

Therapist's Corner

We asked two of our therapists, Ilene Greenwald and Amy Freedman to come up with a list of activities that are handy tools in child development. They are activities that all children can benefit from and enjoy.

Amy Freedman, one of our speech therapists, offers the following ways to make use of all the time we spend in the car going from one place to another:

There are lots of ways to have fun with language while driving around.

I SPY This game can be addressed at all different levels. For younger children, you can name colors ("I spy something red."). For older children, you can describe the function/use of what you see ("I spy someplace where we take out books."), or spell words ("I spy something r-e-d). It is fun to add a pair of binoculars (made out of two toilet paper rolls).

READ SIGNS Take advantage of all the reading out there! Can your child recognize signs: Dunkin' Donuts, Shaw's, Speed Limit, etc. This counts as reading and can often be used to pair with at home and classroom reading. For example, when your child ask how to spell shul, you can say the first two letters make the sh-h-h sound and are the same ones that are in the word Shaw's. You can take turn reading signs, play the alphabet game: One person finds a word that begins with A and the next person finds a word that begins with B, etc. (easier version: the letter can be any place in the word).

CATEGORIZE Take turns naming items within a category such as names, animals, foods, sports, etc. You can provide strategies such as naming kids in the class, family members, picturing people from T. V. /movies/books, etc. To add a challenge, try and name items in order of the alphabet (Anna, Beth, Carol, etc.).

RHYME Rhyming teaches sound patterns and vocabulary. You or your child pick a word and say all the words that you can think of that rhyme with it. Nonsense words count. Afterwards, you can talk about which words are real and which are silly.

The car is a great time to play any language game and a great time to interact with your child, enjoy it!!

Ilene Greenwald, our occupational therapist, offers the following games and activities focusing on different sensory systems.

All of us learn about the world through our sensory systems. The infant mouthing everything is learning through oral sensation. The toddler touching everything in his way is learning through his tactile system. The preschooler challenging his balance by walking on curbs, racing through the playground, doing obstacle courses, and hanging from the monkey bars is learning through his proprioceptive system (knowing where his body is in space and how much pressure he is exerting through his muscles) and his vestibular system (the sense of movement and balance). The process of taking this information and using it, is called sensory integration. We continue throughout our lives to learn and grow through the various systems.

Following are a few suggestions to do at home that are facilitating sensory integration and are fun.

“Dough” is great for touch, proprioceptive and smell sensations. Here are three recipes for different doughs.

Play Dough Recipe

4 parts Flour 1 part Salt Vegetable oil Dish detergent Food Coloring	Mix flour and salt. Add equal amounts of oil and dish detergent until the play dough is moist and doughy. Knead thoroughly. Add food coloring for color. Store in a covered container to keep moist.
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Oobleck Recipe

Cornstarch Water Food coloring	Dump a box of cornstarch in a clear plastic container. Add water and mix. Add food coloring. It is a wierd substance that is unclear why it flows like a fluid but reacts like a solid when compressed. It will clog the sink drain so should be cleaned up by a vacuum. To save it, put it in a plastic wrap/bag in the fridge
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Scented Play Dough Recipe

2 pkgs kool-aid 2 cups flour 1 cup salt 2 cups boiling water 2Tbsp cooking oil 4Tbsp cream of tartar	Mix all ingredients together. Enjoy!
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Different games and activities are great for the different systems. The following games and activities are offered as fun and helpful.

Don't Step on the Ground!

vestibular and proprioceptive systems

Throw various items on the ground such as newspapers, couch pillows, bean bags, etc. Have the child toss an item. Jump from square to square without touching the floor to retrieve the tossed item.

Simon Says encourages proprioception and following directions

Activities

- Encourage obstacle course play with tunnels, climbing under chairs, jump ropes, hula hoops, any other toys around your yard. Incorporate language concepts of over, under, around and through into the directions.
- Playing with pogo sticks, sit-n-spins, romper stompers, roller skates, scooters, bike riding, etc. encourage sensory development.

I hope some of these suggestions give you some new ideas to think about playing with your children. Enjoy them!