



Family Connection: Routinely Routine

Skill: *Identifies daily routine activities*

- A child's understanding of their daily routine activities contributes to a sense of safety and independence. Helping children establish and maintain daily routine activities provides them with consistency which is a key ingredient to happy and helpful learning!
- Explain to your child that when they are at home, they have certain routines. You can say something such as, *"When we are at home, we will do similar activities everyday just like you do at school! What are some things you do at school?"* Or, *"All of those things help you learn and grow. You do so many things throughout the day at school. We are going to do many things at home that will help you learn and grow, too!"*
- Support your child in identifying daily routines (at home) by creating a visual schedule. In order to create a visual schedule, use a wipe-on/off board or paper and make a two-column grid.
- One side of the grid will include pictures that illustrate different daily routines (which you can find by way of magazines, catalogs, grocery flyers, and other paper advertisers). For example, bars of soap (for handwashing), toothpaste/toothbrush (for brushing teeth), fruits, vegetables, and other nutrient food choices (yogurts, wheat bread, etc.), and so on.
- The other side of the grid will be left blank so that your child can add a small sticker (or a checkmark) next to each daily routine as it's completed.
- As you and your child work together to find images for the visual schedule, talk with her about the importance of each daily routine. For example, *"Yes. Washing our hands is very important because it helps to prevent the spread of germs and can remove germs from our hands. Did you know we should scrub soap on the front and back of our hands, between our fingers, AND our fingernails!? When I am washing my hands, I hum the 'Happy Birthday Song' two times because it helps me remember to scrub all the important parts of my hands, and it makes the time go quickly!"*
- If you choose to use paper for the visual schedule (rather than a wipe-on/off board), you can use the schedule multiple days by placing a new and blank piece of paper atop the completed daily tasks.

Family Connection: Segmenting Savvy**Skill:** *Identifies separate words within a sentence*

- Identifying separate words in a sentence requires a skill called sentence segmenting. Sentence segmenting is the first step toward learning how to identify smaller sounds (such as syllables and letters within words), all of which are strong indicators towards success with reading.
- Following is an experience that enables you to practice sentence segmenting with your child in a fun, yet easy and effective manner!
- Start by telling your child that you need their help counting the number of words in sentences, and then model how the activity will work by saying a simple, two-word sentence such as, “I run.” As you speak, hold up one finger for each word (i.e. one finger for the word /I/, and a second finger for the word /run/).
- After you demonstrate, ask the child to listen to another sentence and to count the words as you did.
- If your child struggles to count each word in a sentence, shorten the sentence to one word (“Yeah!” “Yes!” Yikes!”). OR, stick with two-word sentences, but after you say and count the sentence, ask your child to repeat the sentence and count the words as he says them. Lastly, rather than asking your child to ‘count’ each word (with his fingers), you can invite your child to clap his hands as he hears each word.
- If your child is interested, continue playing, and as he shows comfortability with the two-word sentences, increase them to three (or four-words) each!

Family Connection: Awesome Athletics**Skill:** *Carries out a one-step request (in an unfamiliar situation)*

- Successfully following directions is an important life skill both at school and in the home. Help your child strengthen listening skills and build verbal processing while playing a game and having some fun!
- Invite your child to participate in a variety of athletic endeavors by saying something like, “*I want to see your awesome athletic skills! Awesome athletes must be good listeners. Listen to my instructions and then show me your awesome athletic skills.*”
- Provide your child with a one-step request such as “Jump up towards the sky!” “Do two jumping jacks!” “Run around the tree.” “Hop like a bunny.”
- Continue providing directions and escalating the number of steps. Switch up the directives to match your child’s interests, or to better suit your location (i.e. if you are in the car, ask your child to “clap once or slap your knees three times”).
- If this activity is difficult for your child, model the directions for them. Children process visual images much faster than they process verbal directions.
- If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, add an additional step to the directions. For example, you might challenge:
 - Hop two times on one foot and then hop two times on the other
 - Run to the end of the yard and then walk backwards on your way back
 - Bounce the ball four times and then throw it in the air
 - Run to the tree, do a jumping jack and skip back

