

# FAMILY ACTIVITIES

## PACKET 2





# THOUGHT of the WEEK



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

“Stop it!” “That’s mine!” “I was using it first!” “I don’t want to do that!” “MOM!!”

Sound familiar? If so, you are not alone! All around us, families are attempting to create new daily routines, play is limited to smaller areas with the same toys as yesterday, and our peers have narrowed to immediate family members. The stress that comes along with finding a new normal can cause emotions to run high, children’s behaviors to shift, and conflicts to rise.

Anger, anxiety, disappointment, and sadness are very real, very appropriate feelings. Young children have not yet learned how to navigate and cope with these feelings in appropriate ways. Instead, they might yell, hit, kick, or lash out at a sibling. Fortunately, there are strategies we can use to support our children through these emotional times and help them gain problem solving skills in the process.

- 1. Approach your children and the situation calmly.** Be aware of your body language; it says a lot about your intentions and your feelings. Strive to remain neutral in order to see all points of view. Stop any hurtful behavior with statements like, “Hitting needs to stop”, or, if needed use an ‘I’ statement such as, “I am angry right now because hitting hurts” and delay the problem solving process until you are able to remain neutral.
- 2. Acknowledge feelings.** Use simple descriptive words that reflect the intensity of your child’s emotions; “You are really, really angry.” This helps children ‘let go’ of their feelings and is an important step that must occur in order for children to begin to think clearly about the problem.
- 3. Gather Information.** Let your children know you are going to listen each of them. Ask them to tell you what happened; stay focused on the concrete actions and materials that are a part of the problem. Listen carefully for detail children are describing, as they are the key to finding a solution.
- 4. Restate the problem.** Use the details and needs children have described to restate the problem and clarify any issues. Reframe hurtful language as needed; “You can’t play cause I hate you” can be reframed to “You are very angry and want to play alone.” Check with children to see if they agree that you have correctly identified the problem.
- 5. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together.** Respect and explore all of the ideas, even if they seem unrealistic, considering how they might work. Help children think through the specifics of a potential solution; “We can share” will need to be broken down further with a follow-up statement such as, “Tell me what sharing would look like.” Ensure all children engaged in the problem-solving process agree with the solution and draw attention to the fact that they solved the problem together.
- 6. Be prepared to give follow-up support.** Children may need help implementing the solution, or difficulties may arise because one child is still angry and needs additional acknowledgement. Check back in with each child to ensure the problem has been solved, especially those children who were very upset.

Remember, it’s natural for both us and our children to experience intense feelings during this time of uncertainty; for many of us, our lives have been flipped upside down. How we approach these situations is up to us; remember, children will feed off of our calm, our ability to problem solve, and our strength to persevere.

# INFANTS



## *Art, Music and Movement:* **Sing, Sing, Sing**

Start this activity at any time (i.e., during your infant's alert moments or when having difficulty sleeping). Choose a song to sing based on your child's mood (a quiet lullaby if your child is upset or a song that is more upbeat).

If your infant is upset or trying to go to sleep, softly sing a lullaby or simply repeat his or her name and offer quiet words of assurance in a melodic way. Often, infants will stop crying, calm down, or fall asleep when they hear the soothing sound of a parent's or a familiar caregiver's voice. If your infant is happy, sing a song that is more upbeat or one that includes movements and allows you to make up the words as you go along. For example, you could sing, "If You're Happy and You Know It" and adapt the lyrics as follows: "If you're happy and you know it, nibble Anna's toes..." or "If you're happy and you know it, kiss LeVar's tummy..." An older infant may "sing" with you or join in with some familiar hand or body movements. For example, you might sing and clap, "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands," and your child might clap as well.

### Children experience:

- Growing calm or becoming alert to sounds, tones, or music
- Responding to other people singing by joining in with vocalizations or motions

When introducing hand and body movements, think about your infant's developmental level and the milestones he or she has already reached, and customize the song to encourage what you know your child can do (e.g., if your child waves "bye-bye," include that as a verse of the song: "If you're happy and you know it, wave bye-bye"). Some other ideas (and you can think of some of your own as well) include: "Lift your arms," "Kick your feet," "Shake your head," "Pound the floor," and "Bounce up and down."



