

Playful Parenting for Learning

This booklet is for parents of children ages 6-9 years old. Children at this age are learning to read letters and numbers. The activities are simple and fun for parents and children. We hope that you all enjoy. Children learn best through games and activities so go ahead and have fun with your kids.

This booklet contains:

- Guiding ideas for playful parenting
- Activities for literacy
- Activities for numeracy



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Section 1: Playful Parenting for Learning

Home is where children are loved and are safe. Home is also where children learn. There are simple things that you and your whole family can do to make sure that young children continue to learn at home.



1. Play with your children. Play is the most powerful way of learning for young children. Run around, sing songs, create make-believe worlds. Children will learn about different things and how to interact with others.



3. Feed your child's mind. Promote learning while feeding your family. Ask your child to name the ingredients, count them, sort them by size, by first sounds, by color, and more!



2. Talk to your children. Have normal conversations. Ask questions and encourage them to talk by listening and responding to what they say.

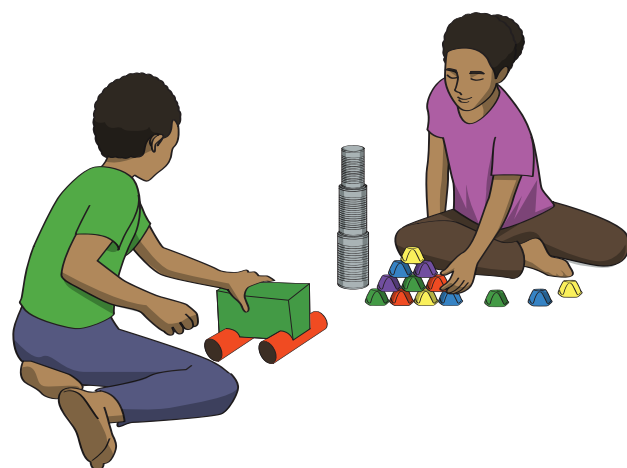


4. Sing songs. Singing songs can help improve literacy and numeracy skills. Songs have rhymes, meter and new words that are important for children to learn.

5. Tell or read stories. Tell traditional or invented stories and ask open-ended questions. It introduces new words and broadens their world to new things.



6. Use everyday objects at home. Simple things like bottles, stones, strings and other objects can be turned into toys and learning materials. You can also use these when you're inventing a story and practicing counting.



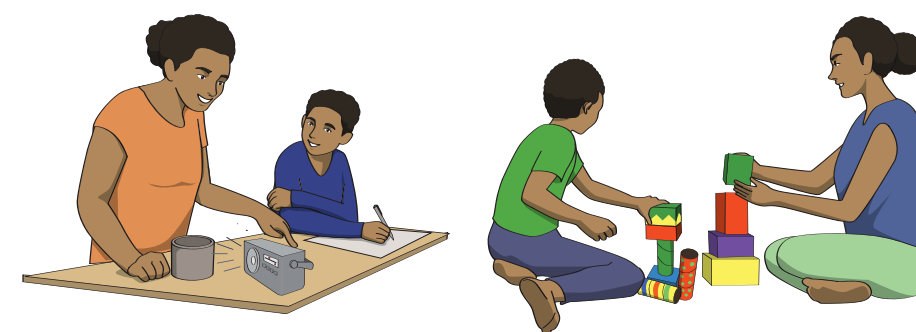
7. Use everyday activities and chores as a chance to learn. Every activity can be a learning opportunity if you engage your child. If you're cooking, you can explain things to your child. If they are older, they can help with the safer tasks like measuring ingredients.



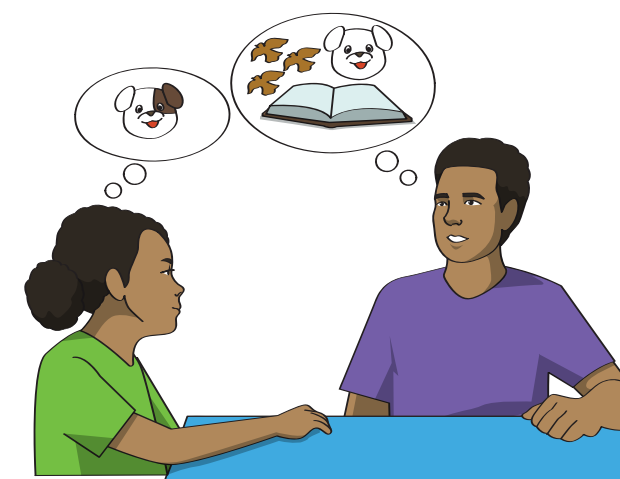
8. Make a learning corner. Make a learning corner in your house and spend time with your child in building this. Fill it with simple, inexpensive learning materials to play with. If your child is still learning new letters and numbers, post these on the wall.



9. Encourage curiosity and discovery. Children learn through discoveries and making mistakes. There is no need to replicate the class environment with quizzes and tests. Encourage your child to ask questions and challenge them with tasks for their own discovery.



10. Develop a routine. Children like having a sense of routine. It will also help you manage your home. You can schedule time when your children play on their own, help in chores or share moments with you. Remember to include meals, rest and sleep in their routine.



11. Follow your child's interests. Learning is more fun when it's about things that interest them. Find ways to include their interests when you do some of the activities listed in this booklet.



12. Practice positive discipline. Praise your children for what they do well. Children generally respond to parents' expectations and using praise helps the child build confidence. When they misbehave, remind them of what good behavior looks like.

