

Our Family



Acknowledgments

The CanLearn Society acknowledges and is thankful to all families who have participated in our family literacy programs over the past 20 years.

Before you begin:

There is no right or wrong way to work on suggested activities. Activities do not need to be completed in a specific sequence, choosing and selecting those that are interesting to you is encouraged.

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This Is Us!

“Every child needs an adult who is crazy about him or her in order to grow up.”

~ Urie Bronfenbrenner

Ideas:

Make a photo collage or a drawing.

Good Times

“Everyone has a story. The story you tell matters.”

Ideas:

What do you think your child is good at? What do you enjoy doing with him or her? What do they especially like doing with you?

Our Best Moments

When are your best moments with your child? What do you enjoy doing with him or her?

Ideas:

- Make letters out of cereal or popcorn
- Play 'I Spy' with a homemade telescope or binoculars
- Use a coupon at the grocery store, match it to the item on a shelf
- Get messy with oil
- Name hidden objects in a box of rice
- Play dress-up
- Play with bubbles in the bath
- Go for a walk outside – smell the roses!
- Hide a smell – who can find a stinky sock?

Four Hugs a Day

**“4 hugs a day,
that’s the
minimum. 4 hugs
a day, not the
maximum.”**

~ Charlotte Diamond

Nobody gets enough hugs a day, because the minimum number is 4. Now, if you haven’t got 4 hugs today, then you better get some more!

I Wish You Wouldn't Do This?

“No parent, no child is perfect.”

Are there things your child does that you find hard to put up with?

School

**“Kid, you’ll move mountains!
Today is your day! Your day!
Your mountain is waiting. So... Get on your way!”**

~ Dr. Seuss

One day your child will go to school. What do you think will help them to do well at school?

Rules

“Call them rules or call them limits, good ones, I believe, have this in common: they serve reasonable purposes; they are practical and within a child’s capability; they are consistent, and they are an expression of loving concern.”

~ Fred Rodgers

What are the rules or routines in your family (like getting up, going to school, mealtimes, and bedtimes)?

A Village

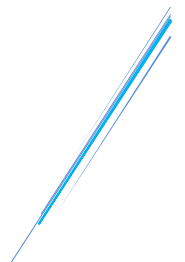
**“It takes a village
to raise a child.”**

~ African Proverb

Would you say you
have a community
beyond your family?
Neighbours perhaps?

Do you go anywhere
regularly with your
child where he or
she might feel they
are accepted and
belong, such as
friends’ houses, play
group, even church?

Who are important
people in your life?



Hopes and Dreams

*“Don’t tell me
the sky is the
limit when there
are footprints on
the moon.”*

~ P. Brandt

Looking ahead to
when your child is
older – what are
your hopes for his or
her future?

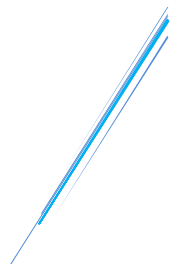
Wants and Needs

“You can learn many things from children. How much patience you have, for instance.”

~ I. P. Jones

How does your child let you know what she or he feels and wants?

Do they have ways of telling you things and persuading you?



Check-in

How is your child doing? What new things is he or she proud of being able to do at the moment?

Make a photo collage or write about it.

Self – Care

“Taking care of yourself doesn’t mean me first, it means me too.”

~ L. R. Knost

Many mothers of young children say that they wish they had two things:

- More energy,
- And more time sometimes for their own needs and interests

Are these things issues for you? Have you found any strategies that help you?

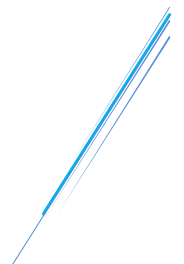
Happiness

“Wouldn’t life be easier for both parents and children, if parents would observe, relax and enjoy what their child is doing, rather than keep teaching what the child is not yet capable of?”

~ M. Gerber

Many parents say is that they hope their child will be happy.

What do you think being happy is about?



Parent Problem-Solver: Whining

Example: you may be dead set about giving your child an ice cream before dinner, but you cave in because your child is saying, “Can I have an ice cream? Why can’t I have an ice cream? You let me have ice cream last week. So you end up saying, “OK, but the next time you ask for ice cream before dinner, the answer is no – so don’t bother asking.”

REFRAME

How am I contributing to my child’s tendency to whine?

REFLECT

What am I doing to give my child the impression that whining is effective?

RESOLVE

What can I do differently that will send the message that whining will not work?

