

READING ACTIVITIES EVERYWHERE!!!

Reading Activities at the Park

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The park is a wonderful place for children to play and explore. At the park children can learn and practice physical and social skills as they play with other children. They can also “do science” as they explore nature. If the park has a playground, children can also explore science as they slide, swing, and balance.



Baby/Toddler

Ball Fun. Play a simple ball game with your toddler. Sit her down opposite you, just a few feet away. Use a big light ball. Roll the ball to her gently. “Here comes the ball! *Catch* the ball! *Catch* the ball!” Then encourage her to roll the ball back to you. Give her lots of praise as she lets the ball go. “You *rolled* the ball! You *rolled* the ball!”

So Much Nature. Put your baby down on a blanket in the grass. Let him explore nature using his senses of sight, hearing, smell, and touch. He can see the trees against the sky. He can hear the leaves blowing. He can smell the fresh air. He can feel the breeze on his skin and the grass in his fingers. Talk to him softly as you enjoy the experience together. “Feel the breeze! Feel the grass!”

All Kinds of Leaves. Toddlers love to collect things. Leaves are especially fun to collect in the fall. Explore the *colors* of leaves with your child. Introduce words for color names like *red*, *brown*, *yellow*, and *orange*. Compare different leaves. Are they all the same or are they different? Collect leaves in a bag. Take them home and start a leaf collection.

Preschooler/Kindergartner

Balls, Balls, Balls. Children love to play with balls because they can do so many things. Play a game of catch with your child, and use words like *bounce*, *roll*, and *fly* to describe the ball’s movement. Use different forms of the words like *bounced*, *rolled*, and *flew*. Invite your child to move the ball in different ways; *throwing*, *hitting*, *punching*, and *kicking*, and notice what happens. Invite another child to play and talk about *sharing* and *taking turns*.

Balancing. Children first learn about the idea of balance as they use their own bodies. Use the word *balance* as your child runs around and uses playground equipment. “Wow! You really *balanced* your body on the swing!” Then extend this idea to other situations. “Did you see how the ball *balanced* on the basketball hoop before it fell through?”

Swing High, Swing Low. Encourage your child to use all of the playground equipment. You can introduce a lot of vocabulary that describes movement and location. For example, when your child is on the swing, you can say “*High, high, fly* to the sky!” each time you push her. As she comes down, you can say “*Down, down, swing* to the ground!” When she is finished, talk about how it felt and use interesting words. “You were flying like a bird! How did it feel to *soar*?”

All Kinds of Trees. Children are curious about trees because they are so big. You can be *scientists* as you collect some information about a tree. You can measure a tree by stretching your arms around it. “Can you reach all the way around?” Feel the *bark* of the tree and use words like *smooth*, *soft*, *rough*, *bumpy*, and *hard*. Look at the leaves of the tree. Notice the *veins*. Ask your child to describe the leaf’s *shape*. Compare the shape to something familiar. “It looks like your hand with fingers.” Compare the bark and leaves from different trees.

First-Grader/Reader-Writer

Ball Games. Children need practice playing team games. Sometimes you have to be flexible about the rules. Try an easy game of *baseball* with your child and some friends. Use a big plastic *ball* and a big plastic *bat*. Make sure that each child has a turn to hit the ball and run around the *bases*. Introduce words like *teamwork* and *sportsmanship*. If your child has experience with team sports use specific vocabulary like *score*, *base hit*, and *homerun*.

Balancing Act. As children get more practice controlling their bodies, they can balance more easily. They also begin to understand the idea of balance in a scientific way. Encourage your child to notice and think about *balance* in many situations. “How can we move the children on the see-saw so they will balance?” If your child has other experiences with balance make a connection. “Remember when we weighed the tangerines at the market on a balance scale?”

Who Lives in a Tree? The park is a good place to learn about how plants and animals help each other. Look with your child for *evidence* that animals live in the trees at the park. Maybe animals use the trees for *food* or *shade*. Look for birds flying near the trees. See if you can find any nests. Look for animals like squirrels or chipmunks. “Why do you think they like the trees?” Tell your child that it will be fun to learn more about trees. “We can look for a book about trees at the library or the bookstore.”



Reading Activities in the Neighborhood

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When you and your child walk and ride in the neighborhood, your child learns about his community. He also learns about the people who live and work there. When he meets people who work in the neighborhood, he can learn about different jobs and careers. In the process, he learns social skills and how to have conversations with people.



Baby/Toddler

What Comes Next? Once your toddler is a little bit familiar with your neighborhood, play a simple memory game. For example, as you pass a house where a big dog lives, say “Where does that big, furry dog live?” After your child responds, point to the house and say “She lives right there in that red house! I wonder where she is today?” After you have played this game a few times, you can ask the same question, but change where you ask it. Ask it before you get to the dog’s house, or after you’ve passed it.

