

# LEARNING AT HOME

## EASY TIPS FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

### TEACH EARLY MATH



Use any objects you may have in or around the home (e.g. cups, rocks, vegetables, etc.). You can count, add, subtract, and/or group items. A parent or sibling can model the activity for the children first, then complete the activity together, and finally ask the children to do it on their own. This can all be done while a parent completes household tasks such as cooking or cleaning.

### TALK

No matter the age of your children, talk to them often and encourage them to speak with you, friends, and other family members. Narrate what you're doing around the house (e.g. "now I'm placing five cups on the table", "now I'm adding oil to the pan", etc.). Encourage your children to use a wide vocabulary. Be sure to listen too—they may share important information about their needs/safety.



### PROBLEM SOLVE



Sometimes, rather than telling your children what you would like them to do, try asking your children (of any age) what they would do to solve a problem (e.g. "The door keeps blowing open from the wind. How do you think we should solve this problem?"). The problem can be real or imaginary—meaning the children's problem solving could be genuinely helpful to you as the caregiver.

### BE CURIOUS

Ask your children questions about almost anything, and whenever possible (e.g. "Why do you think your sister is upset?" "What do I do after I peel the potatoes?"). Especially during difficult times, asking questions about how they are feeling is important. Encourage your children to ask questions too, giving them thoughtful responses when possible. At times, encourage them to try to come up with their own answer before responding.



### TELL STORIES



Tell your children stories (from books or from memory) and ask your children to tell stories to you or other family members. If you don't have books at home, ask your nearest school or library to borrow some or share books with neighboring families. If you have a smart phone, you can access hundreds of books virtually, via apps/websites such as those at [booksmart.worldreader.org](http://booksmart.worldreader.org) or [digitallibrary.io](http://digitallibrary.io).

### CREATE THINGS

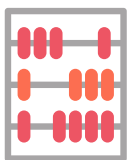
Challenge your children to build or fix something (e.g. a broken toy, a mouse trap, a play house made of sticks, etc.). Other forms of creation such as music, dance, drawing, etc. all develop important parts of the brain, encourage creativity, and promote problem solving skills.



ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILDREN TO DO ONE OF THESE TODAY!

# LEARNING AT HOME: THE WHY

FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN



## WHY EARLY MATH?

Teaching your children early math helps them to learn to count, identify numbers, create patterns with objects, sort, add, and subtract. These important skills set children up for success in math in later grades. What's more, research shows that early math skills also help children to learn to read. Additionally, counting will help children with home activities and, later, will help them to get and keep a job.

## WHY TALK?

Talking to your children builds their vocabulary and helps them to learn from the way you tackle problems. Sing, read, and tell stories to your children in the language spoken at home. Encouraging your children to talk to you about how they're feeling helps them to build their emotional intelligence and gives you the information you need to support them through challenging times.



## WHY PROBLEM SOLVE?

Encouraging your children to solve problems will help them to think critically and solve more complicated problems later in life. They can also solve real problems around the home, meaning they can both be helpful to caregivers and feel like a contributing member of the household.

## WHY BE CURIOUS?

Asking your children questions and encouraging them to ask questions in return teaches them how to be curious, which is essential to life-long learning. Especially during difficult times, asking questions about how they're feeling can lead to better mental health and address issues early on.



## WHY TELL STORIES?

Both oral and written stories help build your children's imaginations and expose them to other cultures, people, and parts of the world. Stories help children to learn to read, sequence events, and build comprehension. Reading and telling stories develops strong, supportive relationships between children and parents.

## WHY CREATE THINGS?

Children develop creativity and imagination when encouraged to create. It can also serve as an outlet and opportunity for expression for children, particularly during challenging times. Children can build things that solve problems in the home, which develops problem-solving skills while also helping the caregiver.



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# EARLY MATH AT HOME

## EASY TIPS FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN



### COUNT

Count items encountered in every day tasks such as cooking and cleaning (e.g. number of potatoes put in water, number of seeds in a common fruit, number of sticks found on a walk, etc.). First count the items for your children, then ask them to count with you. Finally, ask them to count items for you.

### SORT

Ask your children to sort objects found in and around the home. Items can be sorted by shape (e.g. Can you find me things in the shape of a circle? How many circles did you find?), size (e.g. Can you put big sticks for the fire in this pile, and little sticks in this pile? How many sticks did you find?), color (e.g. Can you find me something red? How many red things did you find?). Then you can ask the children to put the items back where they found them!