## *Communication, Language, and Literacy:* **Beginning with Books**

### Children experience:

- Touching, grasping, or mouthing books
- Turning the pages of books

Find a cozy place to sit, position your infant comfortably on your lap, and introduce a book. With an older infant, offer a couple of books and ask which one he or she wants to read (depending on your child's level of understanding, they may — or may not — choose a book). Have several other books nearby to keep your reading time uninterrupted.

Give your child time to handle the book before you open it up. Infants may grasp it, turn it over, open and close it, drop it on the floor, or put it in their mouth, which are all normal behaviors and necessary steps in their book learning. In fact, you could make the process of exploring the book an activity (without even reading the book to your child). If you'd like to read the book, let your child continue exploring the book while you choose another book to read.

As you look at a book together, slowly read the words or simply talk about the pictures (let your child hold the book if he or she wants to). If there are things to feel, guide your child's hand to the interesting textures on the pages and describe each texture. Older infants may explore textures in a book independently (without needing your guidance) and may spend more time looking



# INFANTS

at the pictures or “talking” by babbling or saying simple words. When you and your infant are ready to move on to the next page, encourage your child to help you turn the page.

Note: When infants explore books independently, they may hold the book upside down. At this developmental stage, infants are not as concerned with looking at the pictures as they are with the process of looking through a book and turning the pages. As infants have more experiences with books, they will become more interested in looking at the pictures and will hold the book right-side up.



## *Early Math and Discovery: Cool Tool*

If you are nursing or feeding your infant a bottle, position yourself in a comfortable chair. If your infant is older and experienced at eating baby cereal or other types of food, secure your child in their highchair and sit in a nearby chair.

Children experience:

- Responding to an object
- Exploring a tool in their play

As you prepare to nurse or give your infant a bottle, notice how your infant responds by turning their head in the direction of the milk. Older infants will place their hand on your breast or reach both hands to hold on to the bottle. For older infants, choose a spoon designed for infants. Infants may be a bit clumsy at getting the food to their mouth with a spoon; alleviate some of this frustration by feeding your hungry infant most of the food, before handing over the spoon. Place the spoon in your infant’s hand, demonstrate how to scoop, guide the spoon and food to your child’s mouth, and describe what you are doing. Then give your child a chance to use the spoon. Remember that your child might explore the spoon in different ways (e.g., put it in their mouth [without any food on it], throw it on the floor, or put it in their hair) without using it for its intended purpose. These are all normal ways that an infant explores an object. Describe what your child is doing (e.g., you might say, “You’re using the spoon to pound on your tray”).

If your infant’s attempts to use the spoon aren’t immediately successful, your child might simply pick up the pieces of food. If this happens, keep in mind that it takes young children time and experience to learn how to handle tools and for their muscles and coordination to develop enough to manipulate tools successfully. When your child is successful, encourage him or her (e.g., you might say, “You scooped up the carrots with the spoon and put them in your mouth!”)



## *Myself and Others: Playing with Piggies*

Children experience:

- Putting their fingers, thumbs, or foot in their own mouth
- Awareness of self by indicating something is theirs

Place your infant on their back (on a soft blanket on the floor, on a bed or changing table, or in a bouncy seat). An older infant can be sitting up (on the floor, in a highchair, or in the bathtub).

Lean in close, massage and kiss your infant’s hands and feet, and say something like “I’m going to find your toes.” If your child is wearing socks,

# INFANTS

pull them off, massage their feet a bit more, and give your child's toes a few more kisses. The tactile experience of having one's feet and toes exposed to the air, massaged, rubbed, and kissed could be an activity in itself, so give your child plenty of time to enjoy the experience before moving on. Wriggle each toe on one foot (beginning with the big toe), and recite the nursery rhyme "This Little Piggy," moving to the next toe with each line of the rhyme:

This little piggy went to market. This little piggy went home.  
This little piggy had roast beef. This little piggy had none.  
And this little piggy went wee, wee, wee all the way home.

