

# Early Learning & Education PROGRAMS

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## The Art of Language

Language is a masterpiece that we begin painting from the moment we are born. From the first exchange of smiles, we toddle towards communicating with our world. With each brush-stroke of learning, images become clearer and understanding deepens. We, as educators and parents, can share our language skills with children so they in turn may grow, learn, and paint their own language masterpiece to share with the world. What a wonderful gift for us to give!

Infants use pleasure sounds and crying to communicate. Adults learn to distinguish between the "I am hungry" cries and the "I want to be held" cries pretty quickly. We smile and use simple gestures and phrases to soothe and comfort our babies. As infants grow they

begin to babble, imitate sounds, and around age one begin using single words. Our responsiveness to infants helps them start to understand the purpose of language, recognize its patterns, and practice its sounds.

Toddlers around two years old begin forming two word sentences such as "Go bye-bye" and may know fifty vocabulary words used in different combinations. This is when language really starts to grow! By age three a toddler might have two-hundred vocabulary words, and has begun to practice receptive language (understanding words and more complex sentences), expressive language (using more complex sounds and vocabulary), communication skills, and knowledge.

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## BOOST YOUR QUALITY

Boost the quality of language learning for children by choosing books that explore their interests, support developmental needs, and represent their culture. Create activities that explore a book more deeply. Look for ways to expand quality in your program by reflecting on these questions:

- What opportunities do you provide for children to hear and see a variety of languages and means of expression in the learning environment?
- When can children use books as resources and see you modeling this behavior in the classroom?



*Source: California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume I by the California Department of Education (Sacramento, 2010)*



# Create an Outdoor Classroom

Creating an outdoor classroom provides children with the opportunity to move while they learn and grow. Physical development milestones such as basic movement, perceptual motor skills, and active physical play are easier to practice outside, and there is the added benefit of learning experience that involve all developmental domains.

Develop your outdoor classroom slowly. Use materials that are easy to store and move. You can use sheets or blankets to define space. Store toys in plastic totes you can stack and move. Larger equipment can be stored in rolling trash cans. Use short, foldable, plastic fences to define areas for infants and toddlers. Here are some more ideas:

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Set up an area on the grass for preschool aged children to race or kick balls. Design an obstacle course for infants using tunnels and large pillows. School age children can jump rope, play hop-scotch, or basketball.

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL

During play, children will naturally express feelings, negotiate, compromise, and practice self-control. If you are interacting and engaged with children, you can guide learning.



## LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Use a plastic wading pool as a book area. Line the pool with a blanket and add books, pillows, stuffed animals, or puppets. Provide clipboards with paper and pencils for writing.

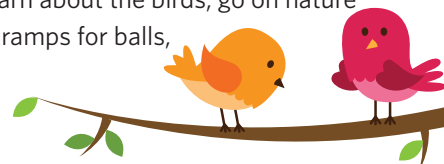


## MATHEMATICS

Use kitchen measuring tools with sensory items, encourage children to count when they jump rope, measure distances when racing, use a stop watch for keeping time, search for shapes, and build with blocks or repurposed materials.

## SCIENCE

Develop a variety of sensory experiences, plant a garden, set out bird feeders and learn about the birds, go on nature walks, measure rain, build ramps for balls, and observe clouds.



## SOCIAL STUDIES

Set up a farmer's market, post office, or flower shop (dramatic play) where children can negotiate and exchange pretend money or goods.

## CREATIVE ARTS

Create an art area where children can draw, paint, build, or sculpt, and design a space where music can be heard and played. Children can help make the musical instruments.





# Water Safety



Drowning incidents involving children under five usually occur in swimming pools, wading pools, toilets, or containers of water. A child can drown in just a couple of inches of water. It can happen quickly, it is usually silent, and brain damage takes place within three to five minutes. The good news is that there are precautions adults can take to prevent life-threatening accidents.

Seventy-five percent of children who drown are out of sight for less than five minutes. Never leave children unattended near water. If more than one adult is supervising children, then one person should be assigned to monitor water activities. If the “Water Watcher” needs to take a break, then another adult needs to take over. Caregivers who are supervising water play should be trained in CPR and first aid.



Set the stage for safety by following California’s *Title 22* regulations, available at [cclid.ca.gov](http://cclid.ca.gov), regarding covers and fences for swimming pools, and latching toilets that are not in use. Check outdoor areas for any standing water that may be present from sprinklers or rain. When engaging in water play, only use small amounts of water and monitor activities closely.