### ADD

Start by making sure your children can count objects. Then you can put one additional item in the pile, and ask them to count again. For example, you have four potatoes. Have your children count them and tell you how many potatoes you have. Then place one more potato, and ask them to count again. They should tell you there are now five potatoes. At first, you can tell them that you added one potato. As they learn, you can begin to ask them how many you added.

### SUBTRACT

Start by making sure your children can count objects. Then remove one item from the pile, and ask them to count again. For example, you have four potatoes. Have your children count them and tell you how many potatoes you have. Then remove one potato, and ask them to count again. They should tell you there are now three potatoes. At first, you can tell them that you subtracted one potato. As they learn, you can ask them how many you subtracted.



### PLAY WITH SHAPES & SIZES

Ask your children to sort by shape or size. You can also have them order objects from smallest to largest or create patterns with objects (e.g. square, circle, triangle, square, circle, triangle). They can cut their own shapes from newspaper to develop their hand-eye coordination or group bottles by shape and size.

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# TALKING AT HOME

## EASY TIPS FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN



### NARRATE

When you're with your children, try to talk about everything you're doing (whether you're around the house, in the market, etc.). This may feel awkward at first, but will feel more natural with time. This encourages curiosity, helps your children to learn from your thought processes and vocabulary, and builds their own vocabulary and critical thinking skills.

### TALK ABOUT FEELINGS

In many cultures, talking about feelings with a child (your own and theirs) is uncommon and may seem unnatural at first. However, it is important for children to learn how to identify, process, and express feelings (both positive and negative) from their parents' example. Asking your children about how they're feeling is especially important during challenging times.



### ASK QUESTIONS

Ask questions about what your children are doing, how they're feeling, what they did that day, what they're learning at school, etc. Rather than answering your children's questions right away, ask them to think of their own answer. For example, if your children ask you "why is the sky blue?", ask them "why do you think it's blue?". This helps to build their critical thinking skills.

### ENCOURAGE QUESTIONS

Encourage your children to ask questions. This helps your children to take an active role in their own learning, build their curiosity, strengthen critical thinking skills, and develop important communication skills. Welcoming your children's questions also helps to build trust and improve relationships between children and their parents, siblings, grandparents, and other family members.



### ENCOURAGE TALK WITH PEERS

Talk between children and their peers is just as important as talk between parents and children. Encourage your children to talk with their siblings, friends, neighbors, and other community members to develop their skills in relationship-building, communication, and much more.



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# PROBLEM SOLVING AT HOME

## EASY TIPS FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

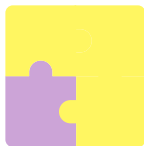


### FIX A PROBLEM

When possible (and safe), ask your children to fix a problem, instead of fixing it for them. For instance, if there is a problem between siblings, you can ask them what they think they should do to fix the situation. You can also ask your children to fix a problem around the house, such as a door that always bangs into a wall. This technique will build your children's problem-solving skills. Plus, they could fix something that is genuinely helpful to parents.

### WORK ON A PUZZLE

If you have a puzzle, work on it with your children or encourage them to complete it. Try to make sure it is [age appropriate](#)—if it's too difficult, children can get frustrated and be discouraged from participating in such activities in the future. If you don't have access to puzzles, you can check with a local school, library, or neighbor. You can also [make puzzles](#) by cutting or ripping pieces of cardboard and other common, easily-accessible materials.



### PLAY GAMES

There are plenty of games like [Tic-tac-toe](#), [hangman](#), and others that require no more than a pen or pencil and something to write on. Games are not only fun, but they also help to entertain children and keep them out of trouble. Additionally, they help your children to be creative and think critically.

### QUESTION DURING PLAY

Ask questions while your children play. For example:

- What do you think made the brick tower fall down?
- If we build it again, what can we change so that it won't fall down next time?
- Is there a better way we can do it?
- Did that work? If not, let's try another solution.



### QUESTION DURING STORIES

Ask questions to build comprehension. For example:

- Why do you think the bear did that?
- Do you think his friend will be happy? Why?
- What would you do if you were the bear?
- If the bear went through the mountains instead of the river, what do you think would have happened?

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# CURIOSITY AT HOME

## EASY TIPS FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN



### ASK QUESTIONS

Get curious about your children. Ask questions about what they like and dislike, how they're feeling, what they did that day, etc. It is good to ask children questions that could have many answers, like "Why do you think the fire is hot" or "Where do you think ants go at night?". These types of questions help them to build their critical thinking skills.