Walk Around the Block. Take your toddler for a walk in your neighborhood and enjoy the sights and sounds together. As you pass, name people and places for your child. “Look, there’s our mail carrier!” Then add more details. “I wonder if she will bring us a letter.” After a few walks, ask your child to make simple predictions. “Do you think we will see that big dog today?”

A Trip to the Library. Before you go to the library, tell your child that a library is a place where you borrow books. “You can borrow story books and information books.” Then, ask the librarian to show you the children’s books. Explain to your child that the librarian is a person who works at the library. He knows a lot about books. Then pick some books out to look at together.

Preschooler/Kindergartner

Sound Walk. As you walk in the neighborhood with your child you can play a fun sound game. Look for people and things with names that start with the same sound. Ask your child to close his eyes. Then tell him to open his eyes and name the first thing he sees- “A dog!” Say the sound that the letter “d” makes in the word dog. What other things can we find that start with the same sound? Look for things like doors, dolls, donuts, and daddies. Give your child help by saying things like “There’s a truck. Does that start with the same sound as dog?”

Meet the Mail Carrier. Explain to your child that a mail carrier brings letters and packages that people send to you. She also takes your letters and packages to other people. “Letters and packages can travel all over the world.” Help your child think of questions she wants to ask the mail carrier. “How do you carry all those letters and packages?” Then, sit outside one day when the mail carrier is making her rounds. She will be thrilled to meet you and your child, and answer questions about her job.

Guessing Game. You can sit on your steps outside and play a guessing game with your child. Notice something, but don’t look at directly at it. Give your child a clue and see if she can guess what you are thinking of. For example, “I am thinking of something with wheels. It is painted black and it makes a lot of noise.” After your child guesses “The neighbor’s car!” let her have a turn.

A Trip to the Library. Before you go to the library, tell your child that the library has many different kinds of books on many interesting topics, for example trees or animals. Ask her what topic she is interested in, and give her some ideas. Maybe she wants a book about trees and leaves, or maybe she wants a storybook by her favorite author or illustrator. “The librarian can help us find the book we want.” When you get to the library, encourage your child to talk to the librarian. She can ask for help to find the book she wants. If your library offers library cards to young children, help her get a library card. Then let her borrow a book to take home.

First-Grader/Reader-Writer

Nature Detectives. When you and your child go outside, take a notebook and pencil with you. Tell him that you can be “Nature detectives.” You will use the notebook to record things you see. Encourage your child to look for living things, or evidence of living things. These may be things like a hole in a leaf, an ant hill, or a half-eaten nut.

When you find something, encourage your child to write it down, or draw a picture of it. You take a turn drawing and writing something too. Later, during a family conversation, invite your child to show your pictures and talk about what you both found. Everyone can help solve the mystery. “What animal did that or made that?”



Using a Map. Drawing a map is a fun and challenging activity. First, explain to your child that a map is a diagram, or a picture of a place or location. It shows places where people want to go, and the roads and streets that go to those places. People use maps for directions. Talk to him about other maps he has seen. Suggest that you make a map of your neighborhood. Take a walk and get the information you need to make a simple map. “There are five houses on our street, and the store is on the same side as our house.” Back at home, give your child a large piece of paper and some crayons. Help him draw your street. Then, let him decide what places to put on his map. Next time you walk, take the map with you for directions!

A Trip to the Library. The library is full of interesting things to find out about. Take a walk around the library with your child and look at the book collections. In the children’s section, read the signs on the shelves. Look for words like fiction, non-fiction, biography, history, and geography. Help your child discover what a few of these words mean. “Let’s look at some of the books to find out.” On another day, encourage your child to talk to the librarian. For example, ask her to show you how to search for library books on the library’s computer system.

Reading Activities at the Mall

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A trip to the mall can be exciting for your child. It can be even better if you have time to window shop. Specialty shops are good places to learn a lot about categories of items like clothing, shoes, jewelry, and books. Shoe stores are really good because the shoes are displayed on shelves. That makes them easy to see and compare. When you read a shoe store tip, think about how you can use it in any store.



Baby/Toddler

Window Shopping. As you walk through the mall, name each store and talk to your child about the things you see in the window. “Look at all those clothes in the clothing store.” When you see something very interesting, stop for a minute. “Let’s look at the puppies in the window of the pet store!”

Entering the Store. As you walk into the shoe store, talk about what you see. Use simple language, repeat words, and be creative. “Shoes, shoes, look at these shoes- big shoes, little shoes, so many shoes!” Tell your child what you are going to do at the shoe store. “We are going to buy party shoes for you to wear to the birthday party!” Listen and watch for your child’s response. Then give her more information. “Yes, party shoes- shiny black party shoes!”

