

Dear Families,

In our classroom, play and inquiry are an important part of our day. Play is one of the main ways that children learn about the world around them and explore many of the big ideas we learn about in our schooling.

This packet is to facilitate this play and work at home. If at first glance this work doesn't seem "academic" enough, there is plenty of research that finds kids engaged in play are often working at a higher level than when they are doing more traditional sit-down academic tasks. The professor Lillian Katz draws a line between academic skills (the alphabet and the number sequence) and intellectual skills (curiosity, problem solving, flexibility). Play facilitates the development of intellectual skills, and also allows for the application of academic skills. For example, a child playing with water, might use intellectual skills to make a boat, but then apply academic skills to write the name of the boat on the side. Intellectual skills do not come from worksheets.

Play is also a time when children develop self-regulation, organization, and working memory. All skills essential for learning academics.

Feel free to continue to do packets, play math games online and on the iPad, and practice other academic skills, but also try to balance that with opportunities for open ended play.

What follows in this packet is some suggested play areas for your child/ren. They do not require toys, but rather materials around your apartment or house. You do not need to supervise your child at play, but check in at the beginning and end of their time. If your child gets bored quickly, do not offer something new, encourage them to work through the boredom.

Included in this packet:

- Directions
- Play areas and ideas
- Play planning and reflection sheet
- Tips for talking to your child about their play
- Tips for helping your child when they say "I am done" or "I am bored"

Warmly,



Note: Your child should also have lots of open ended, however they want to play, play time every day. To illustrate the difference, we will call this choice workshop.

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Directions:

1. At the start of the day, ask your child what play choice they want to make for today's choice workshop, and the materials they will use (use the samples below for help).
2. Have your child draw, write or tell you what they think they will do with those materials.
3. Set the materials up and walk away. If you are worried about mess, throw down an old towel or whatever you have.
4. If your child comes to you, use the tips sheet (included).
5. After 45-60 minutes, clean up. Talk about how it went (see the tips sheet).
6. Use an extension (if you like).



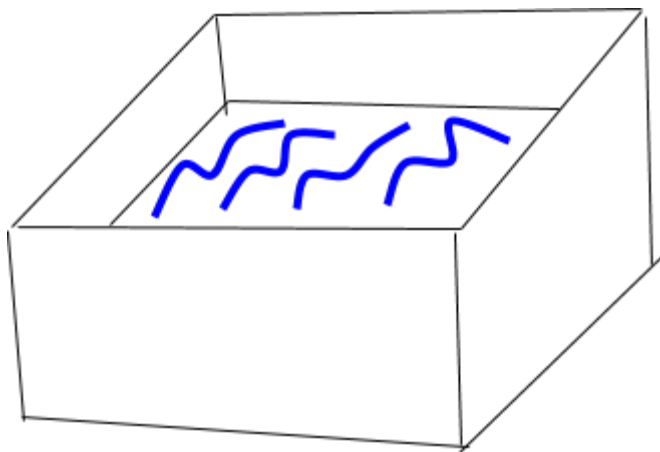
Suggested Play Choices

Play Choice 1: Water Play

Main Materials

Tupperware

Water



Supplemental Materials

Use any:

- Measuring cups
- Eye droppers
- Basters
- Funnels
- Food coloring
- Rocks, wood, leaves
- Glue, paper, markers
- Containers
- Aquatic animal figures

Skills developed here:

- Volume
- Properties of water
- Engineering
- Problem solving

Option:

Make it a sensory table and change out the materials to beans, rice, pasta, dirt, sand, etc

Questions to ask: (if you decide to check in)

- What is happening here?
- What are you making?
- What do you think would happen if....?
- What are you noticing?

