

Spotlight on Development

Children develop food patterns by watching and eating what their parents eat. For better or worse, what food their family eats influences the “nutritional psyche” of their children’s diet. How parents eat (scheduled/random, skipping meals, snacking, eating on the run, etc.) and even **what** they eat impacts their children.

If fast food and sugary snacks are presented daily, the child learns to crave that type of food. However, a child exposed to fresh fruit, cheese, veggies, etc. establish this healthy preference. Also, an overloaded plate can be overwhelming and unappetizing.

Training Note: Review and discuss this informative handout on [Food Acceptance Patterns](#) with your staff. Assign each staff member a section and have them report back to the larger group what they learned from their section.

What might my child do or say?

Children like to eat foods that are familiar to them. To introduce a new food will require multiple exposures before the child decides they like or dislike the food. A new food may take 8 to 10 exposures before a child is willing to accept the new food.

Hint: When introducing a new food item, offer a small portion of the new food along with some familiar foods. Summer time is a great time to taste fresh foods. If there are farmers markets, neighborhood garden plots, etc. provide information to the parents.

Ask Home Visitors to think about their own food intake. Do they eat the same food over and over throughout the week? How do they feel - eating healthy versus eating unhealthy?

What can I do to help my child develop?

As with all learning and habits, children “do” what they “see”. **Model, Model, Model**

- Expose the child to healthy foods
- Model healthy eating
- Do not reward children for eating a particular food (broccoli) The child may reason “It’s so bad they have to “bribe” me to eat it.” *Example: “If you eat your carrots you can go out and play.”*
- Respect children’s ability to know when they are full. Do not make them clean their plate. Parents responsibility is to offer healthy choices and regular scheduled meal times. Children have the final say on how much they eat (or will not eat.)

Activity 1: Language and Literacy – Categorizing

What your child will learn from this activity

Text-to-self connections are highly personal **connections** that a reader/listener makes between a piece of reading material and their own experiences or life.

Why is this important? -*Story comprehension*

A child can use prior knowledge to help them understand what they are hearing and use this knowledge to make connections with the story based on their experiences. A child that has never ridden a bus or seen a bus will not have background knowledge to help understand how a bus operates.

Have Home Visitors consider something they have read but not experienced in life.

Examples: riding a train, airplane, boat, horse, etc. How would their understanding be if they did not have background knowledge?

What to do

6. It is important for the parent to introduce (say) each picture label. Remind the parent to “complete, confirm, correct.”
7. Parents may want to draw a bus and house (town) underneath the words bus/town in each column. This will allow the child to focus on which column they will place the picture cards.
11. If the child does not name the picture, the parent can say the name and have the child point to the card.

Activity 2: Language and Literacy – My Bus

What to do

6. A cereal box, card stock, paper box, etc. cut into a rectangle will work for the base of the bus. (The sturdier paper is easier for the child to hold and manipulate.) Decorate the bus in a variety of ways; colors, markers, stickers, etc.
7. To focus parents on the parent instruction “I will write their name on each window.” Ask parents who they think the child will choose to ride on their bus?

Ask Home Visitor why would we label? It is a way to bring print awareness into a child’s life in a natural way.

THINK

What other props could parents add in to increase pretend play.

Activity 3: Think and Explore – Let’s Go Shopping

What your child will learn from this activity

Labeling is all around us; street signs, Mom’s shopping list, a thank-you note to Grammie, restaurant signs, etc. and all help contribute to a child’s ability to read.

Labeling basic guidelines:

- Use upper and lowercase letters properly—only proper names begin with an uppercase letter.
- Words are printed neatly.
- All words are spelled correctly.
- The letters used in a label are of the same size, type, and color.
- The words and letters in a label read from left to right.

You will need:

- Collect 12 or so items, but parents may choose to begin to “play store” using six to eight items. Fewer items will allow the child to be confident in the game and limit the choices.
 - Price tags are **Activity Sheet 4 and 5**. Color or highlight the color word on each block price tag.
 - HIPPY blocks – red, blue, green and yellow. The blocks will represent money.
 - Small gift bag that stands on its own or a paper sack. Any bag that allows the child to place the purchased items into with ease.
 - Small box to use as a cash register. A shoe box, shipping box, etc. The box needs to be big enough to hold several blocks.
- Get creative and add or draw additional buttons on the box or add a scanner.



