



# PARENT-CHILD HOME PROGRAM

A PROVEN BEGINNING FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS SINCE 1965

These tips can help enhance the learning opportunities through play.

- Choose toys that encourage imagination and conversation. Avoid toys that “talk” – you and your child should be the ones talking.
- Choose toys that encourage problem-solving. Puzzles and shape sorters are examples of toys that involve problem-solving.
- Choose toys that can grow with your child. For example, a block wagon can be pulled and pushed by a very young child, and the blocks can be used for building when the child is developmentally ready.
- Choose toys that build your child’s math skills, and include tasks such as counting, sorting, and sequencing. Pegboards and wooden beads to lace are examples of such toys.
- Children should have opportunities to develop their small motor skills with toys such as blocks or lacing cards, and they should also have opportunities to develop their large motor skills, with plenty of occasions to climb, throw, run, and jump.
- Always be aware of safety issues, and make sure a toy is safe for a child under the age of 3. The label on the toy will indicate this. Be aware of choking and suffocation hazards.
- Ask your child open-ended questions about his/her play, such as “why did the block tower fall down?” or “which block do you think will balance next on your tower?” Give your child time to answer and respect his/her point of view.
- Sometimes children are focused on the task at hand and don’t feel like talking during play. You can still introduce talk into the play by narrating what your child is doing.
- Provide developmentally appropriate games, where your child has the opportunity to learn skills such as taking turns or following directions.
- Provide just enough assistance so your child doesn’t get too frustrated. Don’t expect too much, but don’t expect too little either.
- Choose toys and activities that have a tangible goal, such as completing a puzzle or matching the cards to a game board.
- Encourage imaginative play by providing props, such as dress-up clothes or a toy cash register. Listen to your child tell a story about her/his play.
- Let your child have many opportunities to experience “I did it!” moments. Praise your child for a job well done.
- Incorporate play into everyday tasks, such as setting the table or sorting the laundry. Keep the conversation going during these tasks.
- Above all, show your child that you are having fun too.