

Parenting News & Views



CARS AND HEATSTROKE

Children who fall asleep in a car seat are quiet and easily forgotten, especially if the adult is distracted, or going somewhere that is not part of the normal routine. That is why an average of thirty eight children a year die from heatstroke caused by being left in a car. *Safe Kids Worldwide* recommends that you **ACT**:

- **A:** Avoid heatstroke-related injury and death by never leaving your child alone in a car.
- **C:** Create reminders by putting something in the back of your car next to your child such as a briefcase or a cell phone that is needed at your final destination.
- **T:** Take action. If you see a child alone in a car, call 911.

If your child attends a child care program, make arrangements with staff to call if your child does not show up on time so you can check your car, or set a calendar reminder on your electronic devices to remind you about checking the car seat before you lock up.

These simple steps can save your child's life!

Source: www.safekids.org/tip/heatstroke-safety-tips



PLAYING WITH MATH

You are your child's first and most important teacher. When you have meaningful conversations with your child, read a book together, or just spend time playing together, you are building skills that will lead to success both in school and in life. You have the ability to help shape your child's attitude about learning. Research shows that children, especially girls, tend to lose interest in math unless they are encouraged to believe in their own ability at a young age. It can be difficult to move past our own fears or worries about learning, especially in subjects that might have been hard for you in school. By keeping an open mind and an enthusiastic attitude about learning, you show your child that anyone can learn anything by being curious and never giving up.

When preschoolers participate in activities or projects, they practice skills they already know and learn new concepts. Many of the new concepts they learn prepare them for higher mathematics like algebra and geometry. Through play, children learn to understand numbers, to sort items, and put things that are similar into groups. Children also practice recognizing patterns and shapes, estimate space around objects, measure size and volume, and solve everyday problems in a logical way. These skills form a solid base of mathematical understanding for your child that will help him be successful in school.

Learning through play allows children to practice new skills without feeling the pressure of passing or failing. During play, there is time to ask questions, think about answers, form opinions, and try new ideas. When children encounter obstacles in their play they use mathematical reasoning to find solutions. Children will often need to try out several different solutions before they find the right one. They may need an adult to step in and help them consider possible solutions. Encouraging children to be persistent and achieve their goals helps them develop problem-solving skills and strengthens their resilience.

You can also encourage math learning by letting your child help with household chores. *continued on back*

IN THIS ISSUE

Recipes	2
Fun with Kids	2
Just for Parents	3

SQUISH SQUASH APPLESAUCE

Children can practice many practical math skills when they engage in cooking activities. They can experiment with measurements, quantities, counting, identifying numerals, and estimating. Children can wash fruits and vegetables, measure ingredients, and help stir mixtures.

Cooking with your child is a great way to have fun together, be healthy, and feel proud of your work. Try this recipe for applesauce and let the learning begin! Remember that cooking activities should always be supervised, and only adults should use sharp tools.

You will need:

- Knife (adult use only)
- Fruit/vegetable peeler
- Cutting board
- Large mixing bowl
- Potato masher
- Several apples (8-12)
- 2 tablespoons of lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons of sugar
- Cinnamon to taste

Instructions:

Peel the apples. Remove the cores and cut them into slices. Put the sliced apples in a pot and warm them over medium heat. Once they are warm, put them into a large mixing bowl, and smash them with the potato masher. This is a great job for children! Add the lemon juice, sugar, and cinnamon. Keep mashing until the mixture looks like applesauce. Serve and enjoy!

Source: www.sproutonline.com



FUN WITH KIDS

CONVERSATIONS THAT TEACH

Conversation with children builds language skills, social skills, and emotional development, and it can help them learn new concepts. When you talk to your child, use descriptive words and complete sentences. For example, “Here is your fuzzy, brown, bear with soft fur and two black eyes, one nose, and two arms and legs just like you!” That sentence is rich with new words that describe the bear and encourage your child to compare the bear’s appearance with his own. Your child is also practicing math skills by counting the bear’s body parts.

Infants will use their bodies to have conversations with you. They will wiggle, smile, babble, and make eye contact when you speak to them. Using descriptive words about the textures and toys they touch helps them associate the objects with words. Include numbers and counting in your conversations to introduce math concepts. For example, gently touch each toe or finger and say, “One little toe, two little toes...” and so on. Smile and make eye contact with your infant so he knows you are focused on him.

