

# Activities and Ideas for Learning at Home with Younger Children

Routine and consistency help our children understand and make sense of the day ahead. In school teachers often use schedules to help the child understand and navigate the day easily. It would be great to introduce some structure into parts of the day.

## A Visual Schedule



One simple way of making a visual schedule is to download the app, *Free Prints* app on your phone which allows you to take photos of various activities in the household which can then be delivered to your home by post. These are real life pictures which the child can understand. <http://www.freeprintsapp.ie>

## An Object Schedule

For some children who may not yet understand a visual schedule, try an object schedule. Use the real household items to help the child understand what the activity is, for example, place a spoon on the schedule for eating time and a plastic cup for drinking time.



## Some Functional Activities for Younger Students



### Academic

#### Puzzles

- Begin with simple Insert puzzles
- If your child can do these move onto more complex puzzles
- *Teaching tip-* request shape, number and colour

#### Counting activities

- Baking- count the number of spoonful's
- Lego play- count the number of pieces
- Counting the number of people in the house
- Counting the flowers in the garden
- Go on a scavenger hunt to find 1-5 items

#### Imitation of actions

Examples of songs;

- Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes
- The wheels on the Bus
- If your happy and you know it
- The Hokey Pokey song

#### Shape activities and identification activities

- Baking- using dough cutters
- Playdough
- A shape bag
- The Hokey Pokey song

#### Playdough/ Therraputty

- Turn taking
- Make a shape
- Request colour

#### Colour sorting

Ask your child to put the red Lego in the tub with a red sticker, put the yellow Lego in the tub with the yellow sticker etc.

#### Colour Identification

- Use art activities
- Toothbrushes
- Toys
- Clothes

#### Communication and Language

- Try to make cut out props for songs and nursery rhymes using cardboard and lollipop sticks, or use a sock puppet
- Say the rhyme with the visuals. Stop at different points and wait for your child to fill in the word or sentence

### Matching Activities

Match pictures of;

- Colours
- Shapes
- Fruit
- vegetables
- clothes
- body parts
- Transport

### Learning through Play

Choose a theme a day to explore with your child (you may need to model some of this);

- Transport
- Farmyard
- Going to the restaurant
- Pretend shop
- Going to the doctor
- Going to the Vet

### Number Identification

- Using a calendar
- Finding numbers on a treasure hunt around the house
- Using fridge magnets on fridge

### Cutting and Pasting activities

- Using a child's special interest, for example favourite toys, dinosaurs or superheroes etc.



## Fine Motor Skills

- Sponge Painting
- Dot painting with cotton buds
- Brush painting
- Playing with whiteboards
- Crayon work
- Tearing paper
- Using a scissors
- Cutting along a straight line
- Trace the dots
- Peg boards
- Threading
- Colouring in
- Lego play
- Sticking and pasting activities
- Playdough
- Cutting out shapes



## Gross Motor Skills

- Using any pedal toys e.g. bike, toy tractors
- Throwing and catching a big ball
- Jumping
- Running
- Climbing up a toy slide
- Kicking a ball to someone or into a homemade goal
- Going for a short walk
- Trampoline
- Using steps in the house
- Balloon and Bubble play
- Dancing
- Obstacle Courses
- Move like an animal game
- Follow the line- use masking tape to create a track to follow



## Games

Often times with young children, structured games with rules are popular and fun!

- Musical Statues
- Ship Shore Deck
- Pass The Parcel
- Fruit Salad
- What Time is it Mr Wolf?
- Duck-Duck-Goose
- Ring-A-Rosy
- Musical Chairs (always have enough chairs for everyone)



## Life Skills

- Open a bottle
- Using a zip
- Opening and closing buttons
- Wash and dry face
- Wash and dry hands
- Tidying up toys
- Brush teeth
- Sorting the cutlery
- Practice getting dressed and undressed
- Fold napkins
- Make a sandwich
- Pour a drink
- Set single place setting at table
- Pour bubbles into a bath
- Wipe or clean a table with a cloth



## Outdoor Activities

- Water the flowers
- Feed the birds
- Plant seeds
- Treasure hunt



## Sensory Play Ideas

- Water play
- Lego bath
- Make a sensory board with a variety of textures for your child to explore
- Lentils
- Pasta play
- Rice Play
- Shaving Foam
- Sand play (try dry and wet mixtures)
- Bubble wrap play
- Bubble bath
- Fill an old plastic water bottle with water, add food colouring and glitter
- Musical instruments
- Shredded paper play
- Make your own playdough using;
  - *1 part conditioner*
  - *2 parts cornflour*
  - *Food colouring (optional)*