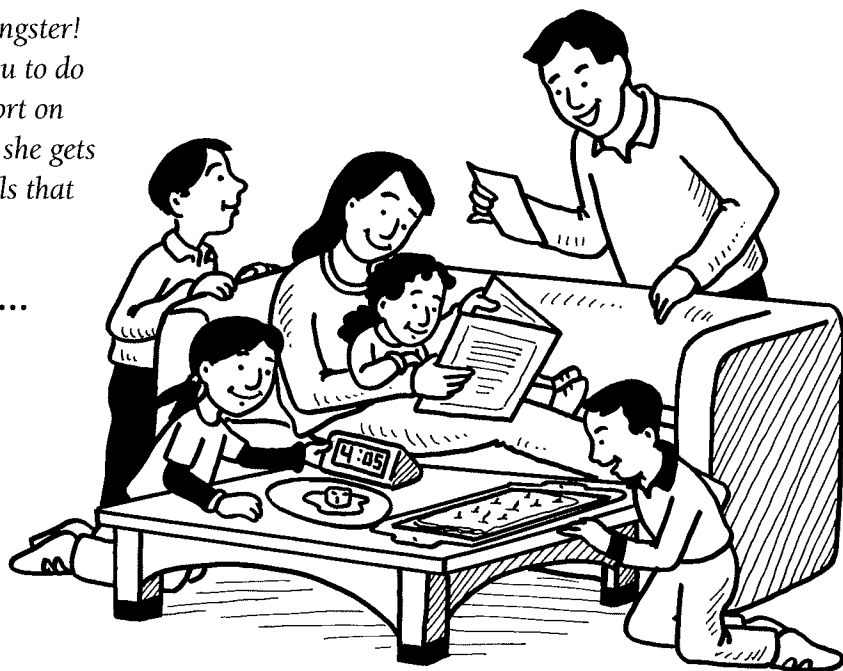


# At-Home Learning Fun

Read, write, count, and explore with your youngster! Here are 10 activities and games designed for you to do together—and they won't take much time or effort on your part. Your child will be eager to learn when she gets to do them alongside you, and she'll practice skills that can help her do well in school.



## 1. Reading aloud

Want to get your youngster hooked on reading? The easiest way is to spend 10–15 minutes each day reading aloud to her. Visit your local library for a variety of books—stories, nursery rhymes, nonfiction books, and more. Once you're home, find a cozy spot where you can snuggle up together and read.

## 2. Measuring and comparing

Fill the bathtub or a kiddie pool with water. Add a 1-cup measuring scoop and empty plastic containers of different



sizes (pint, quart, half-gallon, gallon). Ask your child to find out how many cups of water will fill the quart and then the half-gallon jugs. Which holds more water—the cup or the pint? Let him explore, and learning will come naturally!

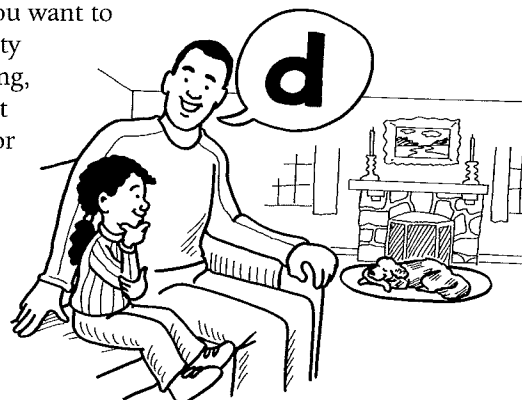
## 3. Growing plants

Watching plants grow lets your youngster see science in action. Grass seeds are ideal because they grow quickly on almost any damp surface. Have him wet a sponge or several