*“There was never
a child so lovely,
but his mother
was glad to get
him to sleep.”*

~ Ralph Waldo
Emerson

Thinking It Through: Spoiling and Unspoiling

You will not spoil your child if you:

- Pick up a baby when he or she cries
- Carry a toddler when he or she asks
- Buy a toy for your child

“Buying a toy doesn’t spoil the child, but buying a toy because your child won’t take no for an answer does.”

REFRAME

How do I spoil my child?

REFLECT

- Do I feel guilty about upsetting my child?
- Do I want to avoid a tantrum or whining?

RESOLVE

Use the following scenarios to come up with new solutions:

- A. Your child wants an ice-cream and won't take no for an answer.

Your knee-jerk reaction is:

But you stop yourself and instead you:

- B. Your child is crying because she asked for a vanilla ice-cream, and she changed her mind and wanted a chocolate one.

Your knee-jerk reaction is:

But you stop yourself and instead you:

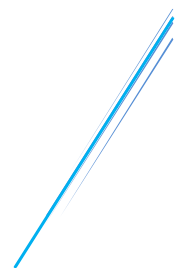
Exploring TV and the Digital World

E. Halligan

“The key is to teach them how to be safe with technology because ultimately, we want our children to be in charge of technology rather than feeling technology is in charge of them.”

~ E. Halligan

- How much time screen time does your child have each day?
- What are the benefits of screen time for children?
- How much screen time is too much per day?
- What is your child’s favourite TV programme or favourite digital activity?
- What digital activities do your family like to do together?



Out and About: At the Playground

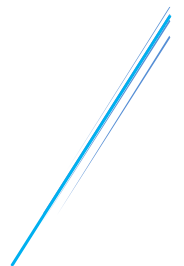
“If you trust play, you will not have to control your child’s development as much. Play will raise the child in ways you can never imagine.”

~ V. Gowmon

Give your child a challenge, and set a time limit (use your phone alarm):

- Run to a certain point and back
- Find five leaves that are bigger than their hand
- Find the first letter of their name in a sign
- Go around all the playground equipment
- Count the number of people at the playground

Which activity did your child enjoy the most?



Storytelling

Story telling involves two important skills that we need for writing. We need to be able to sequence (put ideas, words and sentences in the right order, and we need a rich vocabulary.

Telling many stories is essential for developing vocabulary and for people to become familiar with how stories are put together. Stories don't have to be read – lots of families made stories are really easy to remember – and for children to join in with.

- Use the “story generator” below to generate your story
- Throw dice to select your story features

Opening line

1. **Once upon a time...**
2. **It was a dark and stormy night.**
3. **The phone rang.**
4. **She would never forget the day that...**
5. **It started a few days ago.**
6. **One morning...**

Character description <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Beautiful2. Handsome3. Tired4. Nervous5. Ancient6. Young	Character <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Princess2. Dragon3. Cat4. Puppy5. Me6. Alien
Location description <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Old2. Modern3. Gloomy4. New5. Ancient6. Isolated	Location <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Home2. Library3. Farm4. Zoo5. Hotel6. Grocery Store
Closing line <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. And they all lived happily ever after.2. Life was never the same again!3. He crawled into the bed, tired but happy.4. That was a day to remember.5. So everything was OK in the end.6. And at last, the adventure was over.	

Number Fun

Give your child the opportunity to play with numbers:

- Counting steps as you walk along; e.g. “one, two, three, jump” together
- Collecting and counting objects in the park; e.g. leaves
- Helping with shopping; e.g. helping to choose four apples
- Use language to help children think mathematically; e.g. “how many will we need, is that enough or too many?”

PLAYDOUGH ACTIVITY

You need:

- 3 cups of flour
- 2 tablespoons of corn flour
- 1 cup of salt
- 1 cup of cold water
- 2 teaspoons of vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons of food colouring

1. Follow the instructions to make play dough together – count out the cup and spoonfuls needed together.
2. Play with the dough, using “math” words to describe it such as more, less, long, thin, big, small – and to share it out.
3. Use the small objects such as small pebbles, toothpicks, candles to stick into the dough to count along.
4. Shape the playdough into numerals.

Cooking Together

The table below has tasks that young children can help with. Some tasks are appropriate for younger children while others are for older children. There is no right or wrong answer – some children will develop the motor skills for “fiddly” tasks earlier than others. What can your child help with at the moment?

Finding ingredients	Choosing a recipe
Adding ingredients	Rolling and cutting
Stirring	Reading a recipe
Measuring	Setting the oven
Weighing	Setting the table
Spreading topping	Using a kitchen timer
Following instructions	Icing and decorating
Cutting and chopping	Putting things away
Counting	Pouring

The End

1. Which activity did you enjoy most?

2. What did you learn about your child?

3. What did you learn about yourself?







