



SCHOOL AGE

Learning Through Play

"Play is the work of childhood." - Mr. Rogers



Why Does Play Matter?

It's more than just fun and games! Play matters because it:

- Helps children learn about themselves and the world around them
- Allows them to explore different interests and passions
- Encourages interactions, sharing, and socialization to help develop social-emotional skills
- Develops important life skills

- Creating original ideas and acting on them
- Engaged and concentrated

A variety of ways school-agers can play as the summer winds down:

Write Or Act Out A Story

Write or act out a story with a beginning, middle, and end. If you want to act out your story, practice a few times and perform for family members later! Or, help your child write the story out on blank sheets of paper, draw pictures to go with it, and staple the sheets together to create your very own book.

What Is Play?

Play is "any spontaneous or organized activity that provides enjoyment, entertainment, amusement or diversion." In simpler terms, it is a time when we are:

- Having fun
- Being creative and spontaneous

Coloring and Painting

Ask your little one to draw a picture of something he did today. When he is finished, be sure to ask questions about that and other things he did.

(continued)

*Activities should be done under the supervision of an adult or older sibling.



Please see below for some additional activities that you could try with your child.



Drawing and coloring is a great time to develop communication. Ask questions about what is in the picture to help develop vocabulary. If your child draws your family, you could ask: "Is dad short or tall? What color is mom's shirt? Are there pets in the picture? What is everyone doing?"

Puzzles

Puzzles can help communication, fine motor, and working memory development. You can even make your own puzzles by drawing pictures and then cutting them into different shaped pieces.

Time to Cook?

As your child continues to grow, he can take on more responsibility in the kitchen. Add new tasks slowly and continue to review kitchen safety rules. School-aged children can typically help:

- Preheat the oven
- Crack eggs
- Stir sauce on stove with supervision
- Peel apples or potatoes (using safe peelers, not a knife)
- Sift flour
- Use a rolling pin
- Spoon batter into pan or tray
- Help make the grocery list

Benefits of Cooking Together

- Cooking is a chance to put math skills to good use by telling time to determine when a dish will be done cooking, using fractions when measuring ingredients, and more!

- Your child can read the recipe out loud to you. There still may be words she has not heard or seen before, but it is good practice.
- Following recipes is great for sequencing practice – what do we need to add first? Why did step 1 have to be done before step 2?
- Cooking serves as a opportunity to talk about food, healthy eating choices, and planning balanced meals. Use this chance to start a conversation!
- You can also improve communication skills while cooking by talking about favorite foods, memories around mealtimes, and how all the steps of the recipe contribute to the finished meal.
- Cooking helps your child learn how to manage more responsibility when he knows he needs to follow the recipe's directions from beginning to end and clean up afterwards. Safety reminders should be used as your child begins handling more kitchen equipment.
- Preparing the meal can increase your child's appreciation of the food served, knowing all the hard work that goes into making it.
- Accomplishing the goal, seeing the finished product, and seeing family members enjoy the prepared meal are all great confidence boosters for your child.

As you can see, there are many different ways your child can benefit from cooking in the kitchen! So choose a recipe, grab an apron, and open your refrigerator. Happy cooking!

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