

EARLY LEARNING PARENTS' PAGES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

Help Your Child Become More Independent with Daily Routines



In the upcoming months, most VPK children will be transitioning to Kindergarten programs. Kindergarten is a time for children to develop ownership and take pride in themselves. To help them achieve this, they will be expected to complete more tasks independently. Families can support their child by teaching them how to complete self-help skills through their daily routines on their own (i.e., hand-washing, brushing teeth and dressing/undressing). Young children want to feel independent, but they also need a caring adult to encourage them to do these things by themselves.

To get the process started, try these helpful tips:

1. First, decide on one daily routine that you plan to teach your child. Now, take a moment to break down the steps in that routine; keeping it simple and fun.
2. With positive and clear directions, show your child each step in the routine (you might consider adding a chart as a teaching tool with photographs of you and your child completing each step of the routine in order).
3. Make sure you are at your child's eye level, to keep their attention, and complete each step with your child; modeling how to accomplish each step.
4. Do it together and enjoy the process. Initially, you should demonstrate each step of the routine and focus their attention on the child completing the task; noting what skills your child needs help with and those they have mastered.
5. As your child begins to master each step of the routine, you can begin to step back, allowing the child to do more and more on their own.
6. Please keep in mind that even though this may seem like an easy task for you, as you have done it many times, your child is learning how to do this for the first time on their own.
7. Encourage each attempt and celebrate successes along the way. As you help your child gain more independence, know that this is also a wonderful bonding time. You are creating memories that will last a lifetime.

For more information and tips go to:

http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/teaching_routines.pdf.

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Structure in the Home Leads to Healthy Social and Emotional Development

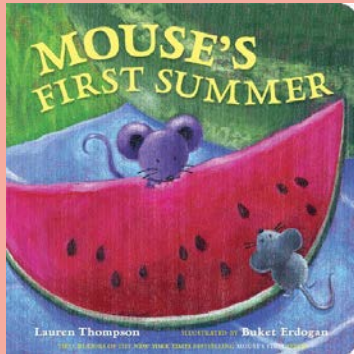
A new [research study](#) reveals that a family's home environment can protect children from developing problem behaviors. The study reveals parents can do things to change the home environment that will have a positive impact on their children and improve the home life of everyone in the family.

Organization and consistency creates a sense of trust and wellbeing in the home. You can change the atmosphere in your home by being consistent and organized. Establishing spaces specifically for your children to eat, sleep and play will help them develop a sense of belonging and safety.

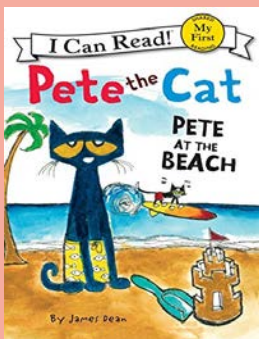
Summer Book Ideas for Preschoolers



"Ice Cream Summer"



"Mouse's First Summer"



"Pete at the Beach"

To find more engaging summer books visit:

<https://bit.ly/SummerBookIdeas>

Some areas of your home may be used for eating meals at certain times of the day and playing or doing homework at other times. You can teach your child to use the space for play or for meals by using visual reminders. Such as when food or dishes are on the table, it is not time to play, it is time to eat. Eating meals together as a family creates opportunities for you to model good manners and appropriate topics to talk about during meals. Setting mealtime routines for everyone, even young children to bring their dishes, cups, spoons or forks to the sink, throw away trash and put away uneaten food are ways to structure mealtime.

Every family member needs a place for their clothes and belongings and a specific place to sleep or rest. Teach your child to return their clothes and toys to their own spot whether it is a closet, a drawer, a box or some other type of storage. If you have multiple children that share spaces and belongings, show them ways to share spaces. Be sure to acknowledge their hard work of correctly putting the items away.

Make naptimes and bedtimes consistent. Having a set bedtime and routine helps children sleep better and for longer periods of time. Predictable schedules or routines create a sense of safety. Doing something different or at a different time every day makes life more chaotic and less predictable for children.

Setting age appropriate rules and limits for your child and making sure they understand the rules and follow them as well as being consistent with the enforcement of your household rules sets the stage for healthy social and emotional development. A healthy social and emotional development plays an important role in your child's ability to learn academic skills in order to be successful in school.



Saying Goodbye to Preschool and Hello to Kindergarten

Many preschoolers feel anxious about moving on to kindergarten. They worry they won't have friends, won't like the teacher, will get lost or won't be able to do what the teacher asks.



Here are some tips to guide your child through the move from preschool to kindergarten:

To Help with End-of-the-Year Feelings

- Place a sticker or make a mark, on each day of the calendar, every day, during the last month of school.
- Encourage children to talk about their feelings in regards to preschool ending; talk about your feelings too.
- Draw pictures and/or write good-bye messages for your child's friends or teachers.
- Revisit the events of the past year with your child by looking at drawings, paintings, photos and writing. Celebrate how much your child has learned this year.
- Offer stress-reducing activities at home such as water play, puppets or play dough.
- Plan ways to keep in touch with classmates such as video chats or sending them a card or letter.

To Ease the Move to Kindergarten

- Visit the new school before your child's first day. Point out ways the room is similar to his preschool room, but also discuss how it holds new materials to explore.
- Plan playdates with new classmates.
- Read books about starting school; such as, *Look Out, Kindergarten, Here I Come!* by Nancy Carlson; *Will I Have a Friend?* by Miriam Cohen, illustrated by Ronald Himler; and *If You Take a Mouse to School*, by Laura Numeroff, illustrated by Felicia Bond.
- Describe the daily routines, including arrival, breakfast, snack, lunch and bathroom practices.
- After your child is settled into kindergarten, plan playdates with old friends.