Family Connection: Spill the Beans**Skill:** *Uses 1-to-1 correspondence to count sets of 4 or less objects*

- One-to-one correspondence is the understanding that when counting a set of objects, you say one number for each object you count. For example, if a child is counting three toys and says the number name aloud for each toy as it is touched, “One, two, three,” she is demonstrating one-to-one correspondence. It is easiest for children to demonstrate one-to-one correspondence when the objects they are counting are in a line or some other organized arrangement.
- Place four or less small objects (beans, buttons, paper clips, etc.) into a plastic cup. Have your child cover put his/her hand over the top of the cup, give it a good shake, and spill the objects on to a table or the floor. Say something like, “Let’s practice counting! I am going to place objects in this cup. Please cover the cup with your hand and shake the cup and then we’ll pour out the objects and count them!”
- After the objects are released from the cup, help your child arrange them into a straight line, and then move them into a pile as they count each object. You can say something like, “I want you to count how many objects we have. Let’s put them in a straight line and count! How many are there all together?”
- If this activity is too difficult for your child, support them by moving their finger as they count the objects.
- If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, have them count the objects in the random arrangement the objects are in when poured out of the cup instead of lining them up or having your child move each object as they count it. You can also add additional objects to the cup.

Family Connection: Word Pairs**Skill:** *Shows understanding of many different words*

- A strong vocabulary supports children’s reading comprehension skills as they must focus on sounding out a word, but not the word’s meaning. You can support your child’s vocabulary development through reading books and talking with your child throughout the day. Understanding the relationship words have because of their meaning will help children when they are using context clues to read new words.
- Explain to your child that you are going to play a word game. Say something like, “*Let’s play a game that makes us think about words. I am going to say a word and I want you think of a word that either means the same thing, a word that means the opposite or a word that goes with it.*”
- Provide your child a word and ask them to think of another word that goes with it. For example, “What word goes with, “FAST”?” (they might say, “quick” or “slow”). “What word goes with “PEANUT BUTTER”?” (they might say, “jelly” or “peanuts”).
- Switch roles every few words so that they are providing you with a word. Make a “mistake” every now and then to see if your child will correct you!
- If this activity is too challenging for your child, provide them with two options to choose from. For example, if you provide them with the word “banana,” ask them if “apple” or “basketball” would go with the “banana.”
- If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, ask them to provide you with two words that go with word you have provided them.

Family Connection: Counting Cupcakes**Skill:** *When asked to produce a set of objects, counts out 10 or fewer objects.*

- Young children need frequent and repeated opportunities to produce a set of objects that corresponds with a number they have been given. This helps solidify their understanding that the last number counted represents the whole of the group. Young children often think that the object they touched when they said the number five is five. They aren't yet able to conceptualize that all the objects they counted collectively represent five, not just the last object they counted.
- For this activity, find a muffin/cupcake pan and write the numbers 1-10 on a piece of colored tape or a sticky-note and place one number on the bottom of each muffin/cupcake hole. (You may want to cover the remaining two spaces with a piece of paper or tape if the pan is made for a dozen).
- Gather objects that you have a good number of like paperclips, buttons, beans, cotton balls, etc.
- Explain to your child that they are going to fill each muffin/cupcake hole with the number of objects that correspond with the number on the bottom of the hole. Say something like, "We are going to practice our counting skills! What numbers do you see in the bottom of the muffin tin?" Encourage your child to say each number as they point to it. "Fill each muffin tin with the number of objects that represent the number."
- Ask your child to select one number to start with by saying something like, "Which number do you want to start with? 4? Great! Count 4 buttons to put into the number 4 tin."
- Continue until each cup has been counted and filled!
- If this activity is too challenging for your child, focus on the numbers 1-5. Take a piece of paper and write the numbers 1-5 along the bottom then draw a line of dots on top of each number that correspond with the number. Have your child place objects on the dots to help them count out the correct number.
- If your child is ready for a more challenging math experience, change out the numbers in the muffin tin (i.e. rather than 1-10, choose random numbers such as 6, 10, 12, 14, 5, etc.).