Toddlers love to clap and sing songs. Clap and call out each letter of your child’s name, or count as you clap. Singing songs like the *Itsy Bitsy Spider*, or *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* can help your toddler learn patterns. Choose books with real objects and look at them together. Reading picture books and looking for the real objects allows your child to practice matching. For example, “Look at this red ball! We have a red ball in your room. Can you find it?”

Children who are three to five years old enjoy talking about the books they read and the many things they do and see. When you take walks, ask him to look for certain shapes, numbers, or colors. Help your child practice describing the position of objects. For example, “You were standing next to a tree, where is it now?” Invite your child to cook with you, set the table, sort laundry, play board games, and read. All of these activities boost math learning and offer opportunities for great conversations that support your child’s overall learning and development.



HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Research has shown that living a healthy lifestyle can lower the risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, and other health problems. Children learn how to eat healthy foods and live an active life by watching adults. What you show your children now about being healthy will stay with them for a lifetime.

Teach your child's taste buds to crave healthy foods by serving fruits, vegetables, and meals that are low in fat, sugar, and sodium (salt). When preparing meals, half of the plate should be fruits and vegetables, and the other half should be whole grains and protein (lean meats, beans, or tofu). Switch to low-fat milk or non-fat milk, and drink water instead of sugary drinks. Model healthy food choices by eating the foods you want your children to try, and involve them in preparing meals. Children can check food supplies while you make a grocery list, help cut out and organize coupons, plan meals, gather items at the grocery store, wash fruits and vegetables, prepare salads, and set the table for family style eating.

Children should spend at least sixty minutes a day being active. Active play supports brain development and helps develop the heart and lungs. Be an active family and play together. Try dancing to music after dinner, going for a walk, kicking a ball around outside, doing some stretches, or riding bikes together. On weekends, spend the day at a local park, beach, or nature preserve. Many wilderness parks have hiking trails for families, or you can take along a ball or frisbee. Visit your city's web page to find parks near your home. On rainy days try walking around a museum, or inside a shopping mall. It does not matter what you do as long as you move!

It is also important to stay mentally healthy. By eating well, exercising, and getting enough sleep you and your child can be mentally fit, but sometimes there are extra stressors in life that make it harder to feel healthy. Make sure your child knows that he has your support by asking about his day and showing an interest in the things he likes. Plan activities that allow you to have fun as a family, like board game night, craft night, or movie night, and encourage your child to explore different hobbies or interests that can help him express himself and release stress. Practicing some of these ideas will help you and your child be more physically and mentally healthy.



AGENCY INFORMATION

For more than a century, 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.

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.

To fulfill our mission, 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, educational, and resource services, which include Community Education, Child Care and Development, and Family Resource Services. Along with helping children and their families, CHS is an expert resource for child care providers, other social service agencies, and government agencies at the local, state, and national level.

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continued from page 1

Children can learn how to match objects and sort them into groups by helping with laundry (sort by colors when washing or match socks when folding), making a grocery list by groups (dairy, produce, canned), clipping coupons that match grocery list items, or placing groceries in the refrigerator. Activities like setting the table, playing board games, and working on puzzles can help your child learn to understand patterns. Sorting, matching, and patterning skills form a strong base for learning algebra.

Cooking with your child can be a lot of fun and a great opportunity to learn. Start with easy recipes that do not involve heat like a peanut butter sandwich, egg salad, trail mix, or green salad. As you read recipes together, your child will practice language, literacy, and math skills. Cooking is a wonderful way for children to learn how to use measurements, estimate quantities, and how to follow directions step by step (also called sequencing).

Practice basic geometry skills by taking walks outside or playing in the park, where your child can count and practice identifying the shapes and colors you see, such as blue cars, or looking for items that have a square shape. When your child spends time at the park playing ball, swinging, or climbing, he learns how to move his body or objects (like a ball), through the space around him. Identifying these skills help prepare your child for learning about geometry.

The time you spend with your child is something he will never forget. Your enjoyment of each other's company will show your child that you are there to support him, and that you care about his learning and well-being. Each smile, conversation, and experience you share with your child builds a stronger relationship that will help him overcome obstacles and continue learning.

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



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