Traditionally, this nursery rhyme ends with adults tickling children's feet during the "wee, wee, wee, wee" part of the rhyme. In addition to tickling your child's foot while reciting that part of the rhyme, move your fingers up your child's legs and onto their stomach. Repeat the rhyme and activity on your child's other foot, and continue by alternating feet until your infant loses interest.



## *Physical Development and Healthy Habits: Pick It Up*

Observe how your child uses their hands and fingers. Note that your child's ability to handle toys depends on their age, developmental level, and prior experiences.

Offer your child one or two objects to hold (too many choices can be overwhelming), understanding that they may only hold the object for a short time before letting it fall. Be sure to give the object back to your child to let them try to hold it again. With practice, children will begin grasping objects with their whole hand for longer time periods. As children develop, they'll be able to reach for a toy, pick it up, bring it to their mouth, and then transfer a toy from one hand to the other. Many infants like to drop an object from a highchair on to the floor, look at it, and wait for an adult to pick it up. Play this game with your child (although you may quickly grow tired of it!), because it is an important part of your child's development and gives them invaluable opportunities to practice grasping and handling objects.

As infants develop, they'll be able to pick up smaller objects, first by sliding their thumb to the side of their index finger and later by using their thumb and finger in a pincer grasp. This skill often develops at about the same time children are ready to eat finger food. Offer children small amounts of finger food so they aren't tempted to put too much food in their mouth at one time. Although it may be tempting to feed infants yourself to avoid messes, let them feed themselves finger foods so they can develop their fine-motor skills.

### Children experience:

- Opening and closing their hands
- Using small muscles to handle or pick up objects

# TODDLERS



## *Art, Music and Movement: No-Worry Painting*

Set up a child-sized easel outdoors on a flat surface. Pour a small amount of paint into two cups, place one cup on the easel tray, and put the other one to the side for later. Attach a piece of paper to the easel. Fill up a bucket with water and gather some towels so you are ready for cleanup.

Dress yourself and your toddler in playclothes. Show your child how to dip the paintbrush into the paint cup and brush the paint onto the paper. If your toddler is more interested in exploring just the paint let your child use their fingers to paint on paper. Older toddlers may try using a paintbrush but will need practice. As they learn how to control the paintbrush, they'll begin to make discrete marks on the paper and may notice that making different movements with their arms produces different lines and marks. Describe your child's movements while talking about the marks created. Before ending the activity, try introducing a new color of paint or another paintbrush. If you've introduced two primary colors, talk to your child about how the colors change.

### Children experience:

- Exploring art materials
- Using art materials to make discrete marks

**Hint:** For children who are beginning walkers or aren't used to standing for long periods of time, place paper on the ground and secure it with heavy rocks or tape (instead of using an easel).



## *Communication, Language, and Literacy: Write Away*

### Children experience:

- Making marks and scribbles
- Writing letterlike forms

Cover your table, and make sure your child is safely seated. Place a piece of paper in front of your child (you can tape the paper onto the table so it doesn't slide). Let your child choose which color marker or crayon to use. (Toddlers often have more success with writing with a marker because they don't have to press as hard to make a mark.) If this is your child's first time using a writing tool, you may need to show them how to use the marker/crayon and help take the cap off of the marker (note that marker caps may be a choking hazard).

Younger toddlers may simply make random marks on their papers. While this might not seem significant, this exploratory stage is a very valuable step in their development of learning how to write. Keep in mind that it is common for toddlers to put items (e.g., crayons) in their mouths. If your child does this, offer a gentle reminder that crayons and markers are for writing on paper. Demonstrate on your piece of paper how to make marks with a marker/crayon. Talk about what your child is doing, and use your own writing tool to imitate your child's actions. Hang up your child's creations at toddler-height.

# TODDLERS



## **Early Math and Discovery: A Walk in the Park**

Find an area for you and your children to walk and explore (e.g., a paved pathway, an open grassy area, a short trail through the woods, or an area near a pond). Plan for this activity to be a relaxed stroll, as naturally curious toddlers will enjoy finding objects to pick up and examine. As long as the objects of interest are safe, encourage your child to explore them. As your younger toddler does this, name the objects and briefly comment on them (e.g., “You found a rock. It looks heavy!”).

