

## Learning at home – Prior to school

Here are some screen free activities for you and your child to engage in. Remember screen time for children of this age should be limited to 1 hour per day broken into parts of not more than 30 minutes.

Children of this age learn best through play so we want to avoid trying to sit and have formal lessons that involve writing. Make it fun!

### Maths

#### Counting activities

- Focus on counting – saying numbers 1-10 in correct order, then progress to 11-20.
- Practise counting objects or actions. For example count your steps as you walk to the letterbox or up the stairs or count the clothes pegs. Count anything.
- Roll dice and count the dots. Use objects to make groups. Eg roll a three put three blocks in a group. Roll again and make another group. How many do we have now?
- Roll two dice and count all the dots.



- Build a tower game. Two players take turns. Roll the dice and count that many blocks out. Each player uses their blocks to build a tower. First tower to 10 is the winner. Make up your own rules. When you have a tower of 10 then roll to take some away first back to zero is the winner. (It is important for children to learn we don't always win).
- It is not important for children to recognise or write numbers at this stage.

#### Other concepts:

- Talk about full, empty, pour drinks into different sized glasses. Which one has more? Why do you think that?
- Cutting up a whole item into pieces. How many people are there? How many pieces do we need? How big should they be? What shape?
- Cutting up a sandwich do you want rectangles? Squares or triangles?



- Make patterns – use anything you have. Stamps, beads, natural materials, buttons, pegs. Show your child a simple pattern using two objects and have them continue it. We want them to be able to repeat it three more times to show they understand it. Then as they can make one themselves add a third item and make patterns using three. Play around and see how many patterns you can make.



## Literacy

- Read at least three story books per day. Start by looking at the cover of the book and talking about what the child sees. Ask them to tell you what they think the story is about or (if it is a familiar story) to tell you what the story is about.
- Stop during the story and talk about what is happening in the pictures.
- Ask what is going to happen next?
- Ask what do they think the characters are thinking, or feeling?
- Stop if there is a word they may not understand and talk about what the word might mean.
- If the text is simple read it to the child and then say the words together. Eg “The cat is on the mat.” Clap as you say each word.
- Say some of the words in the book and break them into syllables. Clap, or jump as you say each syllable. Eg “But-ter-fly” (3 claps)
- Can your child clap the syllables in their name? John- (1 clap), Ma-ry (2 claps), Ann-a-bel (3 claps)
- Look at the pictures together without reading the words and then ask the child to tell you the story.
- Talk about the sounds letters make or the sounds you hear in words.
- Say some nursery rhymes together, sing songs, make up silly words that rhyme (sound the same)
- It is not important for children to be recognising or writing letters at this time. The above activities are more important for building a strong foundation for reading and writing.
- Drawing – blank paper, or even an old cardboard box and any kind of crayons, paper, pencils, textas. Use a chalkboard or whiteboard if you have one. Hang a piece of paper on a wall – drawing on a surface is good for balance and co-ordination.
- Scissors (small appropriate size) start by snipping, then cutting across paper, before moving to shapes. Cut up old magazines or junk mail. If you do not have glue you can mix some cornflour and water to make a paste.

## Play Dough Recipe

2 cups of plain flour

4 tbs of Cream of Tartar

2 tbs of oil

1 cup of salt

Food colouring

2 cups of boiling water



Mix all the ingredients except the water in a mixing bowl. Add the boiling water and stir as it congeals. If it is a bit sticky just flour the table or board before using and mix it in. As soon as the mixture cools enough the children can work with the warm dough.

May the dough with your child. Measure the ingredients. Talk about the different ingredients being dry, wet, use words like liquid or solid. Talk about temperature as it cools.

If you don't have colouring then just make white dough. You can also add a few drops of essential oil to make it smell nice.

## Physical

- Young children need to strengthen their hand muscles. Any building blocks – joining them together and pulling them apart.
- Threading beads. If you don't have beads maybe you could make some with dough or by rolling strips of scrap paper.
- Using tweezers, tongs or pegs to pick things up and move them
- Playdough – it is easy to make. Encourage children to roll and pinch the dough. Let them use their imagination! Ask them to talk about what they are making.

Children in this age need to be active for **three hours per day**.

- Put some music on and dance. Play musical statues. (This game is also good as it helps children learn to control their ability to start and stop when required).
- Play hide and seek.
- Run, jump, hop, skip - count the actions, use a timer to measure how long you can do the skill for.
- Ride a bike
- Go for a walk and look for numbers or patterns in your street. Take photos of things you see and discuss them.
- Learn to skip using a rope
- Play hopscotch
- Throw and catch a ball
- Try using a bat and ball
- Throw a ball into a basket
- Blow up a balloon and see how long you can keep it up in the air

Games: Play any games you might have at home. You may need to adapt the rules to make the game shorter or simple. Card games are also a great way to learn to count, take turns and learn about following rules.

- Do some puzzles
- Matching games