Section 2: Activities for literacy

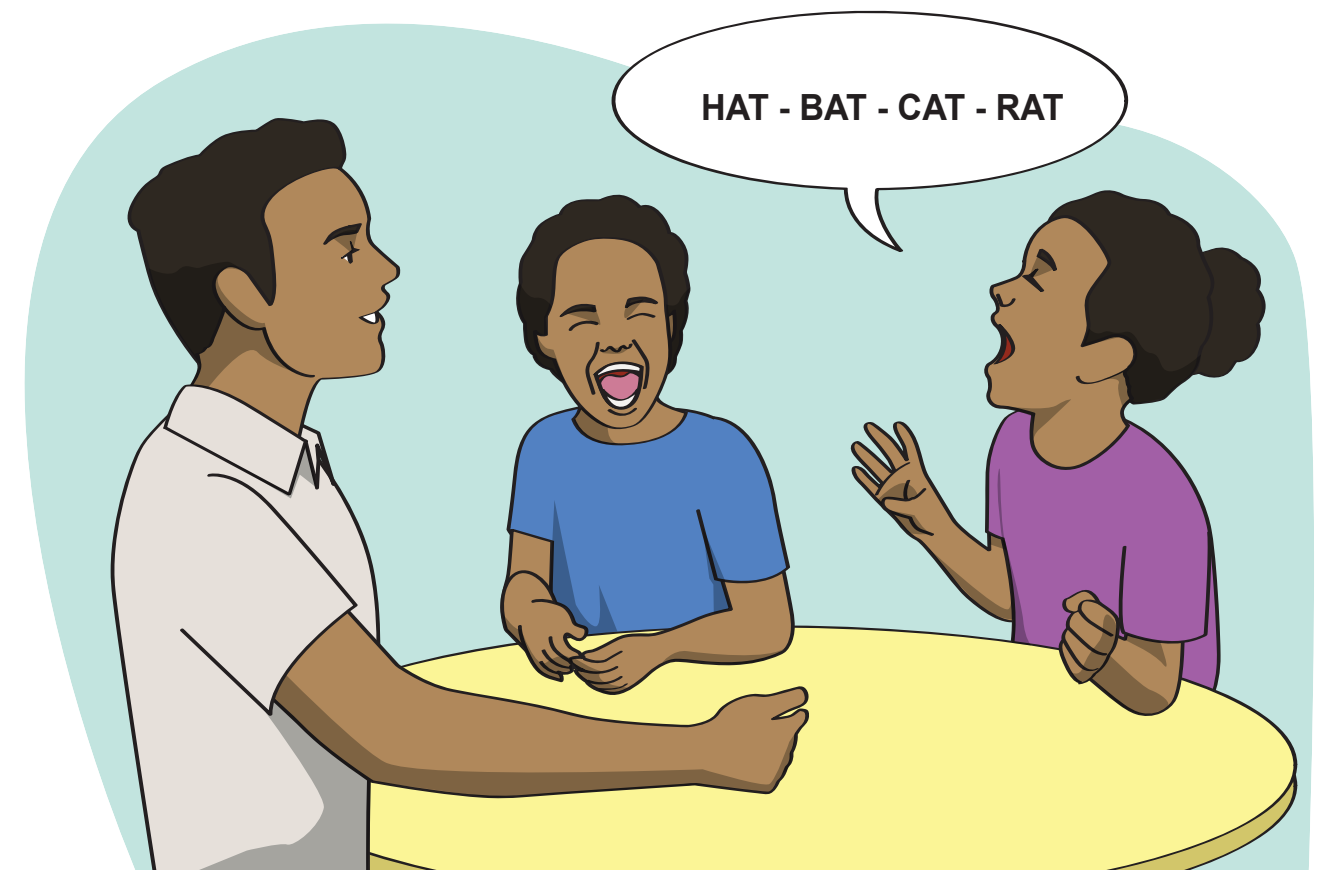
The home is where children can learn about new words and ideas and express themselves in various ways. This section provides sample activities of what you can do with your child to build their language and literacy skills.

Activity #1 Build a Story



Title	Build a Story
Materials	None
Objective	Children create stories with parents
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sit in a comfortable space. 2. Tell your child that you will create a story. 3. Begin the story with a first word or phrase ("Once upon a time, long ago, a lion..."). 4. Ask your child to add one more phrase. If there are other siblings, ask each one to add one more phrases. 5. Continue until you feel the story is complete. <p><i>Variation to make it challenging:</i> Ask children to summarize the plot of the story they created.</p>

Activity #2 Rhyme Circle



Title	Rhyme Circle
Materials	None
Objective	Children practice rhyming or recognizing sounds
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell your child that you are going to play a "Rhyme game". They need to give a word that rhymes with a word you give. 2. Explain what rhyming words are— if needed, give examples. (bat-pat / cat-hat / net-pet) 3. Take turns giving a word. Everyone should give a word within 5 to 10 seconds. 4. Come up with as many rhyming words as they can. 5. If there are older children, ask them to give the first word. 6. When someone is no longer able to think of a rhyming word, start over by asking for a new word. The next child will then find a rhyme for the new word. <p><i>Variation to make it simpler:</i> Instead of rhyming words, use "first sound of the word" or "first letter of the word".</p>

Activity #3 Concentration Game



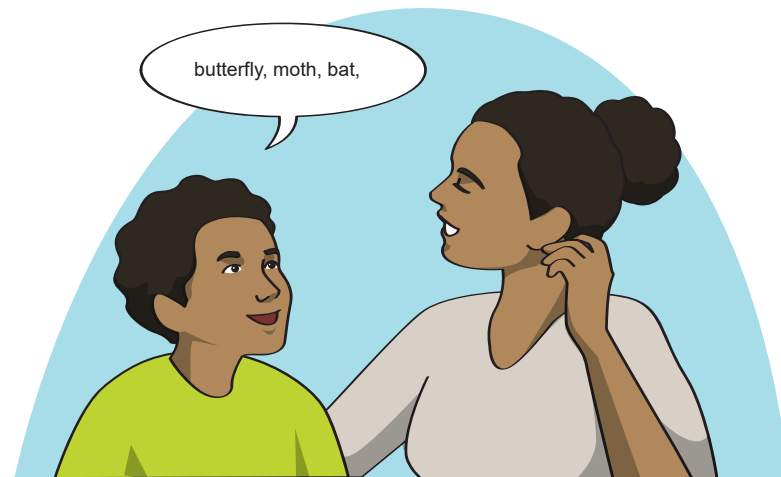
Title	Concentration Game
Materials	None
Objective	Children practice oral vocabulary and categorization skills
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You can play this game in the kitchen or other rooms with many objects. 2. Ask your child to walk around and search for a “thing” that is in your mind. 3. Give one hint first (e.g fruit, vegetable or kitchen utensil) 4. Explain that when you clap fast, it means that they are near the object 5. Give another hint if needed (e.g starts with the letter T...) 6. If there are more children, ask them to take turns. If the first child didn’t find it after 3 guesses, you can ask others to take a turn. Older children can also take charge and decide what the “thing” is.

