

PLAY & LEARN AT HOME

JULY 2020



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

LEARNING ON THE GO

Singing songs helps children break words down into their smaller components. They can begin to learn about rhyme, syllables, beginning and ending sounds because we slow down our speech when we sing. **Shaking a shaker** or other noisemaker helps them feel the rhythm of language even more because they are learning with their whole body. Also, holding a shaker helps build fine motor (small finger muscle) skills that will be needed for gripping a pencil or pen to write, and shaking the shaker is a gross motor (large muscle) builder.



If you don't have a shaker at home, make your own! Use an empty medicine bottle for a quick child-proof shaker. Fill it with whatever small objects you have around that make a good noise! You can also use two plastic or paper cups taped together, and empty water bottle or a small plastic container – but be sure that whatever you put inside is large enough that it won't be dangerous for baby if they break the shaker open and put it in their mouth!

 **Here's a fun shaker song you can use!**

Shake it to the east, and shake it to the west,
Shake it all around, and then you take a rest.
Shake your shaker up, shake your shaker down,
Shake it, shake it, shake it, then you settle down.

FAMILY PLACE

Did you know that music can help build math readiness? When children react to steady beats, rhythm and melody through clapping, rocking, dancing and marching, they are experiencing mathematical concepts! Let's explore this with just one simple but fun activity - marching. You can march with or without rhythm instruments, drums, (pots/pans/bowls with spoons work), and you can march inside or outside!



Encourage your child to hear and find the steady **beat** by clapping or drumming while they march. This sets the stage for developing one-to-one correspondence (knowing that each object in a set gets only one count). You can play with the math concept of "more" by stomping once or twice and then asking your toddler to stomp *more* than that. Try marching fast and slow to play with *opposites*.

Rhythm sets the pulse of music in a continuing pattern like a 1, 2, 3 waltz or a swing jazz rhythm. When children play with rhythm and start to recognize **melodies** (tunes), they are recognizing patterns (things like notes that repeat in a logical way). Patterns help children learn to make predictions, to understand what comes next and to make logical connections - all early math skills that help get them ready for school. Try: Sing and march four steps, clap twice. Repeat.

Of course, marching is a good physical activity, too. So, turn on the tunes and march along!

LITTLE EXPLORERS

Young children use math every day! They compare sizes of toys and portions of food, their own height to another's, the weights of two pumpkins, and the lengths of toy trains. They also begin to develop the vocabulary of **measurement** and **comparison**, using terms like *longer, shorter, taller, bigger, smaller, wider, heavier, and lighter*. When you use a measuring tape and talk about length, individual numbers, and compare distances, it helps children understand that numbers have meaning.

A fun way to create a memorable measuring experience is to use any kind of measuring tape, a yard stick, or anything you have at home and try leap frogging! My 3-year-olds and I tried this activity outside using chalk to mark each frog jump. You can adapt this activity any way that works best for you!

Leap Frog Activity

1. Start by encouraging the child to bend down to their feet and use their whole body to create a "leapfrog" jump.
2. Mark where the child started to where the child ended. Keep leaping until you have several leapfrogs marked.
3. Use the measuring tool and use those measurement and comparison words like, "You jumped longer this time than the first time! You jumped 20 inches the first time and 22 inches this time!" Show the child the numbers on the measuring tape and talk about smaller and bigger numbers.
4. **Optional:** Mark the longest leapfrog and write the measurement!



READY, SET, KINDERGARTEN!

Hand clapping games require **concentration** and **team work** to make the games successful. Learning to cooperate and taking turns takes lots of practice! When children take turns and work together to achieve a goal, they become aware that small actions can add to a greater purpose, building kindness and a sense of **empathy**, two important skills that are necessary for kindergarten and beyond!

Here are simple handclapping games you can play together. Use these songs or make up your own!

Mary Had a Little Lamb

Mary had a little lamb,

Little lamb, little lamb.

Mary had a little lamb,

Its fleece was white as snow.

Clap your hands on your thighs

Clap your hands together

Clap each other's hands

Repeat

Double Double This This

Double double, this this,

Double double, that that,

Double this, double that,

Double double, this that!

Double = clap own hands together

This = clap each other's hands palms facing

That = clap each other's hands back facing

You can also demonstrate working together with your shakers! Shake out a simple rhythm and ask your child to repeat it back to you. Can they make their own rhythm with their shaker?

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