

If you read just **one** book a day to your child, they will have been read **1825** books by their 5th birthday.

Source: We are Teachers

Spotlight on Development

Children need sleep. Sleep promotes growth, is heart healthy, helps battle germs, and boosts learning? Do you agree? How does a sleepless night affect home visitors? Discuss as a group. [Sleepfoundation.org](https://www.sleepfoundation.org) has an informative article related to how **set** bedtimes boost preschooler's health. This is a possible topic for a group meeting and a topic that reinforces the importance of routines.

Have Home Visitors consider what the research says on poor sleep and adults:



SIGNS OF NOT GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP INCLUDE



POOR WORK PERFORMANCE

MOOD SWINGS

DECREASED ALERTNESS

LOW ENERGY

INCREASED SIGNS OF AGING

BRAIN FOG

WEIGHT GAIN

INCREASED IRRITABILITY

What might my child do or say?

Ask the parent about their child's bedtime routine. Do they wake during the night? How does the child transition to bedtime? Does their child have a set bedtime? Use the information gained from guided discussion to gain understanding of the current routines in place. During role play practice guided discussion by using what, why, when, why and how questions.

What can I do to help my child develop?

One of the most important tips for a bedtime routine is **be consistent**. Routines allow a child to know what to expect. Children's fear of the unknown includes everything from a "suspicious" new food to a major change in their life like a new baby or a move. Just like adults, they handle change better if they expect it and it comes in the form of a familiar routine. Why? Routines make a child feel safe and secure.

How can a routine benefit a family? Below are just a few benefits.

1. Routines reduce power struggles. **Example:** bedtime is bedtime, brushing our teeth. It is part of our routine.
2. Routines help kids cooperate. They know what is expected and what comes next.
Example: Bath time, then story time and finally it leads to bedtime. Over time children will learn this routine and begin to perform the routine by themselves (independently).
3. Children learn the idea of "looking forward" to an activity they enjoy. **Example:** Playground time is after naptime.

Activity 1: Language and Literacy – Growing Vegetable Soup

What your child will learn from this activity

What does the parent see in their child regarding food choices? Does the child separate their food – no touching allowed? Has the family tried any new foods this week? One family shared with how they baked sweet potato fries with cinnamon. It is now a favorite in their home.

The average child sees 10,000 food commercials per year, and many of these commercials are related to fast food. Fast foods generally contain more fat sugar and salt (and a toy) and when frequently offered to children they are less likely to choose healthy food.

Note: Healthy Eating is a possible Group Meeting topic. Many presenters, such as extension offices, offer a child/parent cooking program, or the food service directors in many public schools are another great resource for a presenter.

What to do

5. Home Visitors should see how the beans are progressing in past weeks. The child should have observed their bean seeds swell, sprout, roots appear and even a few leaves over the last few weeks. This concrete connection will help as we view the pictorial representation. (**Activity Sheet 1**)

6-8. Parent and child look at the pictures from the book and review what a seed needs to grow into a plant.

10-13. Using the first three pictures in a row (reading left to right) (the seed, seedlings and tomato plant). Parents should use the words (vocabulary) from the book. Planted, sprouted, growing, plants, etc.

14-15. The remaining four pictures are used and placed on table in order in a row (side by side). Parents should use the words (vocabulary) from the book. Pick, dig, wash, cut, etc.

Note: The pictures will be visual cues (prompts) to help the child “tell” the story.

Activity 2: Language and Literacy – Making Vegetable Soup

What to do

6. What is a recipe? It shows us what we need and how to cook.

7. Activity Sheet 2 contains the vegetables needed to make our pretend soup. If a child is easily distracted keep the vegetables in groups (groups of celery, carrots, tomatoes, etc.)

8. The child will picture read the recipe card. Allow the child to repeat “one onion” and find the onion on the table.

9. Child points to picture and says, “two potatoes” and chooses two potatoes.

10. “three tomatoes, “four celery stalks”, “five carrots”

11. Using the cutout vegetables (picture representational) pretend play washing the vegetable cards.

12. Pretend play peeling the vegetables.

13. Use a plastic knife or a knife from a child’s play set. Make sure the parent understands the knife is for pretend-play and not to really cut the vegetables. After parent makes the “real” cut the paper vegetables will be added to a pot for cooking.

