

# 14 ways to be involved in your young child's education...

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## **1. Relax, and keep activities enjoyable**

Avoid overdoing workbook type of activities. Children have years of these ahead of them. Turn learning activities into games. Say, "Let's play a game", not "Let's practice your numbers".

## **2. Write lists with your child**

Ask your children to help you make shopping lists, things to do lists, labels for organizing their bedrooms, etc. Keep the content of the lists simple. If they know how to print and sound out a few letters, let them print those letters on the list (apls for apples). If you have more than one child, take turns getting them to help.

## **3. Cook with your children**

Let children experience the differences between measuring a cup (or 250 ml) and half a cup of ingredients. Enrich their cooking vocabulary (mix, sift, whip, teaspoon...) with hands on experiences. Point out the first letter of the title of the recipe. This is the letter c, it's sound is c, the title says, cupcakes.

## **4. Present problem solving opportunities**

"If everyone in the family gets 2 cookies for a snack, how many cookies do we need?" Allow plenty of time for the child to think and to actually count out two cookies for each person. Encourage different ways to solve a problem. "That's good thinking. Can you think of other ways to solve the problem?"

## **5. Play counting games on the way to and from destinations**

For example, "Let's count stop signs. How far can we count before we get to \_\_\_\_\_ (school, the dentist, etc.)? Let's count backwards from 5."

## **6. Play alphabet games**

Play alphabet board games, ABC bingo, word bingo, and other simple games such as, "I Spy", using objects that begin with a specific letter sound. Solve ABC riddles – I'm thinking of something that starts with the sound, "Mmm" and you can eat it (say the sound of the letter, not what the letter is called).

## **7. Read picture books to your children**

Read lots of fiction and nonfiction books to your children. Encourage them to retell a story, recall events from a story or act out parts of a story. Be enthusiastic about representing your favorite parts of the story by drawing pictures or by making characters with modeling clay and your children will soon join in.

## **8. Read ABC, rhyming and pattern type books**

In addition to reading favorite story and nonfiction books, read simple pattern books (the dog goes to town, the sheep goes to town...), ABC books, rhyming books, concept books (shapes, opposites) and books that refer to numbers and contain math vocabulary. Rereading books reinforces concepts.

### **9. Encourage your child to notice letters, words and numbers in posters, books, signs and magazines**

Play games with supermarket flyers. Let's circle all the number "5s". Let's count how many times we can find "w" on this page or the word "exit" as we walk through the mall.

### **10. Play board and card games**

Relax and give your child plenty of time to count the numbers on the dice and to move his/her game piece around the board. Avoid the temptation to quickly sum up the dice and tell your child what square to go to. Use two dice when one is too easy.

### **11. Count money**

Give your child a bag of pennies to count and stack into piles. Slowly introduce counting by 2s, 5s, and 10s. As your child is confident with one coin add nickels, dimes and quarters.

### **12. Use math vocabulary at home**

Include words like more than, fewer than, rectangle, triangle, square, circle, add, subtract, share, divide, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and equal in your every day speech. E.g. "Let's fold the napkins into triangles. Give me fewer potatoes than Dad. Give Mum the first cookie, give Dad the second cookie, and give \_ the third cookie to \_ . Divide the crackers between your friends."

### **13. Start preparing your child to be responsible for homework**

To help your child get used to a homework schedule, plan the same time and place each day to spend time doing sit down type of activities with your child. Turn the television and other electronic games off, clear distracting toys away, and bring out puzzles, games or drawing supplies. Schedule part of the time to do activities together and a shorter amount of time for your child to work independently.