with blue ink.

Please circle ONLY ONE program for which in-kind is to be calculated:

EARLY HEAD START

HEAD START

EXPANSION

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PRINT full name of volunteer/donor: _____

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Print Child's Name _____

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How Many Steps?

Primary Objectives

- 4. Demonstrates traveling skills
- 20a. Counts

Why It's Important

Providing your child with a goal to focus on while she practices her gross-motor skills may encourage her to move more readily, even with adult support. Counting each step slowly is a way to support your child's efforts to move purposefully and methodically.

Materials

None

What You Do

1. When moving from one area of the room to another, hold your child's hand or provide other appropriate support, and count together the number of steps you take.
2. Offer as much assistance as necessary for your child to move smoothly around the room. Acknowledge her movements. *Walking up stairs is hard work. You are really using your strong leg muscles today.*
3. Count when going up and down stairs, through doors, etc. *One, two, three, four, five, six. Six steps to get to the sink.*
4. When repeating a path already taken, ask your child if she can remember the number of steps it took the last time. Count again to see if the number matches. *It took us six steps to get to the sink. Let's see how many steps it takes to get back to the chair. One, two, three, four, five. Only five! Wow, you must have taken really big steps this time.*
5. Notice if your child becomes tired or frustrated. Offer time to rest when needed. Offer physical and emotional support as well. *You've done a lot of moving today. Let's take a break and relax your muscles now.*

Parent Feedback

My child enjoyed this
activity.

Please circle one....



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Push and Pull Toys

Primary Objectives

4. Demonstrates traveling skills

Why It's Important

When your child plays with push and pull toys, he practices his growing gross-motor skills. Your child learns to steer the toy in the direction he wishes to go, and to start and stop as he moves around the room.

Materials

Push and pull toys

What You Do

1. Set up a safe space where your child can push and pull toys without having too many obstacles to move around.
2. As your child explores each toy, describe what he is doing. *You found the new shopping cart. You're pushing it around the room.*
3. Encourage your child to use his push and pull toys for other play. *I wonder what you are going to put in your cart. Can you tell me?*
4. Continue to encourage and acknowledge your child's play for as long as he is interested. Add more push and pull toys and related props based on your child's interest and abilities.

Parent Feedback

My child enjoyed this
activity.

Please circle one...



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Fill and Dump

Primary Objectives

7a. Uses fingers and hands

Why It's Important

Children at this stage love to experiment with cause and effect by filling up a container and dumping it out. You can encourage your child's fine-motor development as she fills and dumps by providing materials that are the right size for her to pick up with a thumb and index finger. When you demonstrate how to pick up and drop the materials into small containers, you give your child the opportunity to imitate your actions.

Materials

Small blocks or beads; large containers; small containers

What You Do

1. Place the small blocks into a large container and arrange several small containers next to it.
2. Show the materials to your child. Allow her to explore the materials on her own.
3. If she does not use the materials for filling, pick up a block using your thumb and index finger and drop it into a small container. Then dump it out.
4. Your child may imitate your play or continue to use the materials another way. Acknowledge her efforts. *You are banging the red block on the floor. You dropped the green block into the cup.*
5. Stay nearby and periodically acknowledge her play. This will help her sustain her attention to the experience.
6. Allow your child to continue with the activity for as long as she is interested. Leave the materials where she can find them to use again during play.

Parent Feedback

My child enjoyed this
activity.

Please circle one....



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Clapping Along Together

Primary Objectives

2a. Forms relationships with adults

Why It's Important

Young children are interested in the rhythms and patterns of speech and music, and they can respond to simple gestures. Clapping to a song helps draw your child's attention to the sounds and rhythm of language and engages her with a familiar adult.

Materials

None

What You Do

1. Sit with your child facing you on your lap or on the floor.
2. Sing the following song to the tune of "Where Is Thumbkin?" as you clap to the rhythm: *[Child's name] is clapping, [child's name] is clapping, clap, clap, clap; clap, clap, clap.*
3. Repeat the song, and encourage your child to clap along.
4. If your child is not used to clapping, you may need to place your hands over her and clap together as you sing.
5. Continue the song for as long as your child is interested.
6. You can use the song at different times of the day by changing the lyrics. *[Child's name] is getting her diaper changed. Changed, changed, changed; changed, changed, changed.*

Parent Feedback

My child enjoyed this
activity.

Please circle one....



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Come and Go

Primary Objectives

2a. Forms relationships with adults

Why It's Important

Separations can be challenging for some children. Your child has bonded with you and trusts you to take care of her. It is hard for your child to understand that she will be cared for even in your absence and that although you leave, you will return. Playing simple "disappear, then reappear" games with your child will help her learn that your absence is only temporary.

Materials

Your child's favorite toys

What You Do

1. Choose a time to play this game when your child is feeling comfortable and secure.
2. Show your child the teddy bear and say, *Teddy is going now. Wave bye-bye to Teddy.*
3. Wave to the bear and move it out of sight, either behind a piece of furniture or behind your back.
4. Ask your child, *Where is Teddy?* Encourage her to look for the toy.
5. Show your child the toy again and say, *There's Teddy. Teddy came back for you.* Let your child hold the toy.
6. You can take the game further by telling your child, *I'm going to go but I'll be right back.* Offer a reassuring touch.
7. Walk to another part of the room where she cannot see you. Return shortly, smile, and say, *I'm back,* as you hug your child. This will give her practice watching you come and go. Remind her in a reassuring tone, *Sometimes I go away, but I always come back.*
8. Repeat the activity as long as your child is interested. If she becomes upset or distracted, stop the game and try it again another time.

Parent Feedback

My child enjoyed this
activity.

Please circle one....



