

COVID-19 SPECIAL EDITION:

Learning Activities for Children

While your children are at home with you, you want to spend time with them, support their learning, and get your own work done. This guide will help you do all three. Below, you'll find at-home activities they'll enjoy. And page 2 features a fun bingo card—they can check off the items as they complete them.



Editor's note: Guidelines are changing rapidly. Make sure to follow all local, state, and federal laws and recommendations on social distancing and other practices when using these ideas.

Vocabulary art

Tap into your child's creative side while she studies her vocabulary words with these two projects.

Word collage. Ask your youngster to write a word and its definition at the top of a page. Then, let her cut out pictures from magazines that go with the word. For instance, if she's studying simple machines in science, she could find pictures of levers (seesaw, scissors) or *inclined planes* (wheelchair ramp, playground slide). Have her glue them on her paper and write a sentence to go with each one.



Rainbow words. Suggest that your child sort her words by writing them with different-colored pencils in the shape of a rainbow. Perhaps she could use a red pencil for nouns, a yellow one for verbs, and a blue one for adjectives.

Junk-drawer creativity

Look no further than your kitchen junk drawer to give your youngster's creative thinking a boost. Try these ideas.



Reuse

Suggest that your child come up with different uses for objects in the drawer. He could use rubber bands to make a ball or turn a cork into a pincushion, for example. Take turns thinking of ways to reuse a bottle cap, a handheld mirror, and other junk-drawer items.

Sort

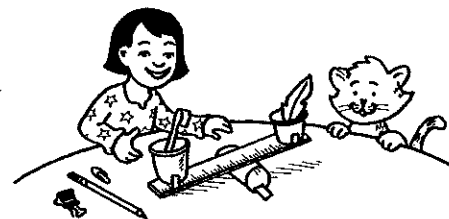
Let your youngster sort items according to a secret criterion, and you try to figure out his rule. Say he puts a paper clip and a key in one group, and a coupon and a gift bag in another. You might guess that he's sorting by materials (metal, paper). Next, you sort objects into piles, and have him determine your rule.

Homemade scale

"My paperweight is heavier than my gymnastics medal!" This balance scale lets your child explore measurement by comparing weights.

Make a scale

Have your youngster tape two small paper cups to opposite ends of a ruler. Next, she should tape a toilet paper tube to a table (horizontally). Now ask her to balance the ruler on the tube.



Weigh objects











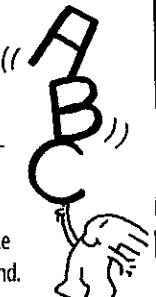

What does your child want to weigh? Suggest that she gather small items like a toothbrush, a leaf, and a pencil. She can choose two at a time, predict which is heavier, and put one in each cup to find out. The object in the cup that drops down toward the table is heavier than the one in the cup that goes up. If the scale balances, their weights are equal.

Idea: As she tests the items, she could line them up from lightest to heaviest.

continued



Instructions: Do the activities on this bingo card in any order you choose. When you get five in a row (vertically, horizontally, or diagonally), you've earned BINGO. Keep going until you've completed the entire card—that's Super BINGO!