Activity #4 Catch the ball



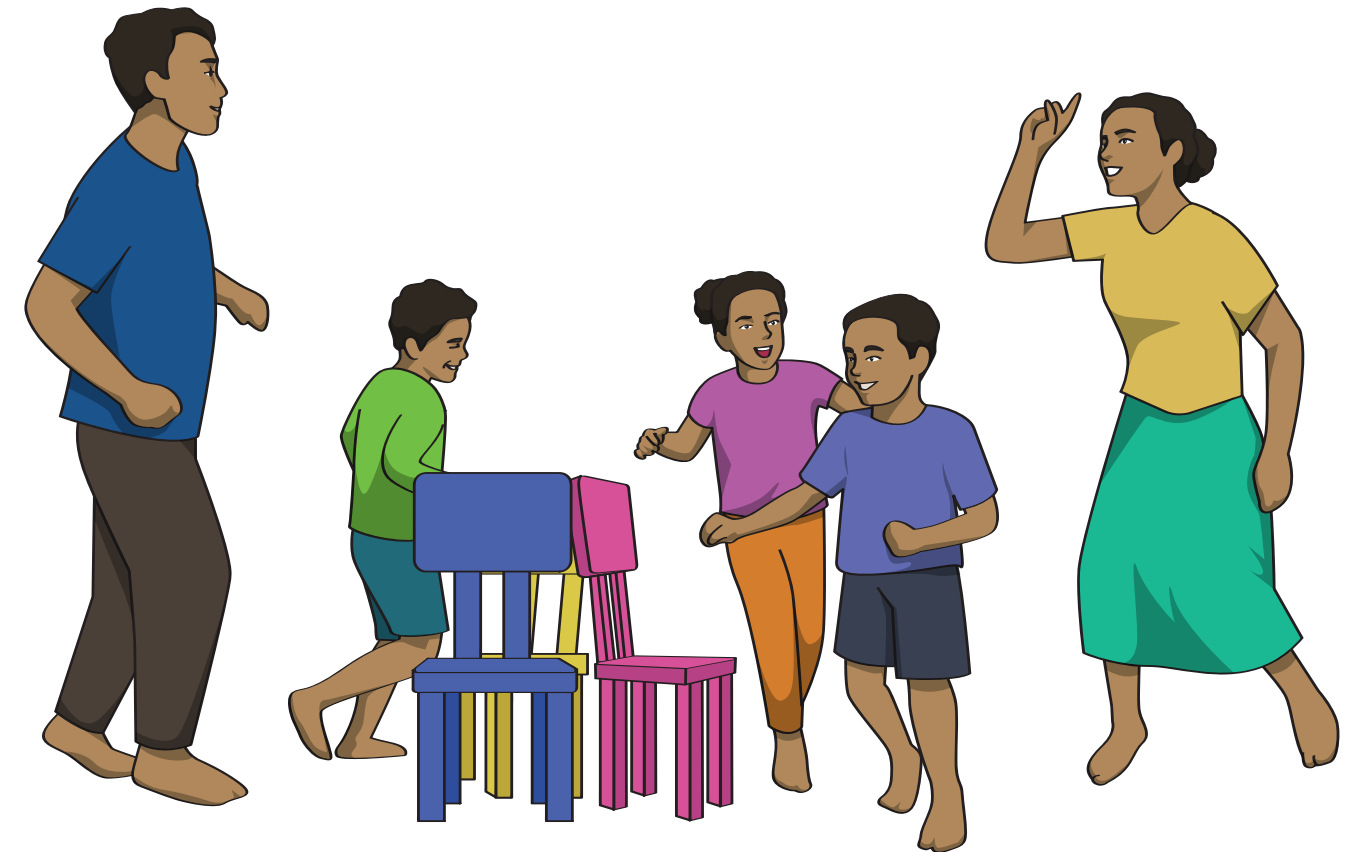
Title	Catch the ball
Materials	ball
Objective	Children build vocabulary skills
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form a circle. 2. Throw a ball to any person in the circle. The person who catches it must give a type of bird. (e.g., chicken, robin, owl, etc.) 3. Ask the person to try and make the sound that this bird makes, or to play-act how this bird behaves. 4. The person then throws it to another person in the circle. <p><i>Variation:</i> Instead of birds, change the category into “animals” or “things in the kitchen” or “things that start with the letter D”.</p>

Activity #5 Things with Wings



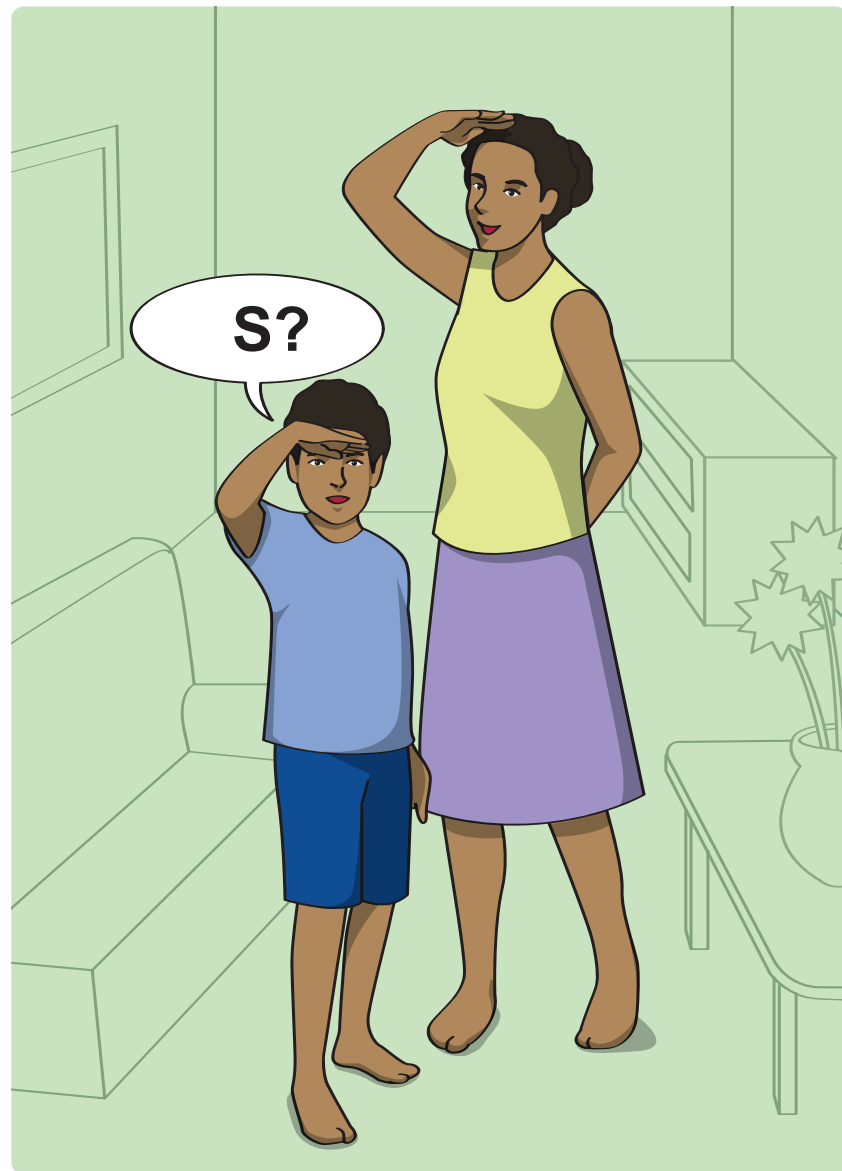
Title	Things with wings
Materials	none
Objective	Children build vocabulary skills and letter knowledge (with variation)
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form 2 teams 2. For one minute, each team must list or think of as many “things with wings”. For example: butterfly, moth, bat, robin, sparrow, duck, etc. 3. Each team takes turns naming one thing. The other team cannot repeat what was mentioned. 4. When a team runs out of things to say, you can start a new category. <p><i>Variation:</i> Instead of “things with wings”, change the category to “things that can be found in the bathroom” or “people who drive for work” or “animals that start with the letter D”.</p>