Describing Shoes. As you look at shoes for your child, talk about the different pairs. Place the stroller so your child can see the shoes too. As you pick out each pair, describe them while you show them to her. “These have ribbons on them! Do you like them?”

Your older toddler can hold the shoes as you push the stroller to the register. Encourage her to watch as the cashier rings them up and puts them in a bag. “What’s in the bag? Baby’s new party shoes are in the bag!”

Fun with Books. Malls often have bookstores with a large children’s section. Sometimes there are chairs to sit in while you read. Find a simple board book. First look at the cover and tell your child what the book is about. Encourage your toddler to turn the pages as you read. When you get to the end of the book say “the end!”

Preschooler/Kindergartner

People Rhymes. Sit on a bench where you can see shoppers passing by. Start a rhyming game about the people you see. “Man in red, man in red, you have yellow hair on your head.” Then start a rhyme and invite your child to finish. “Girl in blue, girl in blue, you have buckles on your” Encourage your child to make more rhymes, even very silly ones!

Guess What Shoe. Play a guessing game with your child in the shoe store. You start first. “Look at those boots. I think a person wears those in the rain.” Then invite your child to play. Point to a different type of shoe and ask “where do you think a person wears those shoes?” Confirm your child’s answer by saying “Yes, those are slippers, a person wears those at bedtime.” Or, you may say “No, I think those are sandals. A person wears those in the summer.” When your child gets used to the game, have some fun with it. Point to a pair of high heels and say “I think a person wears those to work in the garden. What do you think?”

Buying Shoes. Explain what you are looking for so your child can help you. “You need new sneakers. You said you wanted green ones.” As you look at the sneakers, use words that describe how they are the same or different- colors, styles, and sizes. Some are small, some are medium, and some are large. “What size do you need?” As she tries a pair on, use words that describe the parts of shoes and feet. “Push your foot in all the way up to the toe. Push your heel down. Pull up the tongue. Let’s fasten the Velcro.”

Fun with Books. Spend a relaxed time in the children’s section at the mall bookstore. Pull out a picture book that looks interesting. Show your child the cover of the book and read the title, and the names of the author, and illustrator. Flip through the book slowly from beginning to end. Invite your child to make up the story by “reading” the pictures. Then read the story to your child.

First-Grader/Reader-Writer

Using the Map. Before you start to shop, look at a diagram of the mall. This is often located right inside the front door. Explain that this is a map or diagram of the mall. Remind your child of other maps that he has seen. First show your child the dot that indicates where you are. Then look for the store you want to go to first. Use your finger to trace a line from where you are to the store. “We will have to walk straight down this hall until we get to the corner. Then we will take a right turn and we will be there.”

Measuring Feet. In the shoe store look for the foot scale. Explain to your child that this is a kind of ruler that measures your foot. “It measures the length and width of your foot so you will know what size shoe to buy.” Encourage your child to put her foot on it. Show her the number at her toe that indicates the correct shoe size. “You wear a size 5 now. Your feet are growing!” If you don’t know how to use the foot scale, ask someone who works at the shoe store to help you.

Fun with Books. For a special treat, go shopping for a book at the mall bookstore. Before you go, share some ideas with your child. Do you both like poetry, or stories about sports, or animals? Does he want to find information, for example, about the trees at the park? When you get to the store, find a salesclerk. “Can you help us? We are looking for a book about” Invite your child to look at some books and choose his favorite one. When you get home encourage your child to write his name inside the front cover. “This book belongs to Jack.”

Reading Activities at the Doctor's Office

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The doctor's office can seem like an unfriendly place to a child. Talk with your child about the people who work there and the things you see there. That will make the doctor's office seem more familiar. Many doctors' offices also have children's books and magazines in the waiting room. Reading to your child is a great way to help him relax.



Baby/Toddler

What's in the Picture? In the waiting room, choose a simple book or a family magazine with a lot of large pictures. Look through it slowly, looking at the pictures together. Make a short comment about each picture and then relate it to your child's life. As you look at a magazine picture of a woman swimming, you can say "Look, she's swimming; swimming in the water. You like to swim in the tub, don't you?"

Body Parts Rhyme. Once inside the exam room, you may have to undress your child before the doctor arrives. Introduce your child to the names of her body parts through a rhyming game. "Belly belly, jelly jelly, baby has a jelly belly!" Touch or rub each body part as you say it so your child makes a connection between the body part and the word. Have fun as you make-up the rhymes and watch your child's excited responses.

Saying Goodbye. As you get your child dressed and ready to leave the doctor's office, sum up what the doctor did during the exam. "The doctor listened to your heart and looked in your ears." Then, invite her to say "Bye-bye" to everyone as you leave and say goodbye yourself. "Goodbye Doctor, thank you for giving me my check-up." "Goodbye nurse, thank you for weighing me." This helps her learn the words for things that happened today and shows her how we say goodbye when we leave a place.