Family Connection: Takeout Takeaway

Skill: Deletes a word from a compound word, without the support of pictures

- Deleting a word from a compound word (e.g. when you take "butter" away from "butterfly" it becomes "fly.") is segmenting skill. Segmenting is the ability to divide sounds we hear into smaller sounds. Learning to segment begins with identifying words in a sentence and then moves to parts of words (such as with compound words).
- Before you get started, think of several food items that happen to be compound words (e.g. strawberry, watermelon, grapefruit, cupcake, peanut, oatmeal, etc.). Invite your child to segment the names of some of your family's favorite foods.
- Explain to your child that you are going to play a game in which they takeaway part of a word by saying something like, "Compound words are words that are made up of two words, and we're going to play a game with compound words that are foods, like the word, CUPCAKE! When you take away the word /cup/ what is left of your CUPCAKE? CAKE! That's right. When you take the word CUP away from CUPCAKE, you have the word CAKE."
- Go through a few more words together, and then challenge your child to try one on his own! For example, "BLUEBERRY. Take the word BLUE away from BLUEBERRY. What is the new word?"
- If this activity is too challenging for your child, use two small objects (buttons, cups, etc.) to represent the two words forming the compounding words. Touch each object as you say each

word in the compound word. Remove one of the objects to help our child takeaway a word from the compound word.

- If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, invite him to think of other food items that are compound words, or come up with new categories of words to explore!

Family Connection: Cereal Line-Up

Skill: *Pairs objects using one-to-one correspondence when given sets of up to 10 objects*

- Children first use one-to-one correspondence to count objects as they say one number for each object they count. As children grow in their mathematical thinking, they then use this skill to compare groups of objects to determine which group has more or less. Pairing objects helps them make concrete connections between different sized groups of objects.
- Invite your child to practice counting, pairing, and comparing groups of objects using cereal (or other objects/snacks with different colors).
- Pour about 20 pieces of cereal on the table and have your child sort them into groups by shape, size or color (whichever makes sense for the food item). Ask your child if they can tell which group has the most or least number of pieces (or if they are the same), just by looking at them!
- Encourage your child to check his/her answer, by using one-to-one correspondence counting skills to determine the exact number in each group.
- Continue playing by changing the number in each group.
- If this activity is too challenging for your child, reduce the number of groups to two (and reduce the number of objects to no more than 5).
- If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, encourage them to leave the pieces in piles (rather than lining them up).

Family Connection: Two Step Tasks

Skill: *Follows two-step, oral directions (that relate to familiar activity or situation)*

- Your child has been working very hard on following directions at school. Not only does the ability to follow directions make your child's time at school and home more productive, it is an important indicator of their language and communication development.
- To continue strengthening your child's listening and understanding skills, provide several different two-step directions throughout the day. For example, "Please take off your shoes and put them in the closet." "Put your toys in the basket and then put the basket on the shelf." "Put your trash in the trash can and your cup in the sink."
- To play a specific game that supports following two-step directions, engage your child in a game of "Simon Says" (i.e. "Simon Says touch your nose and turn around." And so on).
- If this activity is too challenging for your child, use the phrase "First (task), then (task)." Before you send your child off to complete their two tasks, have them repeat the instructions using the "first – then" language and touching a finger for each task they are going to do.
- If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, you can add a third or even fourth instruction (if your child is ready) or you can time how long it takes to complete the tasks (if he likes that type of motivation).

Family Connection: Nature Walk

Skill: *Identifies at least 3 living things*

- Understanding the natural world helps children develop scientific thinking skills, which is why taking a nature walk with the children is an excellent way to provide you a chance to determine how comfortable they are with their knowledge of living and non-living things.
- Ask your child to join you on a walk and explain that you're going to practice being scientists as you search for living things!"
- As you walk outdoors with your child, encourage your child to identify living things. As she does, pause and study each living thing (for example, "I see a squirrel! I know it is living because it moves and breathes!").
- If possible, make a list of the living things your child observes.
- If this activity is too challenging for your child, identify the living things for your child and encourage him to name one or two things he notices about the living things. Another option is to provide you child a choice between one living thing and one non-living thing.
- If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, support them in thinking through how the living things they have identify grow and change over time.