Activity #6 Letters and Chairs



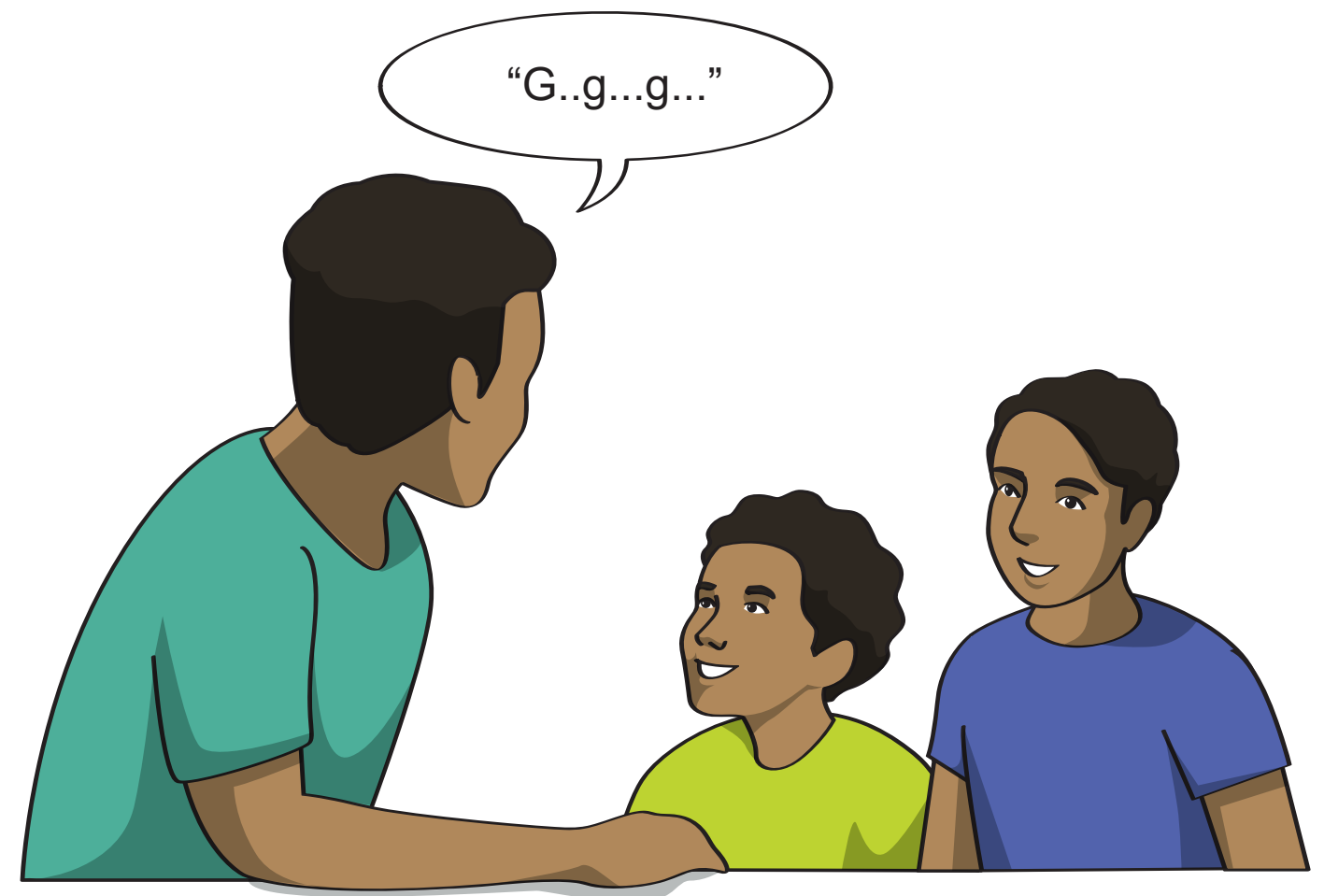
Title	Letters and Chairs
Materials	chairs
Objective	Children thinking about the letters in their names
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arrange 2 or 3 chairs in a circle (one chair for each player). 2. Ask children to run around the chairs. If you have an only child, ask others in your home to run around with the child. 3. Give the following instructions for different rounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “If your name starts with letter the L, sit” • “if you have the letter “A” in your name, sit” • “if your name includes the sound “Na”, sit” 4. Children can also take turns creating rules. <p><i>Variation:</i> Play music so that children can also dance while they go around the chairs.</p>

Activity #7 Letter Hunt



Title	Letter Hunt
Materials	none
Objective	Children build letter knowledge
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask your child to go on a letter hunt. 2. Ask your child to look for and identify items that start with a specific letter. For example, the letter "s" 3. Walk together around the house or outside your home. Remind your child to be very quiet and to shout out only if they see something that starts with the letter "s". 4. Change the letter after you have done a few examples of letter "s".

Activity #8 Guess Who



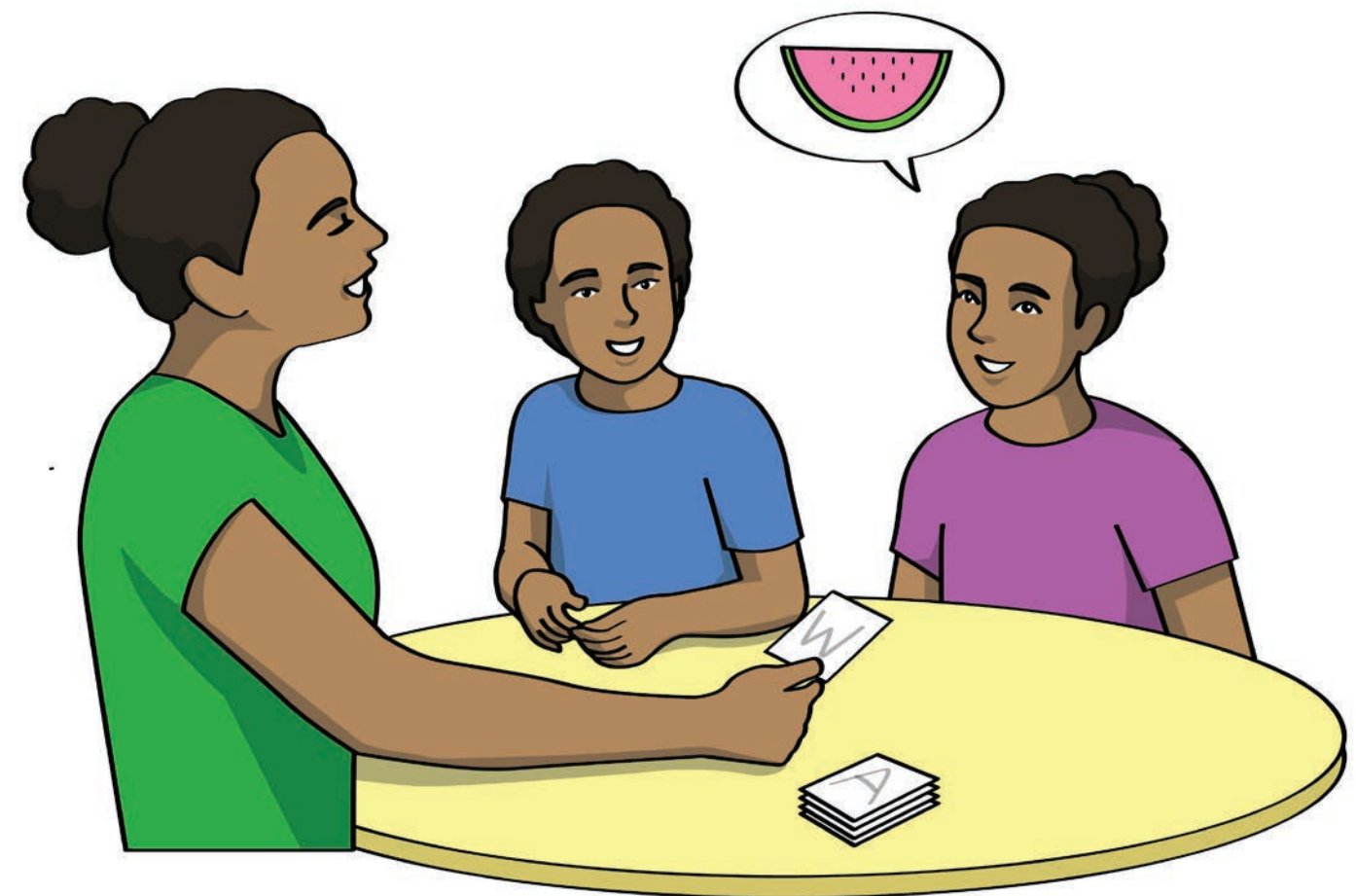
Title	Guess Who?
Materials	none
Objective	Children practice phonemic awareness or sounds
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell your child that they will be playing a game that requires them to listen very carefully. They will try to connect the sounds they hear to the name of someone in the house. 2. Say, "Guess whose name I'm going to say now." Then secretly pick a name of someone in your home and clearly enunciate the first phoneme of the name. 3. Repeat the beginning sound multiple time for names with a difficult or confusing consonant, such as Gabriel: "/g/ /g/ /g/ /g/ /g/." For other phonemes, stretch and repeat ("/s-s-s-s/ /s-s-s-s-/ /s-s-s-s/"). 4. If more than one person's name has the same initial sound, encourage your child to guess all of the possibilities. This reminds them that each phoneme shows up in multiple words. <p><i>Variation:</i> Widen the choices by guessing names of other people you may know like neighbors or friends or family members who live somewhere else.</p>

