

Spotlight on Development

“STEM” stands for **science, technology, engineering and math**. The Age 2 (and Year 1 and Year 2) are perfectly geared to learn STEM concepts. Children of this age draw from their natural and instinctive curiosity about the world. Teachers and parents need to allow children opportunities to investigate by encouraging them and asking questions about the world.

Examples: A nature walk allow a child the opportunity to collect almost anything: rocks, fossils, seeds, leaves, sticks, bugs, or whatever interest the child. Discuss the skills developing as a child collects, counts, and looks at the different designs and shapes found in nature.

What might my child do or say?

Discuss with parents safe, supervised places to play in their surrounding neighborhood, community, etc. Share specific examples of “your child might” bullets. Example: My child can walk to the mailbox and back to the house without tiring. or My child can use his feet to help guide and stop “his car”.

Reminder: Some children may be overwhelmed by the outside world (no boundary). The need for visual boundaries to help the child narrow their focus can be helpful. A small fenced area, a blanket anchoring the child to a certain space, a focus on an outside swing or slide, etc. all are examples of how to help make the outside world less overwhelming to a child.

What can I do to help my child develop?

Parents need to understand the importance of outside play and the specifics of how to **maximize** learning while outside. Home Visitors will use the bullets to be aware of what parents are doing and how to continue to help their child develop. During guided discussion, allow the parent to share examples of learning that has occurred outside.

Activity 1: Language and Literacy – Sequencing

What your child will learn from this activity

The real **pictures** will help children align the storybook objects **with** their real-world reference. This helps the child transfer knowledge they have learned from the book.

What to do

2 - 8. Focus on re-reading and drawing out details – What question was baby bird asking?

17. Place in a long row left to right. Why? We read left to right and want to reinforce the pre-reading skill of visually tracking left to right.

18. The child will retell the story using the story cards. This retelling will allow the parent to assess for story comprehension and allow the child to use language (expressive) to recall the story. Parents should complete and confirm the child's responses.

Note: If the child has trouble retelling the story using all nine cards, start with three cards, then add three more cards, etc. Build the story.

19. **Save the cards** and allow the child to retell the story to another family member.

Activity 2: Language and Literacy – What's Missing?

What to do

4. If needed (do not assume), show the child the eyes of the baby bird and have the child make the same facial expression to help connect the feeling to the face.

7. Allow the child time to respond. Wait time = think time. If needed, the parent may need to give a helpful (leading) question/prompt.

14. What could the parent use to explain steam to the child. *Steam – a white spray of water.*
Examples: The shower, etc.

16. The parent should say/repeat what is happening in each picture. *Example: the cat, the dog and momma bird on the nest.* Hearing (auditory) and seeing (visual) will help the child remember "What is Missing?"

THINK

Talk to your child about what to do if they should become separated from a parent. This shouldn't be a discussion which makes children scared and alarmed. Instead, encourage the parents to approach the subject positively and calmly. Let parents know how important it is to teach their child their real name as soon as they can memorize it. Think about it, there are many mommy's and daddy's in a crowded supermarket. Another tip is to teach your child to FREEZE – stay put and ask another Mom for help.

Activity 3: Think and Explore – Opposites, Empty/Full

What your child will learn from this activity

Full and empty are terms used to identify quantities. The child will use language (empty/full) to describe the content of the cups. Opposites are best taught to children by demonstrating and teaching in related pairs. Wet/dry, empty/full, etc.

What to do

1. The cereal, rice, beans, etc. will be in a pan/bowl and the 2 cups are empty.

6-7. We want to encourage the parent to verbally express cause and effect. "If I turn the empty cup over, nothing comes out."

8. Encourage the child to use the spoon to fill the cups.

Training Note: Ask Home Visitors why we would encourage using a spoon? What skills are we working on? Possible answers - Fine Motor – holding the spoon and Visually Tracking - as the child fills up the cup.

9-10. Home Visitors should make sure parents understand the cup should be filled to the top (full). Be mindful of the size of the cup being used. The cup needs to be big enough (opening) for the child to be able to fill easily, but not so big that the child tires before filling the cup full.

16-20. The child may use a small cup or a small measuring cup with a handle to pour water into the cups.

21. A small piece of sponge, washcloth, or anything the child can squeeze water from into the cup. Home Visitors need to guide parents to find items in the home that could be used for the activity. Help the parent decide – the best plan is to have the material in mind **before** the activity.

Note: Squeezing the water into the cup helps strengthen the small muscles in the hand.

Activity 4: Think and Explore – Exploring

You will need

Sites may choose to provide small bags of pretzel sticks and 2 cupcake wrappers for the activity.

What to do

2. Lotto Board **Empty (p.17)** and a corresponding Lotto Board **Full (p.18)**.

3. The parent needs to identify/name the items on each Lotto Board. Example: full dog bowl/empty dog bowl or full wagon/empty wagon. It is important for the parent to use the terms **empty and full** to identify the item.

Encourage the parent to save the cards and Lotto Boards and play the game throughout the week.

Ask Home Visitor to share feedback from parents about the Th!nk activities. Are parents completing the activities?

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Activity 5: Motor – Snipping

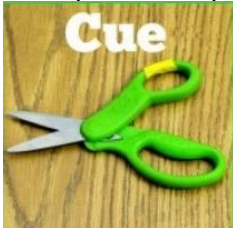
What your child will learn from this activity

Ask Home Visitors for feedback on the cutting activity from last week. Were the children successful? What problems did the parents encounter?

What to do

1. Have each home visitor demonstrate how they hold scissors. “Is there pointer finger guiding?” or “Do they place all fingers in the bottom scissor hole?” Have each home visitor demonstrate holding the scissors the correct way. So many of adults hold scissors incorrectly (many adults hold their pencil incorrectly) and this results in a tired hand. It is very important that the Home Visitor review this information with the parent. In the home, have parents show the Home Visitor how they hold their scissors.

A small piece of tape is wrapped around the small hole of the scissors.



6. Placement of the guiding eyes between the wrist and first knuckle. The purpose is to help the child keep their thumb pointed up.

7. The child is practicing picking up the scissors and placing their fingers correctly. If needed the child can repeat multiple times.



8. Parent is helping the child understand how to hold the scissors – what to check for (thumb/eye on to).

15. Home Visitors should demonstrate how the parent should hold the paper.

16. If the child had trouble cutting regular paper choose to repeat using same weight paper and build up to the heavier paper. Remember the child is only cutting **snips**.

Note: is important to remind the parents to keep the scissors in a safe place. We want the child to have many opportunities to practice cutting, but under parent supervision.

THINK

Snipping straws, playdough, etc. can be fun and great practice for the child. Repeat (with supervision) throughout the week.

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.

How comfortable are you letting your child use scissors?

Why do you think this is an important skill to learn?

What do you think your child learned from the book, *Are You My Mother?*