### ENCOURAGE QUESTIONS

Ask your children to get curious with you too. Encouraging your children to ask questions helps them to take an active role in their own learning. You can encourage questions during any daily activity. For example, when the family is having a meal together, you can have your children ask the other family members "How was your day? Tell me about it." When you are cooking, you can say, "I am cooking beans. What do you want to know about beans? Do you know where beans grow?"



### QUESTIONS DURING HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES

Invite your children to participate in your normal household activities, such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for younger children. Ask them questions like, "Why do you think it takes so long for the pot of water to boil?" "Why does the floor get dirty?" or "Why do you think the baby is crying—what is she trying to tell us?"

### QUESTION DURING PLAY

Encourage curiosity during play by asking questions. For example:

- Who won the race?
- How could you be faster next time?
- Did you have fun even though you didn't win?
- What other games could you play that involve running?
- Does running make you happy? What else makes you happy?



### QUESTION DURING STORIES

Get curious while telling/reading stories to your children by asking questions to build comprehension. For example:

- What do you think this story is about? (when looking at the cover of the book)
- Who do you think we are going to learn about in this story?
- What do you think is going to happen next?
- Could she/he have done that in a different way?

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# STORY TELLING AT HOME

## EASY TIPS FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

### TELL STORIES



Tell your children stories and ask them to tell stories to you or other family members. Stories could be passed down through the family or made up using the imagination. Tell stories in a simple and dramatic way to help your children understand. Add actions, dialogue, and sounds to the story. Repeat stories several times each week to help children learn. Ask older children to tell the stories back to you.

### READ AND WRITE STORIES

Read stories with your children and encourage them to write their own. If a parent is unable to read or is short on time, ask an older sibling to read to or with the children. If you don't have books at home, ask your nearest school or library to borrow some or share books with neighboring families. If you have a smart phone, you can access hundreds of books virtually, and for free, via apps/websites such as those found at [worldreader.org](http://worldreader.org) or [digitallibrary.io](http://digitallibrary.io).



### QUESTION DURING STORIES



Asking questions during stories (either oral or written), helps your children to build comprehension skills. Examples:

- Why do you think the bear did that?
- Do you think his friend will be happy? Why?
- What would you do if you were the bear?
- If the bear went through the mountains instead of the river, what do you think would have happened?

### SING SONGS

Singing songs is a fun way to practice story telling at home. Songs help children to think creatively, develop musically, and learn patterns. - Use songs that are simple and easy to understand. Add actions to the song, teaching the children to join in. Sing the song in a dramatic way to encourage the children to participate. Repeat songs often to help your children to learn and sing along. Point to real-life objects that are included in the song, teaching them new words.



### ACT OUT STORIES

You and your children can act out stories too. This encourages children to use their imaginations, relate to characters, and learn to collaborate with their peers. This is also an activity that can be done with minimal supervision from parents.

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# CREATING AT HOME

## EASY TIPS FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

### BUILD SOMETHING



You don't have to have blocks at home to build something with your children. You can build anything (of course ensuring your children's safety first), such as a fort using rocks and sticks found outside, towers out of plastic cups or bottles, or a toy house out of discarded cardboard. Building using resources available around you is a fun challenge that encourages creativity and imagination. You can ask them to design their building by drawing it first, then building it and comparing what they drew to what they built.

### FIX SOMETHING

Fixing things is a great way for your children to use their critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, while solving a problem around the house. Rather than fixing a problem yourself or for your children, consider asking them to fix it themselves. For example, if a door keeps blowing open, hitting the wall and leaving a dent, the children could work to come up with a solution. This is both helpful to the parents and a fun challenge for the children.



### CREATE VISUAL ART

You can create art with your children, often without any complicated or expensive materials. You can use items from around the house or neighborhood, like leaves, nuts, sticks, food packaging, and old newspapers or magazines. Art is a healthy outlet for children to express themselves, while building their creativity, imagination, and motor skills.

### CREATE PERFORMANCE ART

Acting in plays develops children's imaginations and is a fun way to keep children occupied. This encourages children to put themselves in the characters' shoes, learn to collaborate with their peers, and get up and moving. You can tell them a story and have them practice the different roles, or ask them to make up their own story. Children love to dress up, and you can help them create costumes with hats, scarves, and blankets and belts.



### DANCE AND SING

Ask your children to write a song or make up a dance. Dancing and singing are both excellent creative outlets that can be therapeutic during difficult times. Children can often better express themselves and their feelings using song and dance. In addition to serving as an outlet, these activities require minimum supervision and keep children occupied while having fun.

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