

**“Play is the highest form of research.”**

*Albert Einstein*

Have staff think about the quote. What does Einstein mean? In a child's eyes, the playground is more than just wood, metal and plastic. It is where their imagination can be set free. They may become whatever they want to be. A princess in her castle, a knight defending the fort, etc.

### **Spotlight on Development**

Ask parents what their child likes to do while playing? What does a typical day look like?

Ask parents if there is an activity they would like to try or if they would like to share an activity with their home visitor. Home visitors can share additional examples of fun activities. **Example:** Chasing and catching bubbles.

Physical activity boosts mood and also helps us rest better at night. Have home visitors apply this to their life. Do they agree? Busy active day = better sleep at night.

### **What might my child do or say?**

It is important to remind parents that physical skills such as; climbing a ladder, catching a ball, etc. are important playground skills. Discuss the why?

Playground skills (or lack of) can affect the child socially and emotionally. A child lacking in some skills compared to their peers, may feel they cannot join in the game.

### **What can I do to help my child develop?**

- Limit TV and other technology time

Provide the following information to staff and share with parents. It is important for parents to set guidelines on media and this plan has many helpful suggestions:

### **Family Media Plan**

The AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics) believes media when used thoughtfully & appropriately can be enhance daily life, but when used inappropriately or without thought, media can displace many important activities such as face-to-face interaction, family-time, outdoor-play, exercise, unplugged downtime & sleep.

This agency offers a **Personalized Family Media Use Plan** you can be aware of when you are using media to achieve your purpose. This requires parents and users to think about what they want those purposes to be. The tool below will help you to think about media and create goals and rules that are in line with your family's values. In staff development, fill out a Family Media Plan for a pretend child. Print out and review the results. Encourage your HIPYPY families to create a free family media plan. The plan will include important information; screen-free zones in the home, limiting screen time, recreational screen time guidance, etc.

### [AAP Family Media Plan](#)

Source: The link below targets the Birth to Five age group and the current research regarding technology.

### [Media and Young Minds](#)

## **Activity 1: Language and Literacy – Growing Vegetable Soup**

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### **What your child will learn from this activity**

How did the family enjoy the new book? Was the child able to understand the pictures in the book? Parent feedback is important and will allow home visitors to help guide the future lessons.

**Memory, Vocabulary, Language, Visual Discrimination** – After role playing the activity, allow the home visitors to link the skills listed to the following **Language and Literacy** activity.

### **What to do**

1. Pictures on **Activity Sheet 1** are cut out **before** beginning the activity.
4. The label names each tool. What is a **tool** to the child? A child friendly definition to go along with the pictures in the book is provided below.  
**Tool:** We hold it in our hands and it helps us do a special job. A shovel helps us dig, a rake smooths the dirt, etc.  
**Note:** Do not assume the child has background knowledge of the word **tool**. If the parent has a real garden tool in the home, reinforce understanding of the word tool by showing the child the shovel, rake, etc.
5. Parent and child will read the book and identify tools.
6. Allow the child to look through the book and point or tell the parent some of the tools. The child will show the parent some of the tools she remembers from reading.
- 8.
8. It is important to name and point to each picture before taking one away. Why? It focuses the child on the card, it reinforces both visual and auditorily.

10. Only add the third card to the “What’s missing?” game if the child has been successful in identifying the missing picture with two cards.

## Activity Sheet 2: Language and Literacy – Vegetable Names

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### What to do

4. If the child does not verbally name the vegetables, have the child point to the vegetable and the parent reinforce the vegetable name. Repeated readings will help the child begin to identify the vegetable by name.

6. The pictures used in the rhyme are located on the page numbers in parenthesis. Parents are more likely to engage in a rhyming activity, if they realize the importance of rhyming. Research shows how rhythm and rhyme play an important role in pre-literacy.

