

Each year parents ask us what work they can do over the summer in preparation for first grade with their child. Below are a few suggestions to keep skills developing over the summer. The most important thing is to support your child's learning with positive encouragement and keep the learning fun! Please adapt these ideas to fit your child's interest and skill level. These ideas are meant to give you activities for the time you wish to work with your child—it is not expected that you would do all of these activities.

## **LANGUAGE ARTS/READING SKILLS**

\*Have your child purchase a notebook of his/her choice from the store. This becomes a journal for "The Best of My Summer Days". At the end of each day your child can write at least one sentence about the best thing that happened that day. Ask your child to date the page at the top. After writing the sentence your child may wish to draw a picture. As the summer continues and your child seems ready, expand what they write by asking a question about what was already written.

i.e. Child writes "Today I had ice cream."

Possible questions "What flavor ice cream did you have?"

"Who went with you to get the ice cream?"

"Where were you?"

In order to keep this a positive creative writing experience children should not be corrected on punctuation or spelling during this activity.

\*Read to your child every day for at least ten minutes- ask open-ended questions when finished reading. i.e. "What do you think is going to happen next?" "What would you have done if that happened to you.?"

Ask factual questions for recall i.e. "What happened first? "How many....?"

Who? What? Where? When? Why ?

\*When reading a chapter book to your child, ask your child to read the first sentence of each chapter. Assist with words as needed. Point out sight words. This provides confidence without being overwhelmed by so many words on the page.

\*Practice homework for first grade- set a timer or show your child on the clock 20 minutes. Decide on a quiet place to work and have a pencil case of materials you will need. This will get a good routine started for first grade. Keep it light and fun. Fill that time with any of the activities below. Start with 2 or 3 times a week.

\*Sight words- practice the list of 100 sight words. Put words on index cards and make crazy sentences by placing four words down on the table and have your child read them.

- give your child a sight word to write a sentence of his own including that word.

- find the sight words in a newspaper or magazine and circle

-Make up your own "Find the word" using sight words

-visit [www.janbrett.com](http://www.janbrett.com) to find more sight words- boards can be used bingo style

-have your child place sight word cards in abc order

-begin to practice spelling- first by looking at the card and then by turning it over to see if he remembers the letters

\*word families

- Jan Brett website has cards for phonograms in a format that you can work on one card at a time
- give your child a word- how many words can they write or say that rhyme
- write silly sentences using these rhymes (Down by the Bay by Raffi is a good book to show this idea)

\*Stepping into Reading is one of many series of books that offer repetition, phonics, and sight words. These can be purchased at most book stores. Have your child read it to you- the tough words that need to be practiced can be written on index cards. By writing these words on index cards your child can see that these are new words to learn rather than feeling frustration at not yet knowing these words. Remember that there are sight words that need to be memorized and practiced as well as phonetic words that are ok to sound out using word attack skills.

\*Talk to your child about a sentence. Where does it start? Take note of the first word using an uppercase letter and the period at the end of a thought. Talk about a noun- ask your child to find it in the sentence. Talk about adjectives that describe a noun- at the top of a paper write a noun- i.e. elephant- ask your child to think of words that tell you about the elephant i.e. big, gray, loud. When your child writes a sentence ask him to add an adjective to make the sentence more interesting. i.e. The cat walked away.  
The big black cat walked away.

Other helpful websites: [www.learningpages.com](http://www.learningpages.com)  
[www.enchantedlearning.com](http://www.enchantedlearning.com)  
[www.starfall.com](http://www.starfall.com)  
[www.abcya.com](http://www.abcya.com)  
[www.readingeggs.com](http://www.readingeggs.com)

## **MATH**

Give your child a list of things to count in the house  
i.e. beds, pillows, chairs, forks, knives, spoons, windows, doors, steps

Provide a graph for your child to show the number

Show them how to make tally marks

Ask them the questions using this information “What has the most? least? How many of \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ are there together?”

Finding shapes in the house- make a paper with as many square (circle, triangle, etc.) things you can find in your house

Practice simple addition and subtraction using counters (stones, buttons, shells, beads)

Use real life situations: i.e. Give your child seven pretzels for snack. How many pretzels will you have when you eat two?

Write numbers 1 to 100.

Count by ten, by five, and by two.

Start a pattern and have your child continue it

Simple: ababab                      complex: aabaabaab ,      abc abc abc

Use colors, shapes, pictures, numbers and letters

Practice telling time to the hour, half hour, and count by 5's around the clock- make a paper plate clock

Practice naming money and what it is worth – count with money

Play a trading game with pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters

Show how nickels are counting by fives, dimes are counting by tens etc.

Have your child cut out coupons – match the coins to the money on the coupon

Allow your child to pay for an item when shopping and wait for the change

Make a list of items for your child to measure using a twelve inch ruler

Have your child arrange items from the longest to shortest

Practice differences- the pencil is how much longer than the crayon?

Show how to count up on the ruler and how to count back- turn these numbers into equations

( for more fun measuring -use blocks, paper clips or popsicle sticks)

## **FUN LEARNING IN THE CAR**

Memory

Name a group of numbers-start with two and have your child repeat- if successful add another number to the group. The challenge is how many numbers can be repeated back. This can also be done with letters, sentences, and word groups.

Classification-

Let's see how many zoo animals we can name? Categories can be changed to sports, things that are red, or anything that fits your child interest

Counting

How high can we count?              Try counting backwards from 100

I Spy

Especially good in the city- try to find the letters of the alphabet in order in signs- person calls out where he found the letter A- next look for the letter B etc.

Keep a tally of two color cars- which did you see more of by the end of your trip

Word problems

You can make them simple or a little more challenging

i.e. There were two frogs in a pond and each was on a lily pad. One lily pad was empty. How many lily pads were in the pond?

Rhyming words

How many words can we think of that rhyme with cat? Now let's try \_\_\_\_\_.

## **FINE MOTOR FUN**

The following activities work the muscles used for writing while providing summer fun.

Legos, k-nex are both excellent motor skill toys

On the beach have your child write in the sand using a stick. Build a sand castle and then use a stick to sculpt the sand. Use wet sand to drip through your fingers to decorate and build towers on your castle. Have a contest to see who can drip the tallest tower.

Another beach game- lay out a row of small shells. Now try to pick up shells while standing on one leg. Can you do it without bending your leg?

Coin game- make a pattern of coins. Now try to pick up the coins using your three pincer fingers. Do not slide the coins.

Playdough- roll it into a snake, form letters and numbers with the snakes. When you are finished form it back into a ball. Hide something within the ball of playdough and see if your child can pick at the clay to find the hidden object.

Give your child a bucket of plain water and a large paintbrush. Use the sidewalk or driveway as your paper and paint away drawing pictures and writing letters/words

Planning a summer picnic - ask your child to assist you to husk the corn on the cob, scoop balls of melon from the watermelon and cantaloupe with a melon scooper, and cut the sandwiches in half and then quarters

Attached as requested by many parents is information for apps for the ipad and iphone.

Remember every experience is a learning experience and learning should be fun!

Have a wondrous summer of adventures , exploration and new discoveries!