

PLAY & LEARN AT HOME

EASY LEARNING AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES TO TRY AT HOME WITH LITTLE ONES

LEARNING ON THE GO

Painting builds fine (small) motor skills in our fingers, hands and wrists and gross (big) motor skills in our arms, backs and necks. Children will need to grasp a pencil and control where it goes when they're writing, and that means building up all those muscles!

Painting develops hand-eye coordination and visual tracking, too. A child's eyes must follow the movement of the brush across the page, training the eyes to follow words across a page when reading.



Try painting with unusual brushes! Smaller objects will encourage your child to use their thumb and first finger (a pincer grasp), which is a step toward holding a pencil

correctly. It also makes for an interesting sensory experience and will give you lots to talk about.

Try painting with:

- Cotton balls
- Sponge pieces
- Bath loofah
- Strips of cloth
- Bubble wrap
- Pipe cleaners
- Q-tips
- Cut up toilet roll
- Feathers
- Crepe paper

Use clothespins or tongs to hold the object and make an easy handle. Squeezing also helps grow hand strength!

No paint? No problem! Try painting outside with water. You can paint on sidewalks, on the side of the house, or on the fence! Best of all? NO MESS.

FAMILY PLACE

Background knowledge is one of the most important things a child needs to be ready for a lifetime of learning. It's everything a person knows or understands about the world and how it works. The more a child knows about a broad range of ideas and the more words they know, the easier it will be for them to learn to read and understand and process new information.

Build your child's background knowledge by reading, talking, playing and experiencing the world! Try these outdoor activities to build background knowledge:

- **I Spy** – "I spy with my little eye something that is green." Can you find something outside that is green? Knowing a lot of color names is part of background knowledge. For children under 3, take along an item that is the same color you are looking for.
- **Color Bingo** – This is great for older children. Choose 3-8 colors to look for. You can even create a bingo card before you go.
- **I Spy Water** – Talk about all the different places we can find water! Raindrops, puddles, streams, gulches, lakes and rivers. What about pools, hoses or sprinklers? Make connections and learn new words! Other versions use trees and bushes or bugs and birds.



- **Toy Wash** – Put soapy water in a bucket or bin and get to work! What happens to the bubbles over time? Where does the dirt go? Is this like a real car wash? Is this how we give baths to real babies?

LITTLE EXPLORERS

Science is a way of thinking, observing, experimenting, making predictions, sharing discoveries, asking questions and wondering how things work.

A great way to get outside and use science skills is to take a nature walk with your children. Encourage them to pick up items in nature and collect them in a bag. Practice counting, create hypotheses about the things you see and look at the different designs and shapes that you find in nature. Bring along binoculars and magnifying glasses to deepen your investigations.



Let them discover and pick up whatever they'd like – within reason of course! You'll be surprised by what they notice. It's quite fun to see their creativity while exploring! On our walk, we found rocks, leaves, pinecones, sticks, flowers and tree bark. When you get home, encourage the children to notice the shape, texture, colors, and weight of the object, noting fine detail if possible.



Try this! Use a clothespin to make each item into a paintbrush. Let them choose which items they'd like to use. Dip it straight into the paint and watch the creation begin!

Using hands-on art is a great way to extend learning. Talk about the textures, lines and imprints the nature items make. To increase curiosity and provide even more opportunities for learning, check out books about nature that interest your child!

READY, SET, KINDERGARTEN!

This volume experiment lets children compare amounts and think about what will happen next. They're dabbling with the scientific method and developing their critical thinking skills.

Head to your kitchen and take out different sizes of bowls, cups, measuring cups and spoons, pans, etc. Fill up some of the containers with water and let your child get exploring! Encourage them to pour water into and out of the dishes, asking open-ended questions along the way.

- Which is more?
- What will happen when we add more water to this cup?
- Do you think this cup of water will fit into this cup?
- Why?
- Tell me about...
- What do you think is happening?
- What could we do to fix this problem?
- How could we do it differently next time?

Allow at 5 to 10 seconds for your child to answer. If they're not interested, save the questions for later and let them free play for a little while.

The next time you're cooking, ask your child to help. Let them use their own set of measuring spoons and measure out ingredients. They'll be helping and learning!

For even more resources, or to talk to an early literacy librarian, visit arapahoelibraries.org/0-5 or call **303-LIBRARY** (303-542-7279).