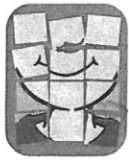


Make learning fun by creating a special learning spot!



Preschoolers love small, comfy places. Why not combine this love with a bit of learning, too?

Consider creating a special learning spot for your child. This may even make her more eager to learn.

Here's how to create one:

- **Find a cozy space** in your home. It could be in the corner of your child's room, in an open closet or even in part of the kitchen.
- **Bring in pillows.** Add books, paper, crayons and other school supplies. Let your child pick a favorite doll or stuffed animal to be her learning buddy.
- **Find time** to share this special spot with your child often. Call it "learning time." You could read

and draw together. Make and use flash cards. Your child can practice writing letters and her name.

- **Encourage your child** to spend some time on her own in the learning spot. She could look through books or maybe teach her learning buddy something new she has learned!

"You can teach a student a lesson for a day; but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity, he will continue the learning process as long as he lives."

—Clay P. Bedford

Teach your child about senses with taste and smell experiments



Without realizing it, many of us confuse our senses of taste and smell. They're so closely connected that sometimes we don't notice which sense we're using.

Here are activities that teach kids (and adults!) about taste and smell:

1. **Try to identify foods** by how they taste and smell. Have your child close his eyes and hold his nose. Place a small amount of fruit, such as orange, grapefruit, or lime on his tongue. Can he tell what it is? Now have him smell the food with his eyes still closed. It might be easier to identify this way.
2. **Make foods** with and without salt. You might be surprised to learn that a little salt can make sweet

foods taste sweeter. That's why it's in so many desserts. Make a cup of hot chocolate with milk, cocoa powder and sugar. Then make another cup, adding a pinch of salt. Which tastes sweeter?

3. **Keep track of things** you and your child smell for a day. It's fun to see how many he can recognize by smell, such as flowers, clean laundry, and food. Help him think of words that describe what he smells, such as *spicy* or *minty*.
4. **Share a fun fact** with your child: Different parts of the tongue taste certain things better. For example, the tip is extra sensitive to sweet things. The middle senses salty and sour best. And the back is sensitive to bitter tastes. Can you notice these differences when eating?

Are you adding learning to your child's play time?



It's easy to fill play time with learning—and you can do so without your child even knowing. Answer

yes or *no* to the questions below to see if you are helping your child learn through play:

- ___ 1. **Do you talk** and listen to your child while playing?
- ___ 2. **Do you find** ways to play with your child creatively, such as by making up stories and doing art projects?
- ___ 3. **Do you build** small and large muscles with activities such as running, jumping, coloring and putting together puzzles?
- ___ 4. **Do you help** your child practice social skills by sharing, taking turns and using phrases such as *please* and *thank you*?
- ___ 5. **Do you make** time to read every day, choosing books that your child wants to read again and again?

How well are you doing?

If most of your answers are *yes*, you are filling play time with learning opportunities. For *no* answers, try those ideas from the quiz.

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