Preschooler/Kindergartner

What's Going to Happen? Sitting and waiting in the doctor's waiting room can be difficult. Luckily, there are lots of things to talk about. Explain to your child what is going to happen when he goes into the exam room. If your child is sick, you might say "First the nurse will come in to ask you what hurts. She will want to know if you feel hot. She will take your temperature to see if you have a fever." If your child feels well enough, play a pretend game. Say to your child "Good morning sir! Oh, you look like you don't feel well today. Do you have a fever?"

What's That? Inside the exam room, there is interesting equipment to see and talk about. Play a game with your child. Look at each piece of equipment and try to guess what it is used for. You can start by pointing to something and sharing your idea. "I think that equipment is for looking in ears, because it has a long, skinny part." Then ask your child what he thinks. Out loud, wonder about the names for things: "I wonder what that ear thing is called?" When the

doctor comes in, invite her to join in: “Doctor, we want to know about that piece of equipment “What is it used for and what is it called?”

Read While You Wait. There are often a lot of children’s books and magazines in the doctor’s waiting room. Ask your child to pick out a book and enjoy it together. When you read it to your child the first time, read it all the way through without stopping. If you are still waiting, read it again. As you read it for a second time, stop at interesting words and talk about them. “Hurricane- what do you think that means?” Connect the word to the story as you figure it out together. “The story said the boy got wet and cold. Maybe a hurricane is a kind of rainstorm.”

Leaving the Office. As you leave the doctor’s office, talk with your child about the exam and each of the things that happened in order. “First the nurse weighed you on the scale and measured you. Then the doctor came in and listened to your heart. After that, the doctor examined your eyes and ears.” This is also a good time to practice any new words that your child learned today: “Every time you visit the doctor, the nurse measures your height and weight. What did the doctor use to listen to your heart? Oh yes, a stethoscope!”

First-Grader/Reader-Writer

Who Works Here? Talk with your child about the people who work at the doctor’s office, and what they are doing. This helps the people who work there seem more familiar. “That lady is answering the phone. I wonder if she is the receptionist? Do you think someone is calling her to make an appointment with the doctor?” You can encourage him to politely ask people about their jobs. As long as they aren’t too busy, they will be happy to talk with your child about what they do.

Read While You Wait. There are often a lot of things to read in the doctor’s waiting room. Invite your child to pick out a children’s book or magazine and read it to you. As she reads, help her to sound out unfamiliar words. First, ask her to spell the word. Then slowly say each sound in the word together. Notice letters that make different sounds in different words. For example the letter “c” may sound soft like in ceiling or hard like in cake.

What’s In a Picture? The waiting room and the exam room sometimes have pictures hanging on the walls. They may be decorations or posters with medical information. These give you a chance to use new words and ideas. If the picture is decorative you may ask your child’s opinion “Do you like the way the artist painted the mountains maroon?” Tell your child what you think too. “I like the way the design matches the curtains in the waiting room.” If the picture is a medical display you may talk about the information it has. “That poster tells about why it is so important to eat nutritious food.”

Supporting Literacy at Home Room by Room

Living Room

- Have reading material around the room - on a coffee table, on a shelf, in a cabinet.
- Try to put books for your children at their eye level and easier accessible.
- Flip through coffee table books and discuss the photos, reading the captions or having your child make up captions for the pictures.
- Turn on closed captioning on the TV...and turn the volume down.
- As you're watching a sports game on the TV, turn the sound way down and try your own play-by-play.
- Play board games or card games, taking turns reading the directions or playing games that focus on literacy skills.
- Use a computer or tablet to find answers your child's inquisitive questions.
- Have your child read a book to remote family via video chat.

Kitchen

- Have your child read or follow along with a recipe.
- Help make the grocery list.
- When putting items away from the store, have your child read the labels and boxes as they put them away.
- Help find and clip coupons.
- Read the calendar of the week's activities, lunch menus, etc.
- Post the schedule of a favorite sports team on the fridge



Meal Time

- Talk about your day. Either have a set of predictable questions or discussion starters to get the conversation going.
- Tell jokes! Have one night a week that is joke night so everyone comes prepared to share.
- Create stories by each person taking turns to add to the story.
- Ask reading comprehension questions about current books they are reading. For example: what was the book about, who were the characters, what was the issue, how was it solved or resolved, would you recommend it to someone else and why, etc.



Bedroom

- Read the bedtime story by flashlight.
- Have your child read to their favorite stuffed animals or put on plays or dance recitals for them.

Bathroom

- Read to them while they are in the bath.
- Have them make up stories with the toys in the tub.
- As you and your child are looking the mirror, copy each other's expressions or sounds.
 - Place a daily note on the mirror for your child to see each morning as they are getting ready like "you're going to have a great day".