Educate children about water safety and how to call 9-1-1 in an emergency. Explain that an adult should be there when they are playing with water or swimming, and that it is safer to walk around water than it is to run. If you are taking children on a field trip to the beach, or another water location, establish safety rules with the children in advance, and ask for parent volunteers to help with supervision. Take steps to prevent drowning today!

Source: Fact Sheets for Families: Drowning, California Childcare Health Program, by Jennifer Rogers (October 2001)



# The Art of Language

When we read to infants and toddlers they begin to develop an understanding of print. They start noticing how we turn pages, and that we read a book from front cover to back cover. Toddlers will often sit with board books and turn the pages. Exposure to books at an early age helps children develop an interest in literacy and an understanding of print concepts.

Between the ages of three and five children increase their vocabulary by four-thousand words or more and use longer sentences. Preschoolers practice the following language and literacy skills: the rules of language (use, vocabulary, and grammar), concepts about print, phonological awareness (sounds of language), alphabetic and word/print recognition, comprehension and analysis of age-appropriate text, literacy interest and response, and writing strategies. We can support the development of these skills.

The most important thing we can do is be intentional. Whether it is selecting print materials, creating a writing area, telling stories, singing, modeling a love of books, or sitting with children while they play to encourage conversations, our intentionality is what makes learning meaningful. When we practice intention we are planning with specific goals in mind, utilizing what we know about child development and the skills and needs of the children in our care. So get creative and draw them in!

Make books with the children, create a listening center for recorded books and music, do circle time outside, use clip-boards with paper and pencils to draw nature outside, tell stories in other languages, ask another school to be pen pals, and let children explore language as if it were art. Most of all be passionate and intentional. As Henry David Thoreau once said, "Language is the most perfect work of art in all the world."

Source: California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume I  
by the California Department of Education (Sacramento, 2010)



## A WORLD OF WORDS

Children learn that words have a variety of purposes, that in English they read from left to right and top to bottom, and that writing involves parts such as a letter, word, or sentence. One way to help children develop these skills is to provide them with a variety of written materials to explore.

Remember that where you place books can also influence a child's understanding. For example, you might place books about rocks in the science area, song books in the music area, or a picture dictionary in the writing center. This way, children can explore the purpose of the book as well as the text itself.

Consider adding the following types of books to your learning areas: poetry, fairy tales, fables, nursery rhymes, books in other languages, reference books (dictionary, field guides, maps), sports section of the newspaper, kid-friendly magazines, picture books, board books, and story books that explore developmental domains.

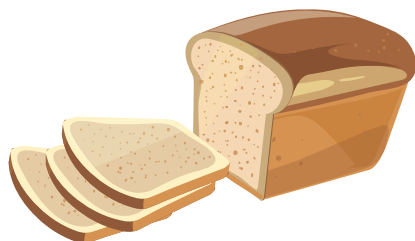


## RECIPES

### Bread in a Bag

#### Ingredients

- 3 cups flour, divided
- 1 cup warm water
- 1 package rapid rise yeast
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1-1/2 teaspoons salt
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- gallon size resealable plastic bag



#### Directions

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Mix 1 cup of flour, 1 packet of yeast, 3 tablespoons of sugar, and 1 cup of warm water in the plastic bag. Let the air out of the bag, close it, and smooch the bag with your fingers to mix. After about 10 minutes, the mixture will start to bubble and look fluffier. Mix together 1 cup of flour, 1-1/2 teaspoons of salt, and 3 tablespoons of oil. Open the bag and add these ingredients. Let most of the air out, seal it closed, and smooch the bag until the mixture is smooth. Open and add the last cup of flour. Reseal and smooch again for one to two minutes.

Take the dough out and knead it for another minute on a floured surface until it is stretchy and stops sticking to your hands. Put the dough into a greased loaf pan and let it rise for about 30 minutes. After it rises, put it in the oven and cook it for 35 minutes. It should look golden brown when it is done.

Source: <http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/cafe/breadinabag.html>



# Move that Body!

## PLAYING OUTSIDE

Playing outside helps children strengthen muscles and build balance, stamina, coordination, and spatial awareness.

### SHAKE IT OUT

**Age group:** Infants

**What you need:** Blanket and a shaded outdoor space.

**What you do:** Spread the blanket on the ground. Lay infants on their backs, and invite mobile infants to sit on the blanket. Begin to chant: "Shake, shake, shake; shake those arms." Shake your arms then repeat the chant as you help infants shake their arms. Continue the chant with more body parts.

