



Learning at Home

The mission of **Cambridge Week of the Young Child** is to celebrate the joys of childhood by providing learning opportunities that inspire creativity, ignite passion, and spark excitement for all who educate young children.

The Week of the Young Child is an annual event, sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The purpose is to focus public attention on young children, their families, and the programs that serve them. For more information on the history of the event click [here](#).

Locally, the week is sponsored by the **Birth to 3rd Grade Partnership**, a collaboration between the City of Cambridge and Cambridge Public Schools. An exciting week of virtual professional learning opportunities, interactive workshops and networking events are planned. For more information and registration information click [here](#).

Can't join us for any of our virtual workshops or family events? No problem! Engage in **Cambridge Week of the Young Child** by enjoying time with your child doing any one of the fun activities we have organized for you here!



Each of these activities are meant to bring joy and fun into your day! There is no right or wrong way to do any of these activities. Simply find a moment in your day, and enjoy some stress free, no expectation for the outcome, time with your kid(s)!

Let your child take the lead and see what happens! Support them, but try hard not to take over. Let them use their hands, feet, and their five senses to engage with each activity...the idea is to create a happy moment together.

All of these activities use items from around your home. You don't need fancy toys or materials to create joy with your kids, and these are some tips for how to use everyday items to engage your child.

Music Monday, April 12, 2021

Put some music on, explore the music with your child, and maybe have a dance party! You can explore the music with them by adjusting the volume, stopping the music, and having them freeze what they are doing. Try music with no words, or music that you don't normally play around the house.

Infants/toddlers: With infants who are not mobile, move their legs and arms to the music and sing with them! Toddlers can engage with the music in so many ways. Put out things from your home for instruments and let the child explore them while they are listening to the music. Pots, pans, buckets turned upside down, spoons, and small jars filled with things that make noise (fill a small container with uncooked beans, a small jar of sprinkles or pepper corns) all make great instruments!

Preschoolers: Using common household items like above, play the music as your child explores. Engage your child by asking them to find items that can be used as an instrument in your home...so many things can!

To learn more...

- [10 Ways Babies Learn When We Sing to Them](#)
- [Playing with Music at Home](#)



Tasty Tuesday, April 13, 2021

Share and explore food together! Perhaps do it a little differently than you typically would share a meal. For example, spread a blanket on the floor and eat together rather than sitting at the table.

Infants/Toddlers: With babies that are not eating solid foods yet, involve them in what you are eating. When they are awake and alert, eat with them! Describe what you are eating in great detail: sweet, salty, tangy...let them hear the crunching and see you enjoying what you eat!

With children who are eating solid food, explore a food together...even something you eat all the time. Engage them in the preparation and talk about what the food is before you eat it. For example, if eating an orange, touch it first, describing the skin, letting them roll it, and then peel it. Section it out and then enjoy it together.

Preschoolers: There is so much you can do with preschoolers and food! Pick a simple recipe and cook or bake with them. Keep it simple, talk them through all the steps, let them help measure out ingredients, counting as you go, and give them time and space to explore while you guide them. Of course if you are using heat, or sharp objects in the recipe, be extra careful.

To learn more...

- [Buon Appetito: Sharing a Love of Food with Infants and Toddlers](#)
- [Baking Math for Families and Young Children](#)



Work Together Wednesday, April 14, 2021

Play is how children learn and can be used as an opportunity to learn how to work together with others. Engage in a play-based activity (or any daily activity) with your child where you have to work together!

Infants/Toddlers: Bring your infant with you as you do house work. Wear your baby in a carrier or sling when at home while they are alert and awake, or have them in an infant seat as you do the activity. Describe the work you are doing in great detail and talk to them about how much they are helping you! Folding laundry with a cooing baby is much more enjoyable than doing it alone! Make sure the chore you choose has no pressure to finish it immediately so that you can follow your baby's lead if they get fussy or tired.

Toddlers often enjoy doing household tasks together, and there are also many play-based activities that you can do with them. Keep it simple. For example, rolling a ball back and forth introduces the idea of working together, as it takes collaboration and turn-taking for the game to work. Involve other people in your home, your pets, and even some dolls or stuffed animals to introduce the idea of working together.

Preschoolers: Build a fort together! Using the furniture, blankets, pillows and cushions, work together to construct something. If you've done this activity before, try to do it differently this time. Use another room, different furniture, or consider building one outside! Emphasize working together to construct your structure. Let your child take the lead and talk through the times when parts collapse and when they stay up. Enjoy the finished product together! Cozy up with your child and read a book, enjoy a snack, or watch a short video together.

To learn more...

- [Five Essentials to Meaningful Play](#)
- [At-Home Activities That Showcase the Country's Diversity](#)



Artsy Thursday, April 15, 2021

Create something interesting and beautiful with your child. Talk about shapes, colors, textures, and more while exploring all of the elements of art in our world. You don't have to be creative or "artsy". Take this time to model exploring the materials you have and practice being creative.

Infants/Toddlers: With infants you can model the process of art making; letting them observe while you talk through what you are doing, and allowing them to manipulate materials as you see appropriate. Use what you have. It can be as simple as drawing something with a pen or pencil, using markers, or even paint. Consider using household items (boxes, cans, recyclables) or rocks to make a sculpture.

Toddlers can start exploring more materials with you! Allow them to use some of the simple materials above, or try "painting" with water! All you need are cotton balls (or something similar), water, and some colored paper. Show them what happens when you dip the cotton ball in water and then dab it on the paper. Now let them try! Make sure to cover surfaces you are working on if using messy materials, or take the fun outside! Also ensure that materials are not choking hazards and/or pay close attention as you are exploring with them.

Preschoolers: Go on a hunt around your home or outside and collect items that could be made into a collage. Using glue or tape, affix the items to a piece of paper, fabric, paper towel, or paper plate to create a piece of art. Create a display for their creations. Consider making a space in your home for an art gallery where they can hang up their work and share it with others.



To learn more...

- [Meaningful Art Projects Parents Can Fit Into a Busy Day](#)
- [NAEYC – Supporting the Development of Creativity](#)

Family Friday, April 16, 2021

Use pictures to talk to your children about family, friends, and loved ones. This can be a great way to include family who might not be part of the child's every day! This is also good way to share photos of ourselves or loved ones when we were children.

Infants/Toddlers: Make family puppets. With photos you are ok cutting up or copies of photos printed on regular paper, cut out the figure or face, and affix it to a popsicle stick (you can also use a plastic spoon or a piece of cardboard). Use the puppets to talk about the loved ones, have them interact with each other, describe them, and talk about how they resemble your child.

Many of us don't have physical pictures that we are willing to cut up or don't have access to a printer. Instead, pull up a picture of a loved up on your phone, show it to the child, and then looking in the mirror together talk about the loved one. Is there a family resemblance? Are there features you all share (skin tone, shape of your eyes, nose and ears, your hair)?

Preschoolers: Stretch out the above activity and follow your preschoolers lead! Let them produce the puppet show. Get them involved in the show by encouraging them to play a part. For example, dress up like a loved one. Even a hat or scarf that reminds them of a loved one can sometimes be enough to get into character. If the loved ones are available, get them involved in the play. Try incorporating loved ones from near and far over video.

To learn more...

- [NAEYC for families- Am I Really My Child's First Teacher?](#)
- [Celebrate Your Child's Multilingualism!](#)