Play Choice 2: Construction Play

Main Materials

- Anything you can build with:
- Package of solo cups
 - Blocks
 - Toothpicks and cut sponges
 - Popsicle sticks
 - Legos (without direction booklets)

Supplemental Materials

- Use any:
- Clothespins
 - Rug or fabric scraps
 - Small cars, animals, or people
 - Pictures or books with different buildings

Skills developed here:

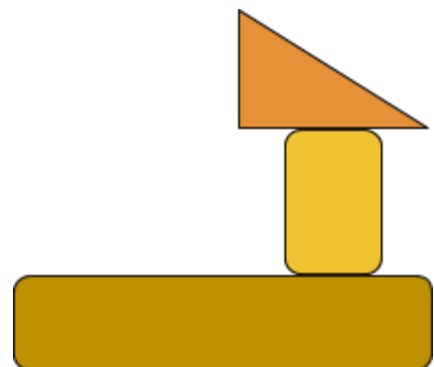
- Storytelling
- Balance and equivalence
- Engineering
- 3 dimensional shapes

Option:

You can print out photos of your family, or street signs, that children can use in their play

Questions to ask: (if you decide to check in)

- What is happening here? Tell me the story here?
- What are you making?
- What do you think would happen if....?
- What are you noticing?



Play Choice 3: Maker Play

Main Materials

Your recycling bin materials

Glue

Scissors

Tape

Supplemental Materials

Use any:

- Big cardboard boxes
- Small cardboard boxes
- Materials from nature
- Pictures and books of inspiration (if your child thinks they would like to make an airplane, try to have an airplane picture or book)

Skills developed here:

- Planning and organization
- Flexibility
- Engineering
- Problem solving

Option:

Encourage your child make a bigger project: A restaurant, a school, an airport so this becomes a multi-day project

Questions to ask: (if you decide to check in)

- What is happening here?
- What are you making?
- What do you think would happen if....?
- What are you noticing?
- What else do you need?



Play Choice 4: Light Play

Main Materials

Flashlight or tea lights

Supplemental Materials

Use any:

- Blocks
- Fabric
- Colored, clear solo cups
- Paper
- Markers
- Books (like the shine-a-light series)
- Toys that can cast reflections (think dinosaurs, lego figures, etc)
- White sheet on the wall

Skills developed here:

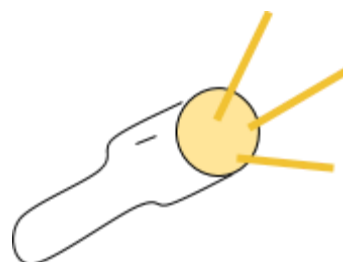
- Storytelling
- Properties of light
- Engineering
- Problem solving

Option:

Watch some shadow puppet videos on youtube to get a sense of how people tell stories with shadows

Questions to ask: (if you decide to check in)

- What is happening here? Tell me the story here?
- What are you making?
- What do you think would happen if....?
- What are you noticing?



Play Choice 5: Dramatic Play

Main Materials

Real life stuff (As opposed to “dress-up” or toy stuff)

Supplemental Materials

Use any:

- Cooking utensils
- Clothes from your closet
- Old phone
- Old computer
- Old envelopes, paper, list pads

Skills developed here:

- Storytelling
- Problem solving
- Oral language
- Fantasy play (which aids literacy development)

Option:

Tie this one to the maker play

Questions to ask: (if you decide to check in)

- What is happening here? Who are you? What are you pretending?
- What are you making?
- What do you think would happen if....?
- What are you noticing?