B	I	N	G	O
<p>Read a book and create a model of its setting in a shoe-box. Suggestions: Use blocks for buildings, foil for bodies of water, and pom-poms for trees.</p>	<p>Estimate everything! How many steps are on the staircase? Keys on a computer keyboard? Count the steps or keys to check your estimates.</p> 	<p>Start a "list journal," or a notebook full of lists. A few ideas for entries: stuffed animals in your home, songs you can sing, sports you've played.</p>	<p>Gather small toys like a rubber duck and a superhero figurine. Use a flashlight to cast their shadows on paper. Trace around the shadows, then color in the outlines.</p> 	<p>Choose several board games, and mix and match the boards and playing pieces to invent a new game. Write down the rules, and teach family members to play. Be sure to return pieces to their original boxes.</p>
<p>Engineering challenge: Build the longest bridge you can between two stacks of books. Use supplies like index cards, plastic cups, and craft sticks.</p> 	<p>Write letters to friends, relatives, and teachers. You might include drawings, jokes, or even a favorite snack recipe.</p>	<p>Use a 4-ft. piece of yarn to form various shapes (hexagon, square, triangle). Arrange playing cards inside so no cards overlap. Which shape holds the most playing cards?</p> 	<p>Cut out pictures of objects from magazines and catalogs. Glue each one on a separate sheet of paper and staple the pages together to make a picture book. Write a story to go with the pictures.</p>	<p>Study your reflection in a mirror, and draw a self-portrait. Display your portrait on the fridge, and encourage family members to add their own.</p> 
<p>Solve this math puzzle: ● + ● = 10 ● + ♥ = 8 ♥ + ★ = 4 ● + ★ = ? Now make up more puzzles like this for family members to solve.</p> <p><i>Answer: 6</i></p>	<p>There are more than 400 words in the word <i>recreation</i>. How many can you list? (Use the letters in any order.) <i>Examples: cat, trainer, race.</i></p>	<p>FREE SPACE</p> 	<p>Make an audio or video recording of yourself reading books aloud. If you use video, be sure to show your audience the pictures in the books. Share your read-alouds with friends and relatives.</p>	<p>Line up 8 water glasses. Measure 1 oz. water into the first glass, 2 oz. into the second, and so on. Now lightly tap the glasses with a spoon to play a tune. Use two spoons to make harmonies!</p> 
<p>Pitch a reading tent. Drape sheets over chairs, and get books, pillows, blankets, and stuffed animals. Then, snuggle up inside to read.</p> 	<p>Set up a chain reaction. Arrange household objects like dominoes, books, plastic bottles, and balls. Can you make the reaction last for one minute? Three minutes?</p>	<p>Write an acrostic poem for each family member. Each line begins with a letter in the person's name. So the first line of a poem for CAROL might be, "Cheerful like a sunny day."</p>	<p>Create your own museum. Choose a theme, perhaps Legos or nature. Arrange exhibits on a table, and label each one using a sticky note or an index card. Now give someone a tour.</p> 	<p>Use a "pointer" like a chopstick or ruler to read words around the house. Look on food packages, book covers, game boxes, clothing, and more.</p> 
<p>Write a joke book. Cut sheets of paper in half. On each piece, write and illustrate a joke that you know. Then, staple the pages together. After dinner, read your jokes aloud to your family.</p>	<p>Find one item in your home that starts with each letter of the alphabet—from apple to zipper. Make a list of the objects you found.</p> 	<p>Look out a window, and graph what you see. You might count trees, bushes, birds, squirrels, cars, and houses. Make a column for each category and draw the items in even rows. What did you see the most of?</p> 	<p>Turn empty cardboard tubes into cute critters like butterflies, elephants, and penguins. Glue on yarn for hair or fur, googly eyes, pom-pom noses, and pipe cleaners for ears or antennae.</p>	<p>Create your own bingo board! Fill it with favorite activities that you can do all by yourself or that your family can do together.</p>

Home & School CONNECTION®

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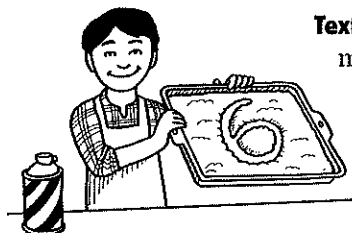


“Let’s play!” Playtime is learning time with the hands-on activities and games in this guide. Below, you’ll find at-home ideas to try with your children. Page 2 features a fun bingo-card format—your youngsters will be excited to mark off each item as they complete it!

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Number writing

As your child learns to write numbers, a little creativity will add some fun.



Textures. Give him different materials. He might finger-paint numbers. Or spread shaving cream in a pan and let him make a number, “erase” it, and make another one.

Glitter letters. Encourage him to write numbers on construction paper and trace over them with glue. Then, have him sprinkle on glitter (or sugar). When the glue dries, he can shake off the extra glitter.

My post office

Making and delivering “mail” is a good way for your youngster to work on reading and writing.

Let each family member create a mailbox by decorating a file folder and stapling the sides closed. Hang your mailboxes on your bedroom doors, and add addresses (“Hallway Door 3”). Encourage everyone to write messages for each other. *Examples:* “Let’s read a book together” or “Thanks for playing Chutes and Ladders with me.” (If your child isn’t writing yet, he could dictate his messages to you.)

Seal each message in an envelope, and write the recipient’s name and address on it. Stickers can go in the corner for a stamp. Now, your youngster gets to deliver each letter to the correct mailbox. Help your child read his mail. Then, reply to each other’s messages—and send more mail!

ABC strips

Letter by letter, your child can spell and read with home-made alphabet strips.

Cut colorful paper into four long strips. Help your youngster write the alphabet in large letters, leaving about an inch of space between each letter. Have her tape the pieces into one long alphabet strip.

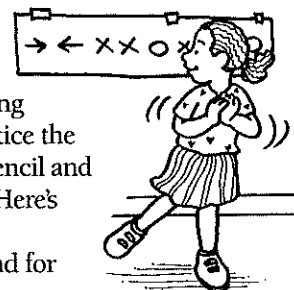
Now, say a short word (*car, box, sit*), and ask her to spell it by pointing to each of its letters on the strip. As she points, she can say the letters aloud (“c-a-r”) and then write the word on another strip of paper. (Give hints as she needs them.) Then, she could use those strips to work on reading the words.

Dance-step coding

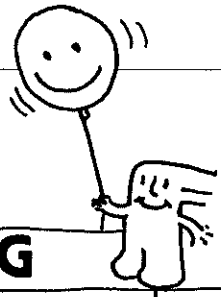
Coding is not just for programming computers! Let your youngster practice the same problem-solving skills using pencil and paper—even if she isn’t writing yet. Here’s how to get her started.