Activity #9 Alphabet all Around



Title	Alphabet all around
Materials	none
Objective	Children practice letter knowledge and focus
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sing the alphabet song with your child. 2. For each new letter, find something in your environment that begins with that letter. 3. Sing the alphabet song by using the names of the objects you found, for example "ant, basket, cup, dog, egg, finger, ginger, home..." 4. Each time you sing the song, try to find new objects in your environment that start with those letters. 5. Encourage your child to repeat the song with you

Activity #10 Name that Letter



Title	Name that letter
Materials	Letter cards
Objective	Children build vocabulary and letter knowledge
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This game is best played with at least 2 people. All players sit in a circle. 2. Prepare letter cards that have all the letters in them. Distribute them equally across players. Letter cards must be face down. 3. Players take turns to take one card from their pile to flip it over and place in the middle of the circle. Everyone can see the letter card. 4. The player must name something that starts with that letter within 5 seconds. 5. If they are able to name something, the card stays in the pile. If not, they need to get the cards in that pile. 6. The first one to finish all the cards in the pile wins. <p><i>Variation to make it challenging:</i> Change the categories to make it difficult. For example, limit the things they can say to something that can be found in the house, or kinds of animals.</p>

Activity #11 Anagrams

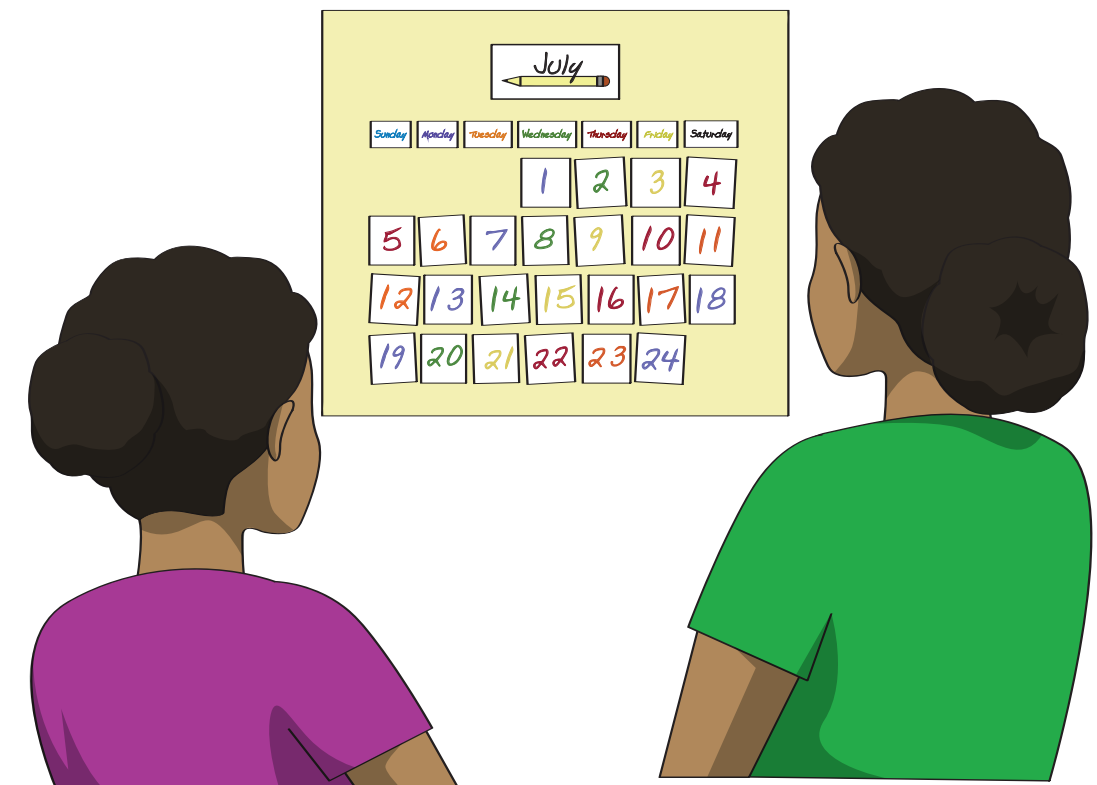


Title	Anagrams
Materials	Used carton or hard paper and letter cards
Objective	Children practice letter knowledge and vocabulary skills
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write a long word on a piece of cardboard 2. Now use all the letter cards of the letters of that long word. 3. Show the children the word. 4. Using the letter cards, ask them to make other words using the same letters. <p>Example: long word = W-O-N-D-E-R-F-U-L Words made from wonderful: drew, end, for, four, flu lend, low, now, red, rode, run, etc.</p>

