

Problem Solving

Activities to Help Your Child Grow and Learn



Your child's attention span is growing. She can attend to an activity she enjoys without supervision. She is starting to sort according to shape, size, and length and can match items that look alike. She is learning how things go together on the basis of function. For example, she can point to "things for drawing" in a picture of multiple objects. Your child loves to read stories and is learning how to make up stories or story endings by herself. Wild stories and exaggerations are common.

Riddle, Riddle

Tell your child to use his brain and solve these riddles. "Can you name an animal that gives us something to drink?" (cow) "Can you think of something that flies but doesn't have wings?" (flag, rocket, kite) "Can you think of something that rolls but doesn't have wheels?" (ball, orange) If your child can't think of an answer, give hints until he gets it. Now, ask your child to make up a riddle for you.

Grouping and Sorting

Gather together a lot of little things in a small container: paper clips, rubber bands, barrettes, or odds and ends. Talk with your child about ways to group the things together. Sort rubber bands by color, size, or length. Line up five items, and point to each one as you count. Now let your child try.

Waiting Game

As you wait for something, count together to see how long it will take to happen. When you are on the bus waiting for the light to change to green, count how long it takes to change. Your child will learn how to count, and it may help her become more patient.

Feely Bag

Gather small familiar objects from outside or around your house and put them in a paper bag. Try a small leaf, a baseball, or your child's toothbrush. Let your child reach into the bag and pick an item without looking. When your child's hand is in the bag touching the item, ask him to guess what it is. Help him if he has a difficult time naming the item.

Number and Letter Search

Play number and letter searches at the store. Encourage your child to find numbers or letters on walls, pictures, and signs. When she spots one, say, "You found the number 5. Good for you!" Point out numbers or single letters of the alphabet. She can start to learn the sounds of letters. "You found an A. It makes an 'ah' sound. Aaapple...apple!"

What Comes Next?

Make a simple repeating pattern with your child with small toys, blocks, utensils, pasta, or shoes. Line up items to start the pattern. Have him help you finish it. Encourage your child to complete the pattern and help if he gets stuck: "This pattern starts with a shoe, then a block, then a noodle. What do you think comes next?"

Notes:



Don't Forget! Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety.