

6 Great Ideas for Summer Learning!

Summertime is for growing minds! Here are a few ideas to help your child build clear speaking and listening skills along with purposeful reading and writing. These activities work on your child's general knowledge, vocabulary, language skills, understanding of print, and critical thinking skills.

1. Ask for help with shopping.

Make a shopping list. Older children can create the list for you. Ask your little one to help you think of the things to add to the list. Talk about what letters and sounds are in the words.

Let your child help shop. Older children may select a category (e.g., canned goods or fresh vegetables) to shop for. Copy items onto your young child's version of the list, using a combination of letters and drawings.

Make a map. Ask your child to notice where things are in the grocery store. At home, help him or her to draw and label the map. On the next visit, your child can see if it's correct and use the map to help you shop. Older children may use the map to develop a strategic plan for shopping most efficiently.

2. Talk in the car.

Have your child notice things: weather, people or traffic signs. Ask "Why do you think...?" questions and start a discussion. Dig to have your child give solid reasons for their statements. Or encourage coming up with the wildest ideas possible.

Ask your child to give you directions to some familiar place. Help with street names and distances. This calls on spatial visualization and sequential thinking. Older children can write the directions and read them out as you drive.

3. Provide computer time.

Your younger child can type on a keyboard and name and sound out the letters and words.

Have your child research a possible purchase and develop a recommendation based on the findings. Or

research a family trip, looking up routes, air fare, hotel costs, attractions and so on. He or she can propose an itinerary, budget and menu of activities.

4. Visit your local public library regularly.

Let your child see you using the library to investigate a question. And let him or her see you choosing, checking out and – especially – enjoying books.

Have your child select some books to take home. On the way home, ask him or her to tell you about one, why it was picked, and what it might be about.

5. Play word games.

I Spy: Say that you see something that begins with a certain sound and ask him or her to guess what it is. Reverse roles. Older children will enjoy **20 Questions**.

Hinky-Pinky: The player thinks of a rhyming phrase (usually two words) and gives a definition. Other players must guess the phrase. For example, "a swine that takes up all the room in a mud hole" would be a "bog hog".

6. Find time to read together every day.

For younger ones, move your finger underneath the words as you read each line. Ask your child to tell you about the pictures. Use different voices, sound effects and funny faces. Ask your child to act out a character.

For the whole family, choose a longer book (see resource below) and have daily read-aloud time. One person may read, or family members can take turns. During the day, talk about the story, the ideas, the words, what may happen next, or who might be cast if this were a movie.

Sunshine State Readers Lists: <http://www.floridamediaed.org/ssyra.html>

What you can do every day Listen to your child's ideas and experiences. Reflect an understanding of feelings expressed Ask for her opinion Get your child to explain things to you such as processes or comparisons Ask him to speculate about why certain things occur.... Let your child watch you do things and show her how to help Let him try new things.