### Children experience:

- Exploring natural objects or materials
- Naming objects

Older toddlers may begin naming different objects they see. To try to understand the new things they are seeing, children add to their new experiences the knowledge they already have. For example, children might say “Doggy” when they see a squirrel. Understanding this part of toddlers’ development will allow you to help your children make sense of the new information they are receiving. You might respond to your toddler with something like “It looks like a dog because it’s running across the grass. That’s called a squirrel.” Expand your child’s language and knowledge by adding more information, for example, “The squirrel is furry and has a long tail like our doggy at home, but he climbs trees...watch!”



## **Myself and Others: Just Another Ordinary Day**

### Children experience:

- Indicating the end of an event
- Anticipating the next event in a familiar sequence

Pay attention to natural routines that you’ve already established with your toddler (e.g., have dinner, take a bath, read a book before bed). Establishing a consistent yet flexible order of daily activities provides comfort, security, and a reassuring predictability for children. However, be cognizant of other events that might alter your routine (e.g., your child is interested in watching a garbage truck). These moments are filled with opportunities for language and learning so be sure to take advantage of

them!

Once you’ve developed a routine that works, try to follow that routine consistently. Label each time of the day for your child (e.g., “It’s lunchtime!”). When you follow a routine, you’ll find that your child will begin to predict what part comes next. If you think that your toddler knows the sequence of your routine, ask them what comes next (e.g., “Bath is all done. Do you know what we’re going to do next?”).

Establish a routine for ending activities by giving a warning for cleanup time (e.g., singing a song to let your child know that cleanup time is approaching).

# TODDLERS



## *Physical Development and Healthy Habits: **Poke, Pull, Squish***

Give your toddler time to explore a mound of play dough. Imitate your child's actions, and introduce new vocabulary words to describe what your child is doing or experiencing (e.g., squishy, poke, flat, heavy, and salty).

Observe how your child plays with the dough. If your child pokes it, offer other items that are good for poking (e.g., Popsicle sticks, plastic pegs). If your child pulls it apart, provide a plastic bowl or cup to fill with play dough pieces. If your child pounds the dough, offer a lightweight wooden/plastic hammer. Use your mound of play dough and other materials in the same way your child is using them and describe what you are doing.

### Children experience:

- Using the small muscles in their hands and fingers
- Hearing new vocabulary words



# PRESCHOOL



## Art, Music and Movement: **Bookmarks**

Show children any examples you might have of bookmarks. If you don't have any, explain that people use something called a bookmark to hold their place in a book, rather than bending down a page or losing their spot. Show them the strips of paper and say this is what bookmarks usually look like. Put out the markers and art supplies and tell them they can decorate their bookmark any way they would like.

Children experience:

- Creative Art
- Writing

As they decorate the bookmark, make encouraging comments like "Oh, I see you are using a lot of colors" or "Tell me about your drawing." When they are finished decorating a bookmark, cover it in contact paper to preserve the art work and lengthen the life of the bookmark.

Ask your children if they would like to read or look at one of their favorite books. When they are done, ask them if they would like to mark the page of their favorite picture or simply place the bookmark in the book to be ready for the next time!



## Communication, Language, and Literacy: **Book Nooks**

Children experience:

- Reading
- Alphabetic knowledge
- Book knowledge
- Bonding with a familiar adult

Tell children about your favorite book and when the story it tells takes place. Or read a simple story and explain that where it takes place is called the *setting*.

Next, say something like "Let's get some of your favorite books and take them to a new setting!" Let children pick where they would like to go. Here are some location ideas that might help you get moving:

- Under a table
- In the bathtub, during bath time
- Under a blanket
- Near a tree
- In the car (books on tape/CD are great fun)
- Someplace to read with a pet

Give children the option of choosing a new place to read every time they begin a new book.

