

Daily Routines Are Learning Times

Engage My Brain, Body, and Voice to Help Me Grow

You can help promote healthy development by involving them through conversation and simple actions during regular activities throughout the day. It's easy as talking to your child about your everyday routines.

Wake Up: Help me learn my body parts, clothing names, sequence (first my sock, then my shoe, etc.)—Math and Literacy skills

Mealttime: Describe texture, taste, colors, opposites (hot/cold, soft/hard); Encourage me to feed myself with a spoon, cup, or my fingers—Language & Literacy, Math & Science, and Self-help skills

Bedtime: Read to me. Let me read to you, tell stories about when you were growing up or when your child(ren) were born; Talk about your day together; Sing a lullaby, share music—Language & Literacy and Social-emotional/self help skills

Bath Time: I can follow directions: pour water, grasp toys, scrub myself, name objects, hide a toy under a washcloth and ask me to find it, mix colors, use washable soap crayons for art—Social-emotional/self-help, Language & Literacy, and Math & Science

Chore Time

Let me help! I can match socks, empty laundry baskets, hold a dustpan or broom, wipe a table, collect non-breakable dishes, set the table, help cook by gathering ingredients or mixing, feed pets, water plants, pick up toys and sort into baskets. Here are some areas where daily routines and chores can help your child learn:

Physical Development: Allow your infant or toddler to crawl in and out of a laundry basket on the floor to practice motor coordination. Roll socks into balls and toss them into the laundry basket as a game to build hand-eye coordination and throwing skills.

Math & Science: Sort laundry by different attributes in various baskets. Say, "Can you put all of daddy's clothes in the blue basket and your clothes in the white basket?" Practice matching socks into pairs.

Language & Literacy: Use the time at the Laundromat when the washer and dryer are running to read stories, sing songs, or do fingerplays with your child. Describe what is happening in the washing machine when you see the soap being added or the spin cycle begin. Introduce new vocabulary about the textures, designs, and colors of the clothing you are sorting.

Social-Emotional/Self-help: Help your child learn to share and observe boundaries. Explain that you want to keep the laundry you folded neatly so you can put it away in drawers. Say, "This is my basket of folded laundry. Thank you for leaving it folded and neat for me."

In the Kitchen

Families spend a lot of time in the kitchen, which makes it is a great place to help your child learn and develop new skills during these everyday routines, involve your preschooler in cooking, washing dishes, and cleanup tasks with items that are safe for Preschoolers and toddlers to handle. Here's how :

Physical Development: Fill a low cupboard or shelf with kitchen items that are safe for your child to explore, such as plastic bowls, a whisk, wooden spoons, plastic containers, and measuring cups. Allow children to explore these items independently and practice grasping, stacking, and emptying their cupboard.

Math & Science: Practice matching pots and containers with their lids. Engage your child in sorting kitchen items such as cups, plates, and spoons. Allow your preschooler and toddler to help set the table and put one spoon, cup, or napkin at each place. Ask your child to look at the table and figure out what items are missing for the meal.

Language & Literacy: Pretend you are on a cooking show and describe what you are doing to your infant or toddler as you cook or clean. Introduce new vocabulary by describing the colors, textures, and shapes of the foods you cook and taste. Use words that describe the sequence of actions for a recipe. Let your child use empty boxes in dramatic play as pretend food.

Social-Emotional/Self-help skills: Describe how your children are learning to feed themselves, discovering items in the kitchen, or being helpful with cooking or cleaning tasks. This builds their sense of confidence in their abilities and pride in their accomplishments.

Other Ways to Encourage Development and Learning

In the living room:

- **Climb a Couch Cushion Mountain:** Stack two or three couch cushions or pillows and encourage your child to use his arms and legs to climb up the mountain. Reaching and climbing strengthens large muscles. As your child grows stronger, add another cushion to the stack for a bigger climb or encourage your toddler to build the stack.
- **Cruise and Play:** Encourage the large muscle development of infants and toddlers that are not quite walking by encouraging them to cruise the lengths of the couch. Take the cushions off your couch and place favorite toys toward the back. This will encourage a child to pull herself up to stand and reach toward the back of the couch to get to the toys.
- **Build a Blanket Fort:** Stretch a blanket or sheet between your couch cushions and chairs to create a blanket fort. Crawl in and out of the fort to work on large muscle development. Talk together about who is inside or outside the fort and how the blanket makes a little house. Using words such as on, in, out, and under builds children's spatial vocabulary and conceptual knowledge.
- **Snuggle Up and Read:** Keep a basket of books near the couch so you always have something for story time. Reading to young children is essential for building their language skills and conceptual knowledge. Read favorite books again and again. Encourage your child to point to the pictures as you read by asking questions such as "Where is the brown doggy?"

While Getting Dressed:

Getting undressed for the bath, putting on warm clothes for outside play, and changing from pajamas to daytime clothes are opportunities to practice skills. During these moments, your child is observing, trying

new physical skills, and talking with caregivers. Here are some ways you can help your child learn and develop new skills during this everyday routine. (all Self-help skills)

- **Physical Development:** Encourage your child to try snaps, buttons, and zippers. Children also move their large muscles and develop motor planning skills while dressing. Help your child practice pushing her arms into the sleeves of her coat and balancing as she puts on pants. Sometimes, the skills for undressing are easier to learn. Encourage your child by saying, "Can you unsnap your pants or pull open the tabs on your shoes?"
- **Math & Science:** Practice cognitive skills such as sequencing, visual spatial skills, and matching. Help your child find matching socks, match items by color, and find clothes to put on. Practice first, second, and third. Say, "First put on your coat, then your hat, then your mittens." Be silly and see if your child notices things that do not belong.
- **Language & Literacy:** Name the articles of clothing, use descriptive words for colors and textures of items, and describe the patterns and pictures on clothing. Introduce words such as over, under, and through as you put on pieces of clothing. Help your child practice following instructions: "Find mommy's boots by the door and bring them over."
- **Social Emotional/Self-help:** Being able to dress oneself provides a sense of accomplishment and pride. Praise your child when he tries to dress himself. Say, "Good job getting your shoes on your feet!" Let your child decide what to wear. Say, "Would you like the shirt with dots or stripes?"