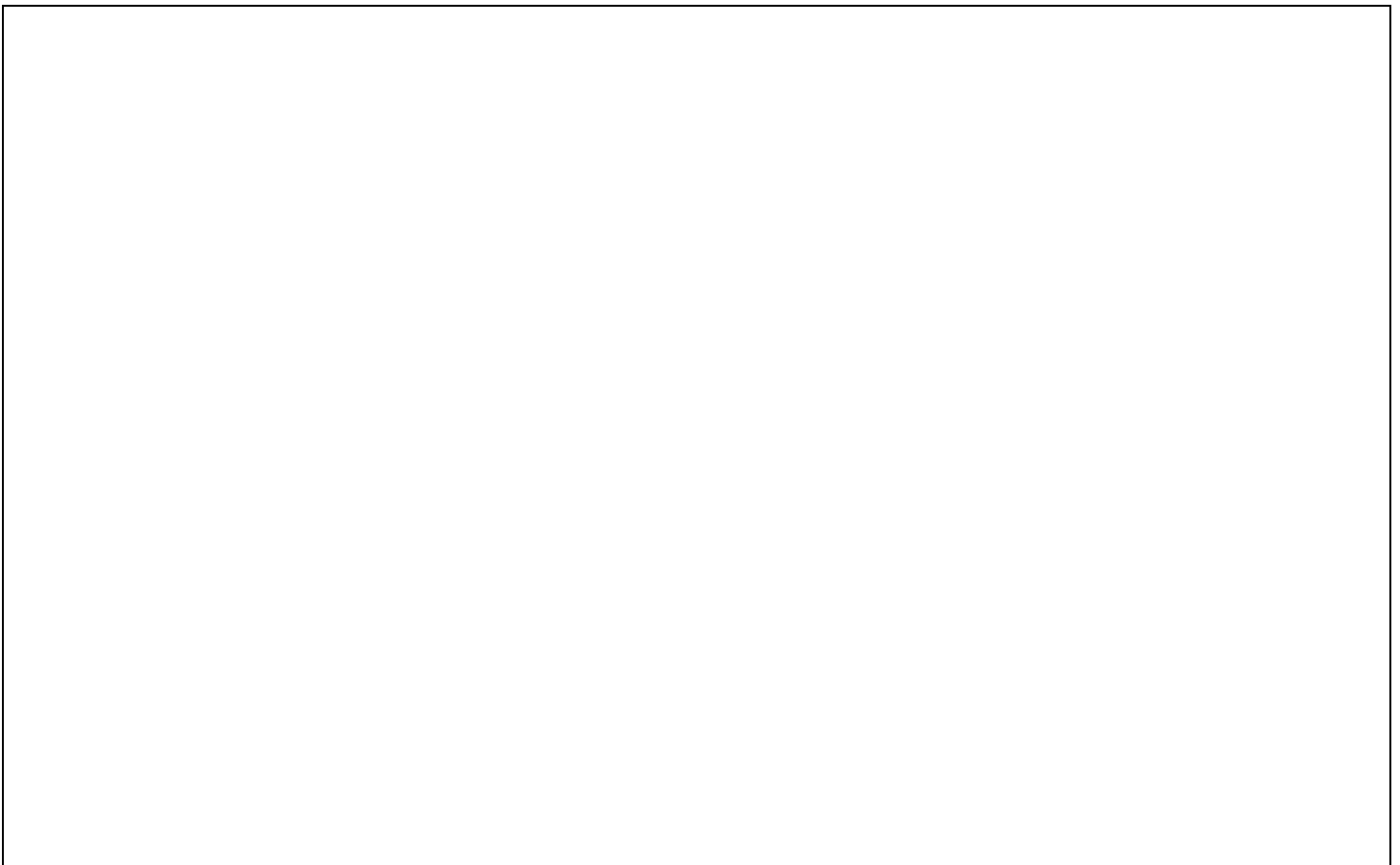
Talking Tip Sheets

What to say if...

Your child says...	You might say...
I'm bored	Where could you find more ideas? Could you try something new with those materials? Set a timer for 5 more minutes. What happens in that time?
I'm done	Will you start something new with those materials or change what you made?
I can't....	Give it a try! You have done hard things before.
I want you to play with me	Let's set a time for ___ minutes. When that goes off I can play with you for ___ minutes.
I don't know what to do next	Give it a try. Maybe you will invent something new!
(fighting with sibling)	Use your strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take space• Talk it out (I feel ___ when ___)• Use a tool (a book, a sand timer, etc) to calm down

OPTIONAL: Planning Sheet

**Draw or write what you will make
or play today!**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a child to draw or write about their plans for the day.

**Reflect: What are you proud of today?
What will you change or try for tomorrow?**

EXTENSIONS

1. Take a picture of what your child made. Ask them to use a sharpie (or the editing app in your device) to label the parts or write a sentence about what they did. Email it out to extended family and friends.
2. Notice what your child is interested in when they play (water, boats, working in an office). Look for books (online or paper) that teach about that thing. Do a little research together.
3. Have virtual planning play dates with friends. Have your child tell their friend what they will make, have them share out what they did virtually with each other.
4. Make a "how-to" book after your child makes something. Then post-it for others!