14-19. These steps and props used are enhancing the make-believe play.

The activity allows the parent to enhance and support the child's pretend play. The activity is creating an opportunity to experience something new and build on what they already know. Consider how many opportunities there are for language development in this activity.

The script allows the parent to work through important stages of make-believe play.

1. Plan – there are defined roles and a beginning scenario.
2. Roles – The roles are defined.
3. Props – used with a purpose
4. Language – describes what is happening.

THINK

Reinforce and guide family to be successful with the THINK activities.

Activity 3: Think and Explore – Learning with Blocks

What your child will learn from this activity

What does a child learn from playing with blocks? Review the following benefits of playing with blocks. (Feel free to add additional benefits.)

1. Problem solving – this can be intentional or accidental.
2. Imagination – create individual creations or work together with a buddy and create something together.
3. Math – length, measurement, comparison, colors, numbers, etc.
4. Motor – fine and gross motor; stacking blocks in a tower.

It is important for parents (and home visitors) to understand the “why” behind an activity.

What to do

1. We are teaching a directional term – standing up (vertical) and lying down (horizontal). We will begin by allowing the child to use their own body to stand up or lie down.

8. Child transfers information to using a toy (doll) to represent spatial terms.

13-18. Parent will build (model) and child will replicate. Remind parent to reinforce using language – standing up or lying down.

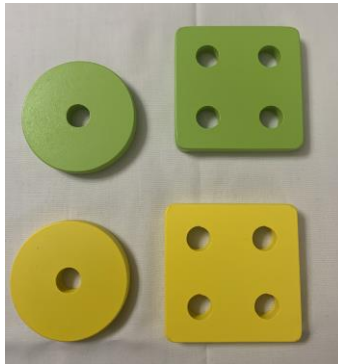
Note: The child will need to follow directions. Remind parents to model and repeat the directions. It is important to allow the child time and reinforce the direction. Help the **child by repeating** Ex. “place 2 standing blocks and **emphasize in front of me.**”

Activity 4: Think and Explore – Learning with Blocks

What to do

Note: A hard even surface is needed for this activity.

1. Limit the number of blocks if needed.
2. Flat (an additional term to describe the block lying down). The focus is visual discrimination. The child will replicate the parent design using their blocks.



Note: Focus is on shape not color.

3. The parent will use blocks in multiple combinations to build 2 dimensional structure. Blocks may be placed; standing up, flat or both.



4. The parent will make a flat design.
5. The parent and child will build a structure using 3 blocks. *Repeat 2 or 3 times using 3 blocks.*



6. The parent and child will build a structure using 4 blocks. *Repeat 2 more times using 4 blocks.*

7-8. Child choice – parent's job is to copy the design.

Note: The focus is not on the color of the blocks. The focus is replicating and building block structures (problem solving and visual discrimination.) Remind parents to talk about (use language) their structure as they build. Ask Home Visitors to identify other skills contained in this activity? Example: fine motor, eye-hand coordination, shape recognition, thinking and reasonings, etc.

THINK

A set of dominoes can add to block fun.

- Parent and child can set up blocks close and then start the “domino chain effect” by tapping one. Don’t be surprised if your Age 2 child only allows you to setup a few before “tapping” the first domino.
- Stacking domino blocks into a tower. The fun is knocking them down.
- Building structures with dominos

Activity 5: Motor – Kindness Stones

What your child will learn from this activity

Kindness is taught by modeling and can be strengthened by practicing. Reading stories and pretend play help children understand and begin to actively be aware of other feelings.

What to do

1 – 2. Palm size stones will be used. As the parent and child gather the stones, the parent may want to take a small shovel (spade) to help unearth the rock.

3. Limit to 4 stones.

4. Allow the child to use a child size brush to wash the stones (old toothbrush.)

6. Parent and child identify who the stones will be for. (Extra tags are included for additional stones.)

7. Allow the child to decorate one stone at a time. Markers work well on stones.

9. The tags will be cut out and placed in the bag with the stone.

Encourage the parent to allow the child to make these special kindness deliveries to each person listed. The activity is to share kindness and make people happy.

THINK

Home visitors should talk with parents (using guided discussion) about other places they can “hunt” shapes.

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.

Who did your child give the kindness stones to?

What are your thoughts about cooking with your child?

What vegetable does your family enjoy eating?