

# FAMILY ACTIVITIES

## PACKET 1





# THOUGHT of the WEEK



From Holly Delgado, Early Childhood Specialist at HighScope Educational Research Foundation

We have entered a time in our lives that is unprecedented; all around us, the world is coming to a grinding halt. Millions of children across the country are unable to attend school, but that doesn't mean learning needs to stop. Our HighScope and COR Advantage teams understand the stress that comes along with the unexpected upheaval of our daily schedules and routines. However, we will persevere.

Whether your school closure is for two weeks, four weeks, or longer, our team strongly recommends building a routine into your own days at home. Maintaining a predictable schedule helps children feel secure and gives them a sense of control. Attempt to balance indoor and outdoor play, independent and adult-supported activities, and be sure to build in time for rest and relaxation. Here are some tips for building a schedule that works for you and your child:

1. Consider the elements of your child's previous schedule and ask yourself the following questions:

- Which aspects of the day can remain the same? (i.e., morning routine, mealtimes, bedtimes)
- Which elements of your child's school routine can you adapt at home? (e.g., play/choice/work time, music and movement, outside time)

2. Work with your child to create the daily schedule.

- Is screen time a part of your day? If so, be sure to set limits around the length of screen time allowed each day.
- Incorporate numerous opportunities for active learning – activities that encourage child choice, hands-on manipulation of materials, support the development of language and thought, and allow adults to participate as partners in play.
- Allow some flexibility for activities to overlap.
- If parents and guardians are required to work from home, build in quiet time so you can “get-away” to accomplish your own work each day.

3. Write your daily schedule on paper or poster board and have your child help illustrate each component of your new daily routine.

4. Post your new schedule on a wall where it's easily accessible to both you and your child.

- Strive for consistency and refer to your schedule often those first few days, as children are learning their new routine.

The HighScope and COR Advantage teams have included some activity ideas to help you plan your week. Please watch for this packet of activity ideas to come from your child's teacher each week. Let's ride out social distancing together!

# INFANTS



## Art, Music and Movement: **Shake it Up**

Bring your infant to a safe space, and tell them that you are going to explore sounds and shakers. Shake the shakers near your infant so they can see and hear them. If your child can hold objects, offer a shaker for them to use. Be sure to have a few shakers prepared, as your child may want to hold one in each hand. Comment on your infant's reaction about the noise produced by the shaker. If your child can't yet hold items, describe the noise the shaker is making when you move it and repeat the sounds that he or she seems to enjoy (e.g., "Your eyes got really big when I shook the shaker"). If your child can hold items, describe how he or she is moving the shaker and the noise that is produced (e.g., "You're holding one shaker in each hand; one shaker makes a very loud noise and one makes a softer noise"). Your infant may enjoy mouthing the shaker, passing the shaker back and forth between hands, shaking one in each hand, and repeating these actions to continue to produce the same noises over and over.

Children experience:

- Responding to sounds
- Creating sounds and music

To create homemade shakers, choose a variety of different containers like: Plastic eggs, plastic spice jars, formula bottles, plastic baby food containers, travel shampoo containers, or water bottles. Then you can fill each container with something like: fish tank gravel, pennies, sand, beads, rice, beans, screws or nails.



## Communication, Language, and Literacy: **Rhyme Time**

Children experience:

- Hearing words that rhyme
- Repeating rhyming words and nursery rhymes

Rhyming (words with the same ending sound, e.g., clock and dock) is an important element of learning how to read and sound out words. Playful experiences with rhyming can increase your child's enjoyment and ability to remember new vocabulary and rhyming sounds. To start this activity, let your child know that you will be saying and singing nursery rhymes. Some suggested rhymes to start with include "Hickory, Dickory, Dock,"

"Row, Row, Row Your Boat," "Baa, Baa Black Sheep," "Little Miss Muffet," "Rub-a-Dub-Dub," and "Jack and Jill."

As you say the rhymes, place emphasis on the rhyming words: "Hickory, dickory, dock. The mouse ran up the clock." After you finish the rhyme, point out the words that rhymed: "Dock and clock; those words rhyme!" Drawing children's attention to the rhyming words also helps them catch on to the cadence or rhythm of the rhyme. Repeat each rhyme several times so your child can learn all the words in the rhyme and specifically hear the rhyming words you emphasize. Children may request that you repeat the entire rhyme again, a few words from the rhyme, or the rhyming words. Repetition is important to build familiarity, support interest, and give children an opportunity to join in and spontaneously say rhymes. Acknowledge both common rhyming words and nonsense rhyming words.

# INFANTS



## *Early Math and Discovery: Exploring Objects*

If your infant can't yet grasp objects, simply hold an interesting toy over their face to watch. An infant who can sit supported but can't grasp objects can watch toys that you hold in each of your hands. Give your child plenty of time to look at a toy and then shake the toy in your other hand.

### Children experience:

- Looking at or handling one object and then another
- Gathering three or more objects

If your infant can grasp objects and sit, either with your support or independently, give them a toy to hold and explore a toy. Younger infants may simply hold on to the toy with one hand, while older infants may transfer the toy from one hand to another. Present a new toy and observe what your child does (e.g., they might glance at the new toy but choose to continue exploring the first one or drop the first toy and grab the new one). Older infants will enjoy sitting on the floor with toys spread around them and may reach for and pick up two toys, one in each hand; exploring toys by looking first at one toy and then at the other; or placing one of the toys in their mouth, followed by the other one.

Older infants may start collecting toys and placing several in a pile. When children gather toys or objects in this way, you will know that they can attend to more than one object at a time, which is a milestone in their development.



## *Myself and Others: Emotions*

### Children experience:

- Expressing emotions with their face and/or body
- Initiating physical contact with other people to express emotions

As you spend time with your infant, observe how your child communicates different emotions — by crying, tensing up, smiling, kicking their feet, babbling, laughing, or simply gazing contentedly. Older infants will begin initiating physical contact with others by kissing, patting, hugging, hitting, or even biting. How you respond to your child will depend on their needs, emotions, and developmental level.

When infants cry, they are typically communicating a need. Talk to your child and identify their emotions and needs (e.g., “You're so sad right now. You have such a hungry tummy”). In doing so, your child learns to be comforted by your voice and physical contact. When infants smile, they are communicating that they are happy and enjoy your company. Smile back, talk to, kiss, and gently touch your child to express that you enjoy their company too. As infants grow, so will their repertoire of emotional expression (e.g., fear, anger, amusement). Pay attention to the cues you receive, and continue doing whatever is amusing your child, or conversely, find a different toy, position/location, or activity if your child shows signs of disinterest.

Older infants will begin initiating physical contact with you and others. Some physical contact infants might initiate may not be



# INFANTS

pleasing; when your child bites you out of anger or frustration, you might feel shocked. It's important to calmly say to your infant something like "You're angry I took that away from you, but it's not safe to chew on." By responding this way, you're acknowledging your infant's anger, naming the emotion, and explaining the reason behind the emotion. This equips infants to deal with emotions in appropriate ways as they develop.



## *Physical Development and Healthy Habits: Kick It*

*For nonmobile infants:* With your infant sitting up or lying down, touch the bottom of your child's feet with the palms of your hands. This will likely result in your child pushing against or kicking your hands.

*For mobile infants:* Choose a space where your infant has room to move, and offer some balls to kick. Accept that your child might instead choose to throw the balls.

### Children experience:

- Stretching their leg muscles and kicking their feet
- Cause and effect – moving their bodies and causing objects to move

Describe your infant's actions. For example, you might say something like, "You're kicking against my hands! Kick, kick!"

*For nonmobile infants:* Repeat this activity with your infant's feet up against a sturdy, padded piece of furniture (e.g., a couch). You can also dangle ribbons or a small blanket near your child's feet for them to kick. Infants will enjoy watching the way the ribbons move and feel them against their feet as they kick. This increases children's awareness of their bodies and different ways they can use them.

*For mobile infants:* Comment on how your child chooses to use the balls, and use them in the same way. Describe how your child is moving their body and the effect those movements have on the ball. For example, you might say, "You swung your leg back and kicked the ball. It rolled all the way over under the window" or "You held the ball in both hands and threw it way up." These comments increase children's awareness of their bodies and the different ways they can use them.

# TODDLERS



## **Art, Music and Movement: Leader of the Band**

Encourage your toddler to make music with the instrument in various ways. Copy your child's actions with your instrument, and describe what you are doing to help your child's awareness of and confidence in his or her ideas. Model another way to play the instrument (e.g., fast, slow, quietly), and describe what you are doing (e.g., "You're tapping yours really fast; I'm going to try tapping mine slowly"). This helps children think about new and different ways to use their bodies and materials. After some time playing with the instrument, invite your child to make a parade around the room or other open space. Allow your child to be the leader and choose where to go.

### Children experience:

- Moving their bodies in various ways
- Initiating and copying movements

### Ideas for homemade instruments:

- Use recycled coffee cans, boxes with lids, oatmeal canisters, or small bowls or baskets as drums that children can bang on with their hands or with kitchen utensils (e.g., wooden spoons, spatulas).
- Put a few small items (e.g., beads, rocks) in a recycled plastic water or soda bottle and secure its cap to create shakers.
- Use metal bowls or pans that children tap on with whisks, spoons, plastic forks, or plastic combs for chimes.
- Give children two metal lids or two metal pie tins to use as cymbals.



## **Communication, Language, and Literacy: Listen Up!**

### Children experience:

- Responding to your voice in a variety of ways
- Responding nonverbally to simple statements or requests

Place younger infants on their back on a blanket on the floor, a changing table, or a bed. Older infants can sit independently (on the floor or in another place). If your infant is lying on their back, begin talking by saying something like "It feels good to stretch out on your back and kick your legs!" Model conversation patterns by pausing in between sentences, which gives your infant time to explore your facial expressions, process your words and the inflection of your voice, and conjure up a response.

Your child may respond to your voice by establishing eye contact, smiling, or cooing.

Try moving to the opposite side from which your child is looking and say your child's name to see if he or she responds. Make a game of it, and move to the other side of your infant to see if your child moves their head to find your voice.

If you give infants frequent opportunities to hear language (called receptive language), they will begin to understand some of your words. Try playing a game by saying something like "I'm going to touch your nose!" and then pause. If your infant doesn't respond (by wrinkling or touching their nose), touch their nose and say "I found your nose!" If your infant does touch their nose, you'll know that he or she understands and is ready to continue playing (i.e., by replacing "nose" with "toes").

# TODDLERS



## *Early Math and Discovery: A “Pairfect” Match*

Tell your child that you will need help with the laundry today. Put all the socks in one pile, and say something like “All of our socks are mixed up, and I need your help. Can you tell which of these socks belong together?”

Allow your child to closely examine the socks and hold them up together. Your child might find socks that match, socks that are the same color but a different length, socks that are the same length but a different color, or your child may simply play with the socks. Describe what your child is doing while identifying characteristics of the socks. For example, you might say, “You found two short white socks; that’s a match!” or “You found a short black sock and a long black sock; I wonder if you can find two black socks that are both short” or “You’re exploring the pile of socks. I see a red sock, a yellow sock, and a blue sock.” Simply pointing out the socks’ characteristics will increase your child’s awareness of and vocabulary for similarities and differences.

### Children experience:

- Matching socks based on color and other attributes
- Noticing similarities and differences



## *Myself and Others: Thinking Backwards*

### Children experience:

- Returning to an object of interest
- Pointing to or showing something they played with

As you and your children play together, pay attention to what toy or object they favor and what they do with it. Gathering information like this will help you support your toddlers as they begin to develop the ability to form and hold images in their mind.