Section 3: Activities for numeracy

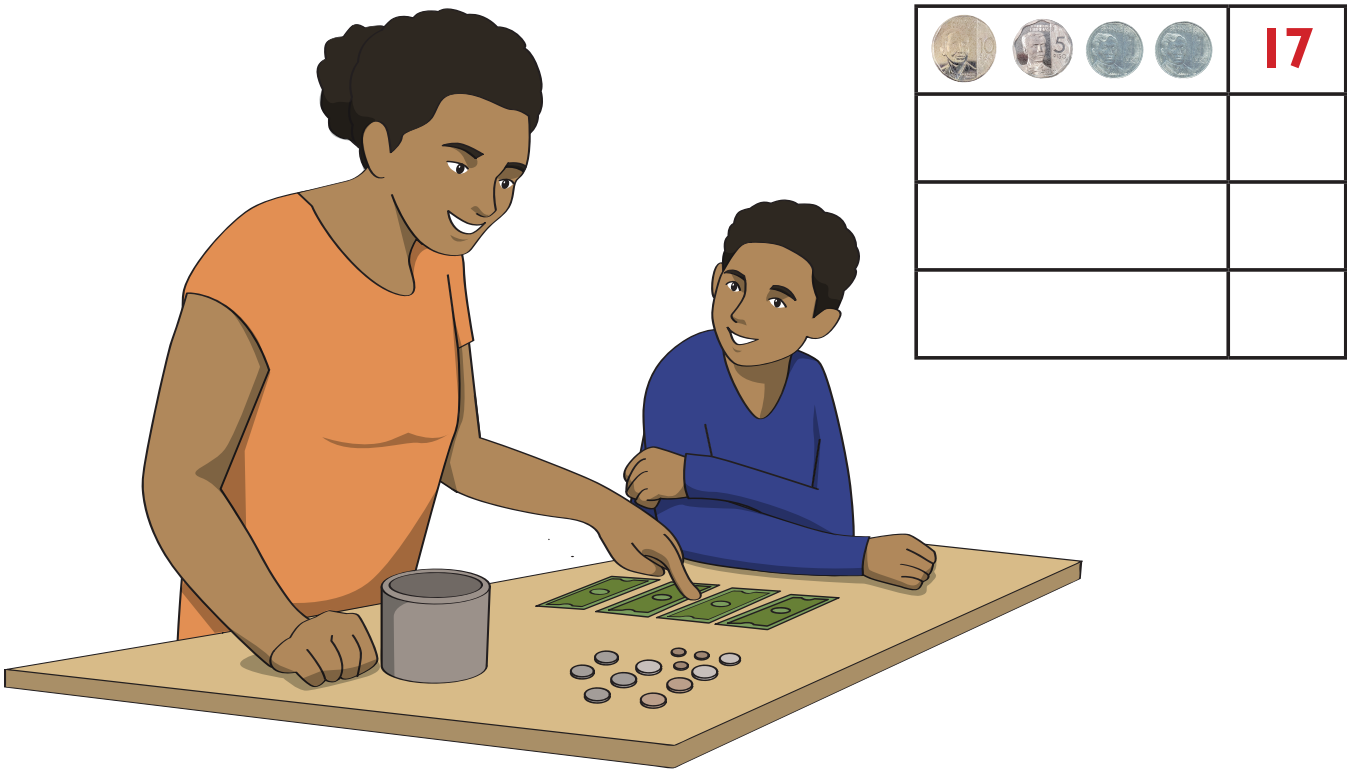
The home is where children can learn about and practice mathematical concepts. This section provides sample activities of what you can do with your child to build their numeracy skills.

Activity #1 What Day is it?



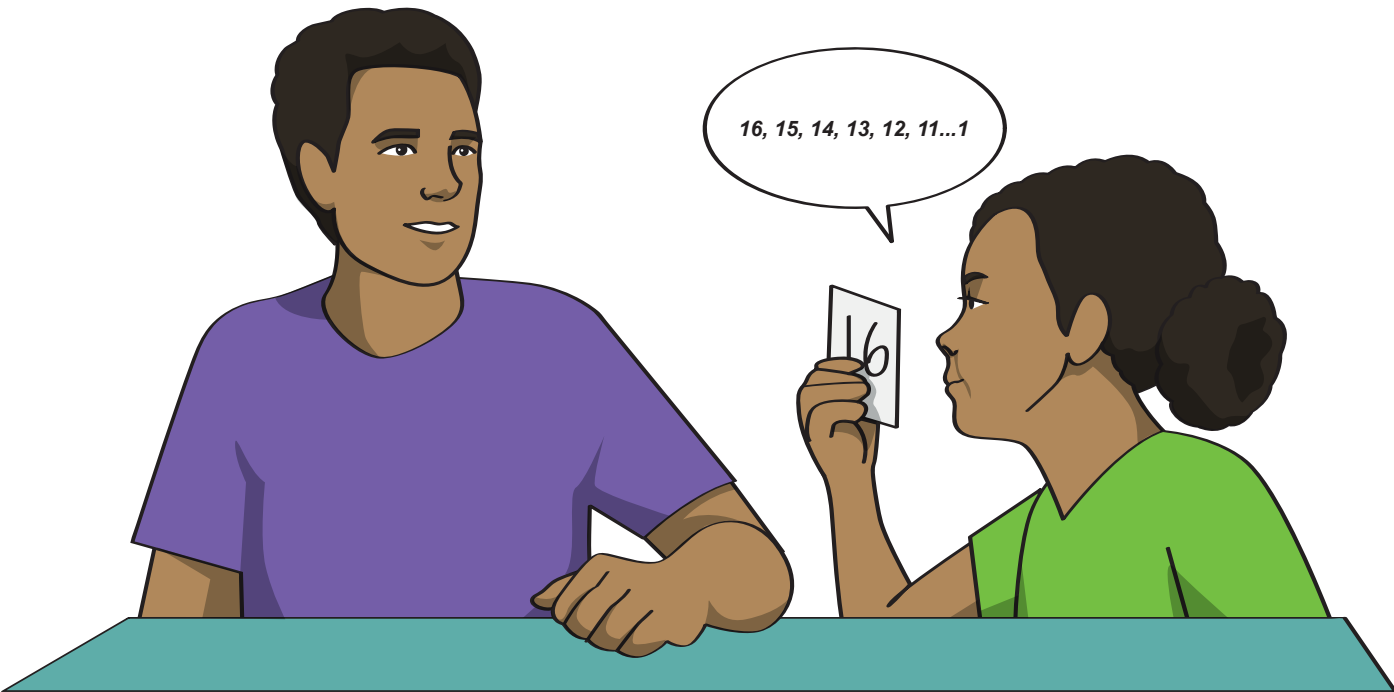
Title	What Day is It?
Materials	Calendar (home made or low cost calendar that is at home)
Objective	Children practice letter knowledge and vocabulary skills
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Look at the calendar together and point to the date. 2. Ask your child, "What month is it today? What day is it today?" 3. "What date is it today?" Ask your child to count from the 1st date of the month up to the date today 4. Continue to ask "What day is today? What day was yesterday? What day will tomorrow be?" <p>Variation: If you have a handmade calendar, let your child put the number in pocket.</p>

Activity #2 What is Money?



