



Learning at home can be fun!!

As life gets busy with many activities, it's easy to just come home and want to do nothing!! But there always seems to be something that needs your attention and the kids like to be entertained so..... how about including the kids in some of those 'jobs' that need to be done at home. This might mean the 'job' takes a little bit longer, but it means you can spend some time with the kids. PLUS.... research shows that the everyday routine activities of life are actually a great opportunity for kids to expand their knowledge of the world, further develop their language skills and try out different life skills.

Conversations are the most important context for building children's language and literacy skills. As you go about your daily routine activities, simply talking with your child will help to develop their thinking language skills. But be aware, there are some key differences are between just talking to a child and having a powerful conversation that promotes their learning.

The most effective conversations:

- go back-and-forth for several turns. You can help this by asking questions and expanding on what your child says.
- follow your child's lead by talking about they are interested in
- use lots of different vocabulary, including more sophisticated words than what your child is using. This helps them to learn new words!
- use language that goes beyond the here-and-now to talk about the past and the future
- give your child an opportunity to use their own knowledge and experience to do things like predict, problem-solve, explain why things happen, and see things from other people's perspectives.

If you're concerned about your child's language development or any of the above areas, contact a speech pathologist to discuss whether assessment for your child is indicated.



Adapted from the Hanen Centre, Toronto www.hanen.org

Try these ideas at home.....

Have the kids help out with:

- *Setting the table:* They can count out the cutlery and put out the cups.
- *Simple cooking:*
 - o making sandwiches
 - o stirring cake mixture
 - o making smoothies
 - o decorating cupcakes
- *Packing up toys*
- *Cleaning the floors:* They can have their own little broom or use a cloth to 'wipe up' marks.
- *Hanging up the washing:* They can hand you clothes and tell you who it belongs to. Then talk about the colour of the pegs and count them.
- *Washing windows:* give your kids a cloth so they can do some of the lower windows and doors.
- *Working in the garden:* let your kids have their own 'area' they can dig.
- *Cook playdough together* then have hours of fun making more creations!

If you're looking for some more specific ideas for fun at home, here are a few websites with great ideas:

- <http://www.makinglearningfun.com/>
- <http://www.learnwithplayathome.com/>
- <http://www.playdoughtoplato.com/>
- <http://twistynoodle.com/>

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