Call attention to your toddler’s developing ability to remember where something of interest is located. For example, when your child returns to

a sippy cup, you might say, “You left your sippy cup on the couch before nap time. You remembered where it was!” Older toddlers may point to or show you something they played with, and, eventually, will be able to tell you something they did soon after the event has taken place. To support these developing skills, talk to your toddlers as they play, imitate their actions, and comment on what you are each doing.

# TODDLERS



## *Physical Development and Healthy Habits: Follow the Leader*

Start the activity by singing a simple, familiar song or use a familiar tune and sing something like this (to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”):

March, march, march your feet as we sing this song.

March, march, march your feet as we sing this song.

March your feet as you sing.

### Children experience:

- Trying out different physical movements
- Making suggestions to others about how to move
- Copying the ideas of others

Ask your child to show you (if nonverbal) or tell you (if verbal) another way to move. Give your child time to think, decide, and display a movement and then copy and name their idea (e.g., “You’re wiggling your hips”). Continue to sing the song from the beginning by changing the words to match the actions (e.g., “Wiggle, wiggle, wiggle your hips as we sing this song”) or simply copy your child’s movement. Try out several ideas, ask your child for input, and offer other suggestions of ways to move. Do this activity in one place (e.g., marching in one place), or, alternatively, move around an open space (e.g., marching around in a circle).



# PRESCHOOL



## *Art, Music and Movement:* **Family Song Book**

Share with your children one of your favorite songs or ask your child to sing a favorite song of theirs to you. Tell children that you want to create a book that includes all of their favorite songs. Have children write each of their favorite songs down on a separate piece of paper as you do the same. If they can't write all the words, you can help them or just let them write one word to stand for the song. Even young toddlers have favorite songs, so draw simple pictures to represent songs they enjoy. For example, if they like the "Itsy Bitsy Spider", then draw a spider on the page. Then, let them decorate each song page to make the pages colorful. If they aren't able to write the complete title of the song, encourage them to draw pictures or designs that help them remember what the song is. Once all the pages have been decorated, punch holes in them and put them in the binder or simply put them in a folder. You could even record children singing and performing their songs and play it for them again later so they can sing along with it.

### Children experience:

- Drawing
- Singing
- Writing



## *Communication, Language, and Literacy:* **Alphabet Clue Game**

### Children experience:

- Alphabetic knowledge

Tell children that you're going to give them a clue and they are going to have to guess what it is you're drawing. Draw one line of a letter at a time, asking children to guess which letter it will be. Answer children with comments, as in the following steps for guessing the letter R:

1. Draw a straight vertical line. Then say something like, "Well this could be an L because L has a tall straight line, but I'm thinking of a different letter."
2. Next, draw the curved part at the top. Then, say something like: "This sure looks like a P, doesn't it? But I'm not done making the letter I'm thinking of."
3. Then say something like, "I'll draw one more short line (draw bottom diagonal line). Can you tell me what it is now?"

For younger children, use letters they are most familiar with, including the letter their first or last name starts with. This game can also be adapted for any drawing you might start drawing, like a face or a bird. For older children, you can ask them to guess a whole word, watching you write one letter at a time, or you can ask the child to do the writing and you can do the guessing!

# PRESCHOOL



## **Math, Science, and Technology: Measure Me!**

Take a piece of yarn and stretch it out from children's head to their toes. Cut the yarn. Tape the yarn to a wall, taping at the bottom so it is in a straight line. Label the yarn with the children's names. Use the yarn to show children how tall they are! Then, tell children that they are going to go on a hunt around the house to find out how long or tall other things are. Let children choose the things they want to measure. Make sure they have a standard measuring tool, such as a ruler, yard stick, or tape measure. Help them count the number of inches or feet of the objects they find. Then, measure a piece of yarn the same length as the object they measure and cut it. Tape it to the wall at the top and bottom next to the yard that shows their height. Label the yarn with masking tape to indicate what object it is.

### Children experience:

- Measuring
- Comparing Sizes
- Cutting
- Numbers

When children have finished measuring, make observations about their results including:

- "The \_\_\_\_ is the longest object you measure."
- "The \_\_\_\_ is the shortest."

