

# Monthly Message:

## Play and Learn this Summer!

Summer is almost here! Ice cream and outside adventures are just around the corner for your family. While there will be many opportunities for fun in the sun, there are also many activities you can do with your children to help them continue learning.

As children's first and most important teachers, families have a major role to play in preparing their children for school. Important skills that you have been working on throughout the year can recede if you don't continue to work with your children over the summer. Children even often experience learning losses during the summer months, according to the Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University.

There are many ways to help your children continue learning by incorporating reading, science, math and other topics into your usual summer activities. For example, you can play a game of 'I Spy' in your backyard or join a summer reading program at your local library.

The summer is a great time to encourage eating healthy foods and being active as well. Children—particularly children at high risk of obesity—gain weight more rapidly when they are out of school during summer break.

Keeping your children engaged with productive activities over the summer can be a difficult task, but there are many resources that can give you ideas and activities to keep learning and playing over the summer.



*Summertime!*



## Summer Activities: Alphabet Hopscotch

### Goal:

To help your child recognize letters and sounds

### What You Will Need:

- Sidewalk,
- Sidewalk chalk,
- Time with your child,
- And a sunny day!

### Let's Go!

1. Draw a hopscotch pattern on a sidewalk or drive way. Write a different letter of the alphabet in each box. Ask your child to help you decorate the letters.
2. Play hopscotch, saying the names of the letters as you land on each square.
3. Play again, this time saying the sounds the letters make as you land on each square.



*Sidewalk chalk time!*



*Note: Some pre-schoolers will have trouble hopping on one foot. It's OK to do 2-foot hops. Just call the game "Jumpscotch!"*

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### obstacle course

#### Goal:

To help your child learn to identify and describe changes in patterns

#### What You Will Need:

- Space to set up an obstacle course
- Things to climb over, under and around.

#### Let's Go!

1. Set up an indoor or outdoor obstacle course. Use playground equipment you already have, or use empty boxes, hula hoops, lawn furniture, cushions, etc.
2. Choose 2 or 3 motions that your

child will use to get around the obstacles in his or her path.

*Ex. over, under, around, through, beside, along.*

3. Now, choose a pattern for your child to follow as they run the course.  
*Ex. You might first tell your child to run the course with a pattern of over and under. Your child would climb over the first obstacle and go under the next.*
4. As your child gets comfortable with this game, vary the pattern in different ways!



### shape Hunt

#### Goal:

To help your child find, recognize, name, and compare shapes

#### What You Will Need:

- Time with your child

#### Let's Go!

1. As you go through your day, explore and identify familiar shapes in your world.  
*Ex. Windows in a room may contain squares or rectangles; a tire on a car looks like a circle; STOP signs have*

*eight sides, so they are octagons.*

2. Talk about the characteristics of the shapes you find. *Ex. Say things like: "Look at these two circles. Can you tell me how they are the same? How are they different?"*

3. Now, challenge your child to find objects with one or more special attributes (attributes are things like color, size, texture, edges, or corners).  
*Ex. "Find a shape with three corners." Or "Find some red circles."*



### Online Resources

Scholastic.com has launched "**Summer Reading Counts**," an interactive online resource for families. This site is devoted to summer reading and features interactive activities for children in addition to expert advice and information for parents and caregivers.

All children can benefit from a trip to the **local library**. Parents of younger children can create a summer reading list with their children, and then reward them when they finish each book.

Parents can encourage their kids to think outside of the box with arts and crafts. Sites such as **kids.gov** and **NGA Kids** have great ideas that will let any child's imagination run wild and stimulate creativity.

Summertime can be a great time to teach healthy eating habits. Parents can get ideas for tasty and nutritious meals at **Let's Move!** and **kidshealth.org**. There is also information available about the **USDA Summer Food Program**.



Tip! Download the new *Daily Vroom App* on your smart phone for brain building activities on the go!