Title	What is money?
Materials	Money (paper notes and coins)
Objective	Children become familiar with money and value
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bring out different examples of money – coins and paper notes. 2. Talk about each piece - its shape, colour, value etc. Explain: “This is a ____ value paper note, which is red and has the picture of ____ on the front and a picture of _____ on the back.” 3. Ask your child if they know what money is for. Explain that money is used to exchange for goods and services. Every time you buy something or get a haircut, there is a price that you need to pay. 4. Use the diagram. Put together a combination of different coins in one row. On the right box, write what the total value is of those combination of coins. 5. Do this four more times in the other rows. 6. Search for some items with price tags in the house. 7. Ask your child if you would be able to buy this item with the different amounts. <p><i>Variation to make it simple:</i> For younger children, it would be enough to be familiar with money by tracing the coins on paper or drawing the paper notes.</p> <p><i>Variation to make it challenging:</i> For older children, make combinations of coins and paper notes.</p>

Activity #3 Count off & Blast Off



Title	Count-Off & Blast Off
Materials	Number cards or dice
Objective	Children practice counting
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shuffle the number card and draw a number (or roll a dice).Let’s say it’s number sixteen (16). Ask your child to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • count in ones starting at 1 up to the drawn number (e.g. 16). • count backwards in ones from the drawn number (e.g. 16) down to 1. When counting backwards, you can pretend your child is about to launch a rocket. 2. If your child can count in twos, try asking your child to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • count in twos forward from 2 until they reach the drawn number (e.g. 16) • count in twos forward from 1 until they reach the drawn number (e.g. 16) • count backwards from 10 in twos • count backwards from 9 in twos. <p><i>Variation:</i> If your child is not yet familiar with many numbers, start with number cards from 1 to 10. As your child becomes familiar with more numbers, add more numbers card to the pile.</p> <p><i>Variation to make it more challenging:</i> When you draw a number card or roll the dice, ask your children to jump as they count.</p>

Activity #4 What's the Order?



Title	What's the order?
Materials	Number cards and sorting objects (beans, seeds, caps)
Objective	Children practice number identification and number order
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare the number cards 1 to 10. 2. Ask your child to shuffle the number cards and take one out. 3. Place the first card on the floor number facing up. 4. Ask your child to take another card and ask, "Is this a smaller number or greater number than the first card?" 5. If it's a lesser number, your child should place it on the left side of the first card. If it's a greater number, it should be placed in the right side. 6. With each new number card taken out, your child should place it in the correct place to show the right order. <p><i>Variation to help children:</i> If your child needs help to visualize the number, your child can use sorting objects. Put the corresponding number of sorting objects on the number cards that are drawn up.</p> <p><i>Variation to make it challenging:</i> If your child finds this activity easy, increase the number cards to reach 40. Use a clock to time how fast it takes for your child to finish using all the number cards.</p>

Activity #5 Hit the Card



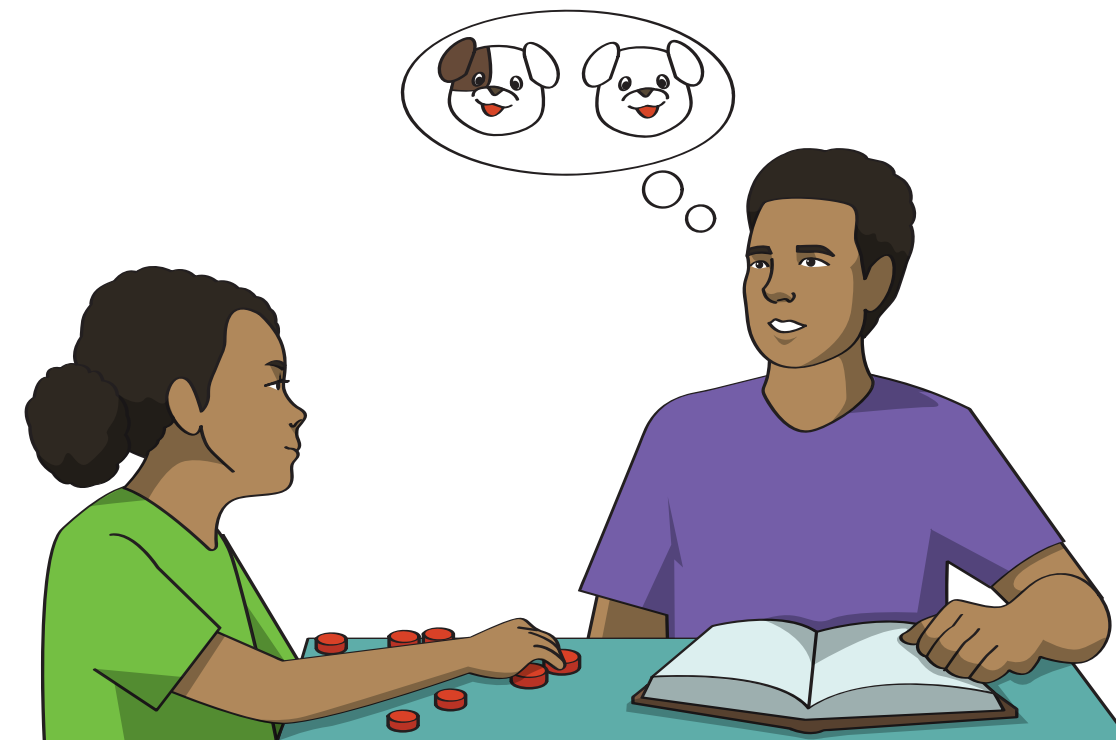
Title	Hit the Card
Materials	Number cards
Objective	Children practice number identification with multiples
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You can have more than 2 players sitting in a circle for this card game. 2. Bring out all the number cards. Shuffle them and distribute them across the players. Each player will have a pile with numbers facing down. 3. Players will take turns, taking one card and putting it in the middle of the group with the number facing up. 4. If the number ends in 0 or 5, players need to put their hand on that card. The last player to put their hand needs to get the cards and add it to their pile. 5. The winner of the game is the first one who to finish all their cards. <p><i>Variation:</i> Change the rules. Instead of "0 and 5", you can say, odd numbers or even numbers or numbers that are multiples of 4 (if your child is at that level).</p>