Together, think of symbols to stand for different dance steps, and print them on paper as a key. For example, an arrow could mean to take a step forward, backward, right, or left, depending on the arrow’s direction. An X might mean “clap your hands,” while an O may mean “twirl around.”


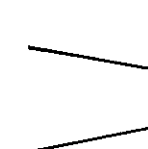

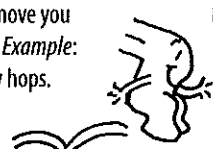
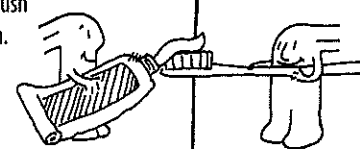



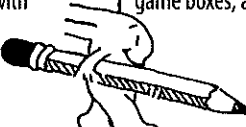
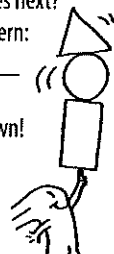



Once she finishes, ask her to use the codes to write a “program” for you to follow. As you dance around the living room, be sure to tell her she’s thinking like a programmer. Then, make up one for her to follow. Put on music and →←XX→OXO →→X the night away!



continued



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<p>Pitch a reading tent! Drape sheets over chairs, and get books, pillows, blankets, and stuffed animals. Now snuggle up inside to read.</p> 	<p>Gather small toys like a rubber duck and a superhero figure. Use a flashlight to cast their shadows on paper. Trace around the shadows, then color in the outlines.</p> 	<p>Cut out pictures from magazines and catalogs. Glue them on a sheet of paper, and make up a story about them.</p> 	<p>Write the numbers 1–12 on separate craft sticks and put the sticks in an "exercise cup." Pull out a stick and do that number of any move you choose. <i>Example:</i> 5 bunny hops.</p> 	<p>Choose several board games, and mix and match the boards and playing pieces to invent a new game. Teach your family to play. Don't forget to return all the pieces to their original boxes!</p>
<p>Engineering challenge: Build the tallest tower you can using index cards and plastic cups. Experiment with different arrangements. How many cups can you stack?</p>	<p>Turn empty cardboard tubes into cute critters like butterflies, elephants, and penguins. Glue on yarn for hair or fur, googly eyes, pom-pom noses, and pipe cleaners for ears or antennae.</p>	<p>Illustrate the steps involved in washing your hands. Post your paper on the bathroom mirror. Now make a sign that shows how to brush your teeth.</p> 	<p>Find one item in your home that starts with every letter—from apple to zipper! Draw pictures of all the objects you found.</p>	<p>Have your stuffed animals put on a play—maybe one based on your favorite book. Assign a role to each one and speak their lines for them.</p>
<p>Be a rock star! Record yourself singing your favorite songs. Then, make up new words ("Meow, meow, little cat" to the tune of "Twinkle, twinkle, little star").</p> 	<p>Design a paper bag city. Decorate each bag to create a building your city needs (school, post office, grocery store). Use tape to make streets on the floor, and place your buildings along the streets.</p>	<p>FREE SPACE</p> 	<p>Read a grocery store circular. Use the pictures to help you read words like <i>lettuce</i>, <i>milk</i>, and <i>bagels</i>. Count the letters. What's the longest word you read?</p>	<p>Make a picture menu of healthy snacks. You might draw celery sticks with cream cheese and raisins ("ants on a log") or a bowl of fruit salad. Post your menu on the refrigerator.</p> 
<p>Start a journal. Each day, color a picture of something you did or saw. Write letters or words to describe the picture. Decorate your journal cover with pictures or stickers and write your name on it.</p> 	<p>Use a "pointer," such as a chopstick or ruler, to read words around the house. Look on food packages, book covers, game boxes, and clothes.</p>	<p>Which shape comes next? Complete the pattern: □ △ □ _ Now draw shape patterns of your own!</p>  <p><i>Answer:</i> ▽</p>	<p>Study your reflection in a mirror, and draw a self-portrait. Display your portrait on the fridge, and encourage family members to add their own.</p>	<p>Set up ramps for toy cars to "drive" down. Stack books and prop one book against the pile. Or lean a piece of sturdy cardboard against the couch. Which ramp lets cars travel the farthest?</p> 
<p>Observe the animals outside your window. Maybe you'll spot birds, squirrels, or lizards. Make "trading cards" by drawing each one on an index card.</p> 	<p>Create a counting book. Label separate sheets of paper 1–10 and staple them together. On each page, draw the matching number of objects. <i>Example:</i> One cat on page 1, two stars on page 2.</p>	<p>Build the entire alphabet out of Legos or other blocks. Arrange the letters to spell words you know.</p>	<p>Invite your stuffed animals to a pizza party. Make a play dough "pizza" with toppings like pepperoni and green peppers. Then, divide it equally among your "guests."</p> 	<p>Graph family members' names. Spell each name (don't forget pets!) with letter tiles. Line up the tiles in even rows and columns. Whose name is the shortest? The longest?</p>

Early Years