What to do

1. Home Visitor props – make sure and determine (supply at training) a few items Home Visitors will take into the home for roleplaying of the activity. Make sure to place price tags shapes from **Activity Sheet 4 and 5** on each item. Include items that will be common in the homes they serve.

Home Visitors should guide families to find familiar items (12 to 16) to play **Let's Go Shopping**. Parents should prepare and gather items prior to beginning the activities. To create interest the child can help/watch the parent as they “get creative” making the cash register.

Note: (Fewer items are acceptable, just limit to sixteen.)

2. Pre-gathered items have been collected, prepared, cut-out and are available in the HIPPY area. (Area where parent and child complete the HIPPY activities.)

3-4. The parent will model each action for the child.

7. Play the game throughout the week and reverse roles. Allow the child to take the lead.

Note: Note: Save the price cards and cash register box. These items will be used in **Week 29, Activity 4**.

Activity 4: Think and Explore – Let's Go Shopping

What to do

1. Child chooses items to “sell” in the store. (Fewer items are acceptable, just limit to sixteen.)

Home Visitors should have several prop items to roleplay this activity in the home. Include items that will be common to the homes they serve.

4. If the child was successful in **Activity 4**, increase the cost of the items to more than 1 block. Example: Each block is worth one, but the item may cost three blocks or 1 red block and 2 green blocks. Remind parents to be mindful of the quantity of blocks in their block set and also the size of their cash register box.

6. The toothpaste is just an example of how to extend the dramatic play. If the family does not have “toothpaste” in their store any item can be “elaborated” on. Home Visitors should choose one of their prop items to demonstrate.

THINK

Invite other members of the family to “play store” and offer suggestions of a different store. A grocery store, a toy store, a furniture store, etc. Remind parents the activities are designed to allow the child to play again.

Activity 5: Motor – Pinch and Pick Up

What your child will learn from this activity

Have Home Visitors identify (find) each skill in the **Motor** activity.

You will need

- Deck of cards – a full deck of cards is not needed. Parents will need the following cards: 5 red and 5 black cards, 5 red heart and 5 red diamond cards, 5 black clubs and 5 black spades. Playing cards can be purchased at a very low cost at many dollar stores.
- A clothespin – If sites do not provide and/or parents do not have a clothespin, the activity can be completed by having the child pick up the cards with the pincer grasp.

What to do

1. It is important for the child to practice opening and closing the clothespin. This activity is best played on a rug or a towel or blanket to make the cards easier to pick up. If needed the child can point to the card and the parent can position/hold for the child to “clip it” with the clothespin.
2. Make sure parents understand how the child is to grasp the clothespin using the pointer finger and thumb. It is important to allow the child to practice open (squeeze) and relax (close) the clothespin **before** attempting to pick up the playing cards.
4. The child is picking up each red playing card scattered and “clipping it” with the clothespin and dropping in the box. Repeat with 3 black cards.
5. Clipping red shapes –hearts and diamonds and moving to the box. It is important to check for understanding of the color and shape. Have the child point to the card (red heart) and then clip it.
6. Clipping black shapes – black clubs and black spade. It is important to check for understanding of the shape – clubs and spades. Have the child point to the card and then clip it. The child does not name the shape, just is able to distinguish the difference in the shape.

Note: The child does not name the shape, just is able to distinguish the difference (**visual discrimination**) in the shape. If the child has trouble telling the difference between the two shapes, point out the differences – the spade has a point at the top and the clubs have three rounds.

Repeat the activities throughout the week. Reinforcing and repetition is skill building. Encourage the parent to point out shapes everywhere.

THINK

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. Have each one share their answers with the group.

What did you like best about the shopping activities?

Why do you think it is important for your child to act out the story?

What is one thing you learned about your child or yourself this week?