Activity #6 Multi-sensory counting



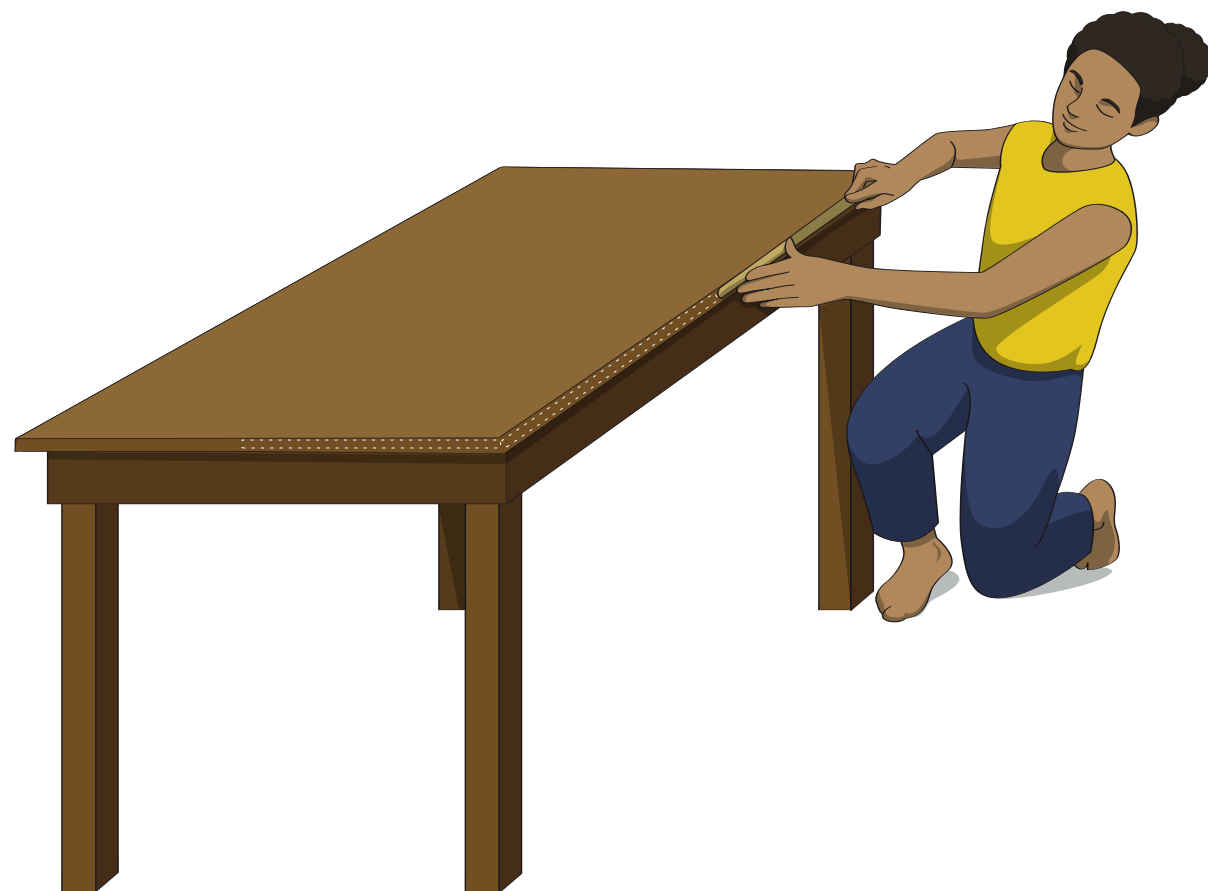
Title	Multisensory counting
Materials	Sorting objects (beans, seeds, caps)
Objective	Children practice counting
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Put together a combination of different sorting objects in a small bag or in a pile. 2. Ask your child to close his / her eyes and grab as many objects as he / she can in one hand. Keep it in one hand. 3. Ask your child to count how many objects he/ she grabbed from the bag. <p><i>Variation to make it challenging:</i> You can conduct this whole activity with your child in blindfold or with eyes closed.</p>

Activity #7 Dog Tales



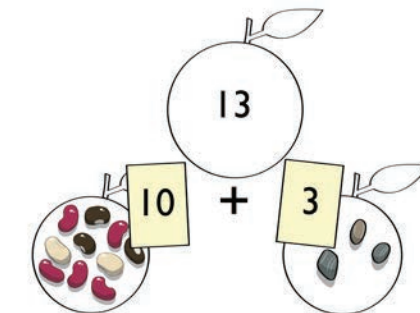
Title	Dog Tales
Materials	Sorting objects
Objective	Children practice simple operations of addition and subtraction
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare at least 20 sorting objects for your child to use in this activity. 2. Explain that you will share a story about dogs. Your child needs to keep track of how many dogs are in the story with the help of the sorting objects. 3. Read the story below: <p>Ella was walking in the park. She saw two dogs by the bench. <i>(ask your child to get two objects to represent these dogs)</i></p> <p>Three more dogs come by. They sniff each other a little but they don't fight. How many dogs are in the park now?</p> <p>Ella sees four more dogs by the tree. How many dogs are in the park now?</p> <p>One dog chases a cat and runs outside of the park. Take away one object. How many dogs are in the park now?</p> <p>On her way out of the park, Ella saw three more dogs. How many dogs were still in the park when Ella left?</p> <p><i>Variation:</i> Make the story as long or as short as you think is needed. Check on how interested your child is. You can also create your own story. Play around with adding and subtracting 'dogs' in the story.</p>

Activity #8 How many sticks fit?



Title	How many sticks fit?
Materials	Sticks or strings
Objective	Children practice measuring things
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give your child a stick (or a string depending on what you have). 2. Ask your child to measure how many sticks will fit in on one side of the table. Your child will need to use the stick as a measuring stick. 3. Choose one side of the table as the length that your child will measure. 4. Your child will start from one end and lay the stick against it and carefully turn the stick so that it covers the next space. 5. Count the number of sticks that were needed to reach from one end of the table to the other. <p><i>Variation to make it easier:</i> If your child has trouble turning the stick, use many sticks and lay them out in a similar line. This way your child only needs to count the sticks.</p> <p><i>Variation to make it more challenging:</i> Ask your child to try measuring other objects in your home like the floor space of a room. Compare things with each other by asking, <i>which was longer – the side of the table or the side of the cabinet?</i></p>

Activity #9 What's a Berry Model?



Title	What's a berry model?
Materials	Blank berry model, Number cards & sorting objects
Objective	Children practice simple operations of addition & subtraction
Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare a blank berry model, the number cards from 1 to 10 and at least 20 sorting objects. 2. Explain that you will show a diagram that looks like a berry so it's called the "berry model". It will help your child think about how numbers are made up of other numbers. 3. Ask your child to place the number card 10 at the top circle or "top berry". 4. Ask your child to also put the corresponding amount of objects beside the number card 10. 5. Underneath, there are two circles or "two berries". Ask your child to choose the number card 6 and place it in one berry. 6. Ask your child to put the corresponding amount of objects (6) in that berry. 7. Now ask, "If this berry has 6 objects, how many more objects do we need to have the same number as the top berry?" (The answer is 4) Guide your child by counting the objects together. 8. When your child understands that 4 objects are needed, ask to put those objects on the last berry. Put the number card 4, too. 9. Explain that this means 10 is the "whole" and the other numbers (6 & 4) are the parts. It can also be understood this way: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. $6 + 4 = 10$ b. $4 + 6 = 10$ c. $10 - 6 = 4$ d. $10 - 4 = 6$ 10. Try it out again. This time, using 10 as the top berry, ask your child to draw a card from the number cards and work from there. <p><i>Variation to make it more challenging:</i> If your child is comfortable with higher numbers, increase the highest number and adjust your number cards and objects. Also, if your child is ready for equations, you can use the berry model to introduce simple equations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. $\underline{\quad} = 6 + 4$ b. $10 = \underline{\quad} + 4$ c. $10 = 6 + \underline{\quad}$

Activity #10 Playing with Building Blocks



Acknowledgements:

https://www.legofoundation.com/media/1070/sixbricks_ok_print.pdf

Franco, Betsy. Counting Caterpillars and Other Math Poems (Grades K-2). Scholastic.

Title	Playing with Building Blocks
Materials	Blocks of different sizes and shapes
Objective	Children practice measurement of sizes and balance
Directions	<p>Blocks are also helpful for you to do many activities with your child. You can make them yourselves from boxes, toilet paper rolls, egg cartons and other materials. Here are suggested activities you can choose from. You can create your own activities when you get used to it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask children to build the highest tower they can build using a combination of different shapes and sizes. • Ask children to use a combination of different shapes and sizes to build an animal or a creature of their choice. They can also try building cars. • Ask children to create their own town using the blocks. • Build a simple tower and ask your child to copy what you've made. Take turns copying each other's tower. You can make this more challenging by hiding the original creation so the other needs to build their copy from memory.

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