And ask questions to prompt a discussion including:

- How could we reorganize the pieces of yarn? (shortest to longest, longest to shortest)
- What was your favorite object to measure?

For younger children, don't use the ruler and just ask them to find something big or small. For older children, ask them to write down the measurement of the objects they measure.



## **Myself and Others: Feeling Cube**

### Children experience:

- Understanding and expressing feelings
- Reading

We all have our ups and downs and children are no different! Helping them express their feelings and emotions can go a long way toward keeping your household calm. Start by making a feelings cube for children. Tape pictures (pictures of family members, magazine clippings, or images found online) of people expressing a variety of different emotions to a small box.

Then, read a book about feelings with your child. Here are a few recommendations:

- *Miss Spider's Tea Party*, by David Kirk
- *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, by Judith Viorst

# PRESCHOOL

- *The teacher from the Black Lagoon*, by Mike Thaler and Jared Lee
- *My Many Colored Days*, by Dr. Suess
- *When Sophie Gets Angry*, by Molly Bang

After reading the story, go back to the pages and review what happened. Ask questions like:

- "Do you remember what happened on this page?"
- "Why do you think the character was feeling so \_\_\_\_?"
- "Do you like or dislike this story? Why?"

After you have talked about the story, show children the feelings cube. Tell them you are going to let them roll the cube and that, whatever face it lands on, they have to show the same face! Take a turn as well and really exaggerate the look on your face! As children make a face, use feeling words to describe what you see. For younger children, use words they are familiar with, such as: "Oh, you look sad." For older children, use this as an opportunity to develop new vocabulary such as, "You look depressed or concerned." Guide the conversation to talk about how to handle that emotion in an appropriate way such as talking about the feeling. End by singing, "When you're happy and you know it!" For older children you can turn this into a daily practice where they create "My Journal" and write or draw their feelings for the day.



## *Physical Development and Healthy Habits: Bean Bag Toss*

Have children warm up their throwing arm by doing simple exercises, such as windmills and shoulder rolls. Give children a sponge and set up the box a few feet away. Tell children to try throwing their sponge into the box. Then place several more boxes around them or just in a line and see if children can throw the sponge into each box. You can offer different items for children to throw, like balls, small pillows, bean bags, or a sock rolled up. Move the boxes closer or farther away to make the activity challenging and fun, but not frustrating. Take turns throwing into the boxes. Show excitement when children get their sponge in a box, and provide guiding questions or comments when they don't.

Children experience:

- Throwing
- Eye-hand coordination

Offer comments like "Can you think of another way to throw your sponge?" or "Last time you got it in when you slowed down and took a breath before throwing." For younger children, give children larger, open containers like laundry baskets and place containers closer to children. For older children, you can use alternative containers like laundry baskets or mixing bowls. Or, you can assign a number to each container and ask children to write down the number each time they successfully throw into that basket.



# MORE RESOURCES



## **Cosmic Kids Yoga**

Find yoga and mindfulness activities channel for kids 3+  
[www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga](http://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga)



## **San Diego Zoo Kids Videos**

See live feeds of some amazing animals, and find great activities from the zookeepers.  
<https://kids.sandiegozoo.org/videos>



## **Time for 10!**

Get your children moving with these fun exercise videos.  
[www.nationwidechildrens.org/family-resources-education/health-wellness-and-safety-resources/resources-for-parents-and-kids/time-for-10/time-for-10-videos](http://www.nationwidechildrens.org/family-resources-education/health-wellness-and-safety-resources/resources-for-parents-and-kids/time-for-10/time-for-10-videos)



## **Sesame Street**

There are wonderful games, videos, and art projects for young children, featuring their favorite characters.  
[www.sesamestreet.org/](http://www.sesamestreet.org/)



## **Cooking with Kids**

Meal prep can be learned and play time as well if you work together.  
[www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/packages/recipes-for-kids/cooking-with-kids](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/packages/recipes-for-kids/cooking-with-kids)