PBS for Parents

When you think of PBS (your local Public Broadcasting Service), you probably think about the wonderful children's shows or the games and apps for children that they produce. Did you know that the PBS website has many different types of resources for parents? These resources include articles on a wide range of topics for families including games and apps, crafts, experiments, recipes and information on child development.



The Learn and Grow section on the PBS website has a variety of activities and tips for families with children 2 to 8 years. You will find topics appropriate for each age level for literacy, math, science and the arts, as well as tips for social and emotional development. The information about social and emotional development may be especially useful during this time of

social distancing. For example, a tip for 2 year-olds' gives you strategies to use when your child is overcome by emotions or impulses. These include redirecting their attention to something else in the room or singing a song with them. For a 5 year-old, the strategy offered when they feel overwhelmed is to ask them questions such as; "What could you do to change the situation? If there are a lot of toys that you have to pick up before you can have a snack, how can you change the situation?"

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There are articles on the website for families that help their children thrive. For example, *Helping Siblings Get Along When They Have to Stay Home* will give you many ideas to help them stop arguing and get along better. *How to Raise a Good Problem Solver* helps you find ways to help your child learn to face a challenge and find effective solutions to problems. *9 Ways to Help Soothe and Comfort Your Child* will help you create a calmer family environment and build your child's sense of security at home.

Subscribe to the PBS free daily newsletter and receive activities and tips to support your child's learning at home every day.

Ready Rosie to the Rescue!

While you and other families across the state are striving to bring stability and normalcy to the "new" situation we find ourselves in, you are also discovering that this new normal now includes becoming your child's teacher. The learning website, [Ready Rosie](#) has great tools to support your role as your child's teacher. Their toolkit is full of different types of learning activities designed to build on classroom instruction. The list of tools available include:

- [Modeled Moment Videos](#): easy and fun activities you can do at home to bond and build on what your child is learning in the classroom.
- [Research and Answer Videos](#): education and child development questions with answers from experts in their fields, shared digitally and activities that are designed to be used off screen.

Ready Rosie is now offering a [free toolkit](#) to support parents like you who have been impacted by COVID-19 (available in English and [Spanish](#)). These resources from pediatricians, mental health experts and early childhood educators cover topics that are important to families:

[Learning at Home](#) : videos released weekly for parents of infant to kindergarten aged children with topics such as supporting dramatic play, dancing and moving, rhyming fun, motor muscle building, social emotional support, making music and many more!

[Prevention and Care](#) offers answers from pediatricians to questions like: "What do I do if I am sick and have my children at home?" or "When should I take my sick child to see the doctor?"

[Emotional Well-Being](#): videos featuring the Founding Director of the Center for School Behavioral Health, Janet Pozmantier, addresses topics such as "How should I talk to my children about COVID-19?" to "How do routines help create a more peaceful home?" These videos allow you more insight into how to talk to your children about what is going on in the world, while staying in tune with your child's emotional needs and how they are feeling throughout this process.



To learn more about Ready Rosie and discover additional content that is available through their website at <https://readyrosie.com/learn-more/>.

THANK YOU TO OUR PROVIDERS!!



May 8, 2020 is Child Care Provider Appreciation Day.

It takes a very special person to work as a child care provider or teacher and their contribution to the healthy development of children may go unnoticed.

Take time to show your appreciation to your child's child care provider and teacher. You do not have to give an elaborate gift, sending a thank you card or a letter of appreciation from you and your child would make their day!

Ideas for Provider Appreciation Day:

<https://www.pinterest.com/flearlylearning/may-upcoming-events/>

Child Care Aware National Provider Celebration:

<https://bit.ly/celebrateProviders>



Happy Mother's Day!

This year's celebration may be different than the past, but there are still great ways for your kids to create gifts at home, that come from the heart!

The following sites offer a variety of homemade crafts that are easy and fun to do, while staying safe at home:

OEL's Pinterest Board



<https://bit.ly/OELsMAYBoard>

Legacy Project



<https://bit.ly/LegacyProjects>

PBS Mother's Day Crafts



<https://bit.ly/PBSCrafts>

Fruit Cup Ladybug



<https://bit.ly/FruitCupLadybug>



Summer Sunscreen Challenge

With summer just around the corner, we will all start to see longer days and feel hotter temperatures. Children are playing outside more in parks, at the beach, or even going on walks and riding bikes with friends and family. Helping your child be safe and [explaining why](#) wearing different types of sun protection is essential to their health. One of the most commonly used ways to protect from the sun is by applying sunscreen that contains SPF (Sun Protection Factor) with the [recommended](#) amount of 30 and higher.

To help kids better understand how sunscreen works, you can set up a [fun experiment](#) to show how it protects!

What you will need:

- Black construction paper
- Sunscreen (lotion, not spray- minimum SPF 30)

Directions:

1. Fold the construction paper in half.
2. Spread sunscreen on one side of the paper, but not the other.
3. Make a design if you like and leave the paper in a sunny spot for a few hours.



What are the differences between the two sides of the paper? Is the side with the sunscreen still dark? What about the other side? You can also try to use sunscreens of different SPF amounts and test them out at the same time too! Remember, the higher the SPF, than the greater the protection!

SPECIAL DATES IN MAY

2: Brothers/Sisters Day

5: National Teacher's Day

8: Child Care Provider Day

10: Mother's Day

13: School Nurses Day

25: Memorial Day

27: Sunscreen Day



Happy
Mother's
Day!

Richard Corcoran
Commissioner of Education
Shan Goff
Executive Director



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