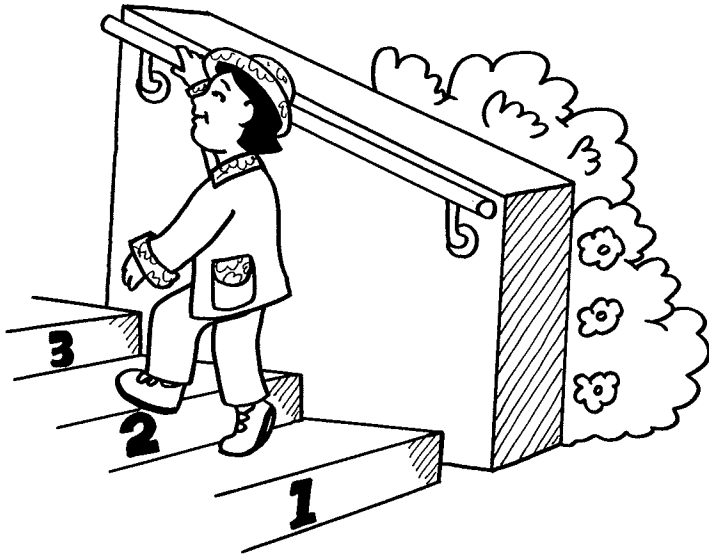
layers of paper towels and sprinkle a thin layer of seeds over the surface. He should keep the “ground” warm and damp, and within two or three days, the seeds will start to sprout. Help him use a ruler to measure the height of his grass every few days. He can draw pictures of it to record its growth.

## 4. Learning letter sounds

Choose an object in the room that your child can see. Say, “I spy with my little eyes something that begins with *d*.” Can she guess what it is? At first you might have to give additional clues, such as: “It’s brown and likes to take walks.” After she understands the game, let her choose an object for you to guess. *Tip:* If you want to make the activity more challenging, use sounds that are at the end or in the middle of a word. *Example:* “I spy something that ends with *w*.”



*continued*



**5. Counting and recognizing numbers**

Your youngster can become familiar with numbers through conversation. For instance, you could say, “Let’s count the steps as we climb them: 1, 2, 3.” Help her begin to understand what numbers mean and to recognize them when they’re written down by pointing them out throughout the day (“We’ll put a bookmark here at page 5”). Games such as Chutes and Ladders and Bingo will also teach your child to count and to recognize numbers.

**6. Telling stories**

Use storytelling to teach your youngster to listen for details and add her own. You can take the tiniest incident that happens during the day, elaborate on it, and turn it into a story. *Example:* “The other day, Patrick was at the beach. He was surprised to see so many shells. As he was hunting for treasures, he found...” Get your child’s help by asking, “What do you think should happen next?” Then, weave her answers into the story. Next time, she can be the storyteller!



**7. Melting ice**

Hands-on science activities are fun and provide opportunities for your child to observe, question, and reason. Let her place an ice cube on a plate. Help her use a clock to time how long it takes to melt. Then, have her think of ways to make the ice melt faster or slower. For instance, what would happen if you used a hair dryer? How about if you put the cube in the refrigerator?

**8. Listening and following directions**

Hide a small object, such as a pencil, a quarter, or a toy car. Then, write a simple set of directions telling your child where to start and how to find the item. Read the directions aloud so he can follow them. For instance, you might say, “Walk to the middle of the room, turn right, and take three small steps to the sofa. Bend down, and put your hand under the sofa. What do you find?”

**9. Sorting household objects**

Use chores to let your child practice math skills. When you wash clothes, he could separate the light and dark items. After washing and drying, show him how to sort laundry. Say, “Let’s put socks here and towels there.” He can match the socks and then sort towels into categories (hand towels, dish towels). Also, put your youngster in charge of emptying the silverware from the dishwasher and sorting the forks and spoons in the drawer.



**10. Building memory**

Your youngster can stretch his memory by memorizing and reciting poems and jokes. Try holding a family poetry night. Get books of poems and nursery rhymes from the library, and let each family member choose a short one to memorize. Then, take turns reciting them for everyone else. Another time, you could have a comedy night. Each person can learn several jokes and take turns standing up to tell them.

**Early Years**