What children gain by rhyme:

- To be able to listen for and keep a steady beat
- To learn retell and be able to repeat Ex. Brown bear brown bear what do you see, I see a red bird looking at me.”
- Be able to retell and sing by themselves. Example:” Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”
- Be able to complete a rhyming sentence by predicting the word that is missing
- Be able to discriminate rhyming words and identify those that don’t rhyme

7 – 9. Turn to the pages noted in parenthesis as you repeat the rhyme Allow the child to be active by pointing to each item. If needed, the first time through, the parent can point to the vegetable. **Example:** The broccoli (point) saw the bean (point) ...

10 – 12. The rhyme is read in parts with each part linked to certain pages. Home visitors may need to mark these pages for roleplay in the home

13. As you repeat the rhyme refer to the pages in the book. The pictures will be a visual cue and will reinforce the rhyme. The child will be picture reading.

**Reminder:** Have home visitors link the skills discussed to the activity.

## THINK

Make sure the parent understands how to trace the hand on the top of the carrot. If possible, make an example during staff training. Ask home visitors what skill tearing pieces of paper works on? What fingers are used to tear the paper?

## Activity 3: Think and Explore – What’s Missing?

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### What your child will learn from this activity

Integrating learning shapes into a game allows the child to be fully engaged in learning the circle, triangle and square shapes. Discuss with home visitors the skills involved and where the specific skill is located in **Activity 3: Think and Explore**.

### What to do

1. 4 Yellow shapes are used. The parent holds the shape while the child slides their finger around each side of the shape for the activity. Touch each corner as you count the sides of the square, triangle and rectangle. Allow the child to feel the edge of the circle.
5. The simple story about the shape family is to add interest, however if the story distracts focus on shape and color missing. If the child has trouble identifying “what is missing?” using 4 shapes, start with two most recognizable shapes – circle and square.

Note: The stories are to add interest to the activity. If the stories become a distraction, focus on taking a shape away and identifying what is missing. *Example: the red circle*

## Activity 4: Think and Explore – What’s Missing?

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### What to do

1. 4 – 2 Blue and 2 green. Make sure all 4 shapes are represented; square, circle, rectangle and triangle. This activity reinforces the previous activity, but uses two colors in the “What’s Missing?” game.
2. If the child cannot verbalize the shape and color have them point to the shape/color or green ask in multiple choice form; “is it the blue circle or green square?”

## Activity 5: Motor – Moving, Finding Circles and Squares

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### What your child will learn from this activity

The child will connect the concept of shapes to their real world. This connection specific to the world (home) they live in will help the child gain a deeper understanding.

### What to do

- 4 -6. Parent is modeling how to find circles in the environment. Have the child take a square and circle from the shape sorter along as they find items in their home. (Remember a square has equal sides. Rectangles and squares are similar, but not the same. Allow the child to use the shape sorter square and compare to the item found.)

6. The **Activity Sheet 2** is used by the **parent** to record the items found on the shape scavenger hunt. Ask Home Visitors why recording the answers is important? The squiggle lines (written words) have meaning.
7. Child will make marks to represent the items found on **Activity Sheet 3 (not 2)**. This will allow the child to see the differences in a smaller group of items. This activity can be repeated in other rooms of the house, outside, in the car, etc.
8. The child is just predicting.
- 9 –10. Count the items found and make a tally mark to represent the item.
11. The child will use the visual clues (tally marks and words) to answer the question. **Note:** Some children may need concrete items for tally marks. **Example:** cheerios, cut straws, etc.

## THINK

Home visitors should talk with parents (using guided discussion) about other places they can “hunt” shapes. Also consider circles and squares may be easier to find in the home. Make sure and emphasize the difference in a square and a rectangle.

## **Family Feedback**

This feedback will be reviewed when the lesson is picked up and should be reviewed each week to help parents know what to look for as they complete the activities throughout the week. It is important to have the home visitors review the questions during staff development. Have each home visitor write an answer to each question on a separate piece of paper. After all have been completed, have each one share their answers with the group.

**How successful was the circle and square hunt? Were you surprised how many things are in the shape of a circle or square? What surprised you or your child the most?**

**What activity did you like best this week? What activity do you think your child liked best this week?**

**What activity did you like least this week? What activity do you think your child liked least this week?**