**What they learn:** Infants begin to develop body awareness, muscle development, and learn new vocabulary.

### HEAVY LIFTING

**Age group:** Toddlers

**What you need:** Buckets, large rocks, blocks, plastic shovels, and sand.

**What you do:** Invite toddlers to fill and dump sand into buckets. Place buckets on the grass and set out large rocks or blocks for them to manipulate. Encourage toddlers to hold a bucket in each hand to experience what two different weights feel like.

**What they learn:** Toddlers use their leg, arm, and back muscles to lift and pull, improve balance and coordination, practice spatial orientation, and explore the volume and weights of different objects.



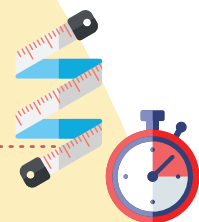
### ANKLE WALK RACE

**Age group:** Preschool

**What you need:** Masking tape, chart paper, markers, stickers, measuring tape, and a stopwatch.

**What you do:** Make a chart to keep score. You can use stickers for prizes. Use masking tape for start and finish lines. Invite children to lean forward, hold their ankles, and walk to the finish line as fast as they can while you write the results on the chart. Extend the activity by having children measure the distance of the race course, and use the stopwatch to keep time.

**What they learn:** Children use large muscles to move, practice coordination, balance, and spatial orientation. They also practice mathematical operations and measurement skills by documenting the races on the chart.



### SUMMER OLYMPICS

**Age group:** School Age

**What you need:** Paper, markers, scissors, glue, collage items, repurposed items (boxes, lids), measuring tape, stopwatch, and sports equipment such as balls, and jump ropes.

**What you do:** Invite children to organize a Summer Olympics. Help them make a list of what needs to be done. For example, design signs, decide on sports, vote on judges and judging criteria, and make scoreboards and trophies. Then they need to divide up the work. They can take turns competing, judging, keeping score, etc. Extend the activity over 1 to 2 weeks.

**What they learn:** They will exercise large muscles, work together, set goals, divide work, think creatively, and practice the math skills needed to keep score, read a stopwatch, measure distance, and make comparisons.





# Child Care Referral Policy

Children’s Home Society of California’s (CHS) Resource and Referral (R&R) Program provides child care referrals to parents within CHS’s designated service area to all parents requesting services regardless of income level or other eligibility requirements. Referrals are provided to parents based on their specific needs. CHS refers to child care centers, license-exempt child care centers, and licensed family child care homes.

In order to promote quality child care for children, CHS will:

- Assist parents seeking child care, but will not make recommendations.
- Provide written information about selecting quality child care.
- Recommend that parents visit facilities before making a decision.
- Inform parents of their right to review licensing information about providers.
- Maintain confidentiality of all information received from the parent.
- Not discriminate against any individual or group based on race, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, handicap, or income.

CHS reserves the right to discontinue referrals to a provider when:

- Licensing, law enforcement, or another regulatory agency has substantiated a complaint involving the health, safety, or personal rights of children; or actions that would impact the care or services to children.
- CHS is informed of an ongoing investigation regarding the health, safety, or personal rights of children; or actions that would impact the care or services to children.
- CHS has received a complaint regarding the health, safety, or welfare of a child and CHS is waiting for a response from the local licensing agency regarding the results of the complaint.
- The provider has been issued a probationary license or a corrective action plan.

CHS will notify the provider in writing when it is determined that CHS will discontinue referrals to the provider because of one of the above items.

## ABOUT CHS

For 125 years, Children’s Home Society of California (CHS) has adapted to the changing needs of children and families. Since 1891, CHS has worked diligently to protect our community’s children and strengthen their families through diverse programs and services.

At CHS, we view a child not in isolation, but in the context of each family’s health, stability, and resources. We believe that families are fundamentally strong and resilient. The mission of CHS is to reach out to children and families at risk with a range of services to ensure every child the opportunity to develop within a safe, healthy, and secure environment.

Therefore, CHS provides a variety of services to children and families in California and nationwide, working to improve their quality of life by offering vital information, education and resource services, and child care assistance.

CHS also serves as an expert resource for childcare providers, other social service agencies, and government agencies at the local, state, and national level. To learn more about CHS and resources available to you, please visit our website at [www.chs-ca.org](http://www.chs-ca.org).

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If you would like additional copies of this newsletter to share with parents or other child care providers, please visit our website at [www.chs-ca.org/for-providers/provider-newsletter](http://www.chs-ca.org/for-providers/provider-newsletter).



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