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Picture Me

Primary Objectives/Dimensions

12a. Recognizes and recalls

Why It's Important

Displaying photographs of friends and family members encourages your child's interest in communication. It also helps your child connect with friends and family members about their experiences and helps him make sense of his world.

Materials

Photographs of your child (photos with friends or relatives, pictures from a family trip or special event, etc.)

What You Do

1. Display pictures of your child, his sibling(s), friends, and other family members he can see them easily. Label each picture with the pictured person's name.
2. When you see your child looking at a picture, talk to him about what he sees. *Look at the picture of Edison. Edison is sleeping in this picture. And here is Emilia! Emilia is smiling in this picture. I see you are here in this picture with PopPop.*
3. Use the pictures to help your child develop and interest in books. *I see you looking at the picture of Joshua. He is holding a book in the picture. Books have pictures, too. Let's see what pictures we can find in this book.*
4. Talk to your child about pictures, print, and written communication throughout the day. Put words to pictures in books and read only a few meaningful words on each page. Try to find pictures and books that are relevant to your child. *Do you see the picture of the cat? You have a cat at home, don't you? She says meow!*

Parent Feedback

My child enjoyed this
activity.

Please circle one....



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Building Towers

Primary Objectives

- 7a. Uses fingers and hands
- 11b. Persists

Why It's Important

Using blocks to build a tower will help your child develop her fine-motor skills. She will also learn about how things relate to space and develop pride in what she can do by herself.

Materials

Blocks; box or dishpan

What You Do

1. Put a set of blocks into a box or dishpan. Set out the box for your child to explore.
2. As she plays with the blocks, encourage her to see how high she can stack them.
3. When the tower eventually falls, have her count the blocks that made up the tower. *You had a lot of blocks in your tower! Would you like to help me count them?*
4. Encourage your child to continue building towers. When the tower falls, she can count the blocks and stack them up again or play with the blocks in her own way. Support her persistence in approaching the task.
5. Explain to your child that the blocks will be available for her to use again at a later time.

Parent Feedback

My child enjoyed this
activity.

Please circle one....



Comentarios de los padres

Mi hijo / a disfrutó esta
actividad.

Por favor encierra en un
círculo ...



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(a Head Start Program)
PARENT IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION

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HEAD START

EXPANSION

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(must match name of donor at top of form)



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Telephone Talk

Primary Objectives

10b. Uses social rules of language

Why It's Important

Role-playing different types of conversations helps prepare your child for future verbal interactions.

Materials

Two toy telephones

What You Do

1. Place the telephones in separate areas of the room, but close enough so that the two speakers can hear each other. Invite your child to have a telephone conversation with you.
2. Begin the conversation by saying hello and introducing yourself. Ask your child to say hello and state his name.
3. Ask simple questions that you know your child can answer easily. *How are you today?*
4. Encourage him to ask you a question. *What would you like to ask me about?*
5. Follow your child's cues to determine how long the conversation should be. End the conversation with a common closing. *It was nice to talk with you. Good-bye.*
6. Encourage your child to use the phones with someone else to practice conversations at a later time.

Parent Feedback

My child enjoyed this
activity.

Please circle one....



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ABC Song

Primary Objectives

- 4. Demonstrates traveling skills
- 8a. Comprehends language

Why It's Important

Children love to sing and move in various ways, and some even learn best through music and movement. Singing the ABCs in a variety of ways will help your child become more familiar with the alphabet and enjoy learning it.

Materials

None

What You Do

1. Before beginning, think about different ways in which your child could move and sing the ABC song.
2. Invite your child to sing the ABC song in various ways: loudly, in a whisper, in a high voice, in a low voice, etc.
3. Encourage her to move in a variety of ways as she sings: while tiptoeing, stomping, clapping, etc. *Can you sing the song and stomp your feet as you sing? Let's see if you can sing it loudly while you stomp!*
4. Observe how much of the song your child can sing, and sing along, if needed.
5. Invite your child to march along to the ABCs as you transition to the next part of your day. For example, she could march to the kitchen for lunch or toward the door to put on her coat.

Parent Feedback

My child enjoyed this activity.

Please circle one....



Comentarios de los padres

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Anytime Books

Primary Objectives

17a. Uses and appreciates books and other texts

Why It's Important

Before children learn to read, frequent exposure to books piques their curiosity and helps them develop book handling skills. By offering your child a wide variety of books without restrictions on how he may use them, you encourage him to explore and gain a deeper understanding of what makes books so enjoyable.

Materials

A variety of books such as board books, cloth books, picture books, books with different textures, and informational books

What You Do

1. Create a comfortable, quiet "book nook" with a variety of books that your child can access easily.
2. Invite your child to enjoy the book nook with you. Explain that he may explore the books any way he likes. Allow him to play freely with whatever book(s) he chooses.
3. Observe how your child uses the books. Avoid limiting him to one book at a time or explaining what he should be doing with the books. Offer assistance only if your child asks for it.

Parent Feedback

My child enjoyed this
activity.

Please circle one....



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Names Are Important!

Primary Objectives

19a. Writes name

Why It's Important

The most important alphabet letters to your child are the letters in his name. Using activities that focus on these letters in a meaningful way helps him begin to make letter–sound connections.

Materials

Your child's name written on a piece of paper

What You Do

1. Encourage your child to write his name daily in a meaningful way. For example, you could pretend to be a librarian and ask him to “sign out” a book that he wants to read with you.
2. Provide a plain piece of paper or other suitable surface on which your child can write his name.
3. Give him sufficient time and space to complete the task. Be ready to help him as he attempts to form the letters.
4. Accept any attempt your child makes to write his name. Focus on his willingness to write rather than on correct letter formation.
5. Talk about the letters in his name and the sounds they make.

Parent Feedback

My child enjoyed this
activity.

Please circle one....



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