# PRESCHOOL



## *Math, Science, and Technology: Carrots and Celery*

### Beginning:

You'll be cutting carrots and celery several different ways. If your children are old enough, let them help cut. Carrots should be cut in circles, half circles, or long sticks. Celery should be cut in long sticks and half moons.

As you cut each shape, place one of the pieces in a bowl. Then tell children to scoop up the rest and put them in the correct bowl. They will be matching the shape in the bowl to the shape of the vegetable in their hands. Once all the vegetables have been cut, get out two plates or cookie sheets. Put a few vegetable shapes on your plate and ask an open-ended question like "What do you think I could make with all these shapes?" Listen to children's responses and build on their ideas. If they say to make a flower, then make a flower! Encourage them to take some pieces and talk about what they are going to make. Be sure to point out the different shapes they are using or shapes they are making with the individual food pieces. You might say something like "Oh, I see you made a big circle using all the little carrot circles!" Then have fun eating your veggie creations!

### Children experience:

- Making Shapes
- Healthy Habits
- Geometry
- Personal Care
- Matching Shapes



## *Myself and Others: Pet Rock*

### Children experience:

- Art
- Creativity
- The natural and physical world
- Making plans and following through on them

You can take your children to a gardening center and let them pick their favorite rock, or simply purchase one in advance. Put out all of the materials and tell your children that they are going to create their own pet rock.

Encourage your children to plan out their project. See if they can describe how they want their rock to look before they begin decorating. Ask your children to pick out the materials they would like to use before they begin decorating. Let your children create their own pet rock using the materials you have set out. Let the activity continue until children are finished creating their pet.

# PRESCHOOL



## *Physical Development and Healthy Habits: Obstacle Course*

Ahead of time, lay out all the areas for the obstacle course. Gather children at the beginning of the course and explain they will do something at each station. Walk them to each station in the order they should follow the course. Show and tell them what they will do.

Here are some ideas for an indoor obstacle course:

- Slide around the kitchen in your socks four times
- Crawl under the bed two times
- Dance like crazy in the dining room
- Jump up and down in the living room five times
- Lie on the couch for 20 seconds and pretend to be asleep
- Go to the bathroom and wash your hands

Here are some ideas for an outside obstacle course:

- Run two laps around the yard
- Jump over a stick or rock ten times
- Fly like a bird with your wings, flapping seven times around the yard

Take children back to the starting point and say “go!” Watch them do the obstacle course. Have children run to each activity station and pick up any items they may have used.

Children experience:

- Moving his or her body in many different ways
- Building gross-motor skills
- Cooperative play
- Following directions



# MORE RESOURCES



## **Kid-Fit Preschool Music & Workouts**

Get moving with some great tunes and exercises.

[www.kidfitmusic.org/](http://www.kidfitmusic.org/)



## **Lunch Doodles with Mo Willems**

Connect with your artistic side as Mo Willems guides you through some fun drawing activities.

[www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=%23MoLunchDoodles](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=%23MoLunchDoodles)



## **Ms. Jenny from the HighScope Demonstration Preschool reads *Silly Sally* by Audrey Wood**

Enjoy a wonderful story time with a great character.

[www.vimeo.com/399264225](https://www.vimeo.com/399264225)



## **Live Story Time with COR Advantage: *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish* by Dr. Seuss**

Wednesday, March 25th at 11:30 ET. Read by team member Katie! Click here to register:

[www.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5YqcOigqD4r4k9r5GEDqftMP8GNtFFuZQ](https://www.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5YqcOigqD4r4k9r5GEDqftMP8GNtFFuZQ)



## **Whale Activities**

This segment is best suited for older preschoolers, 3.5-5 years old and school age children. Great for anyone who loves whales or wants to learn more!

**COR Advantage Video:** Maranda reads part one of a book called "100 Things You Should Know About Whales & Dolphins" by Steve Parker!

[www.vimeo.com/399201332](https://www.vimeo.com/399201332)

**National Geographic for Kids:** Follow it up with a short video on YouTube about bottlenose dolphins by NatGeo!

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjMn\\_dVCJyA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjMn_dVCJyA)

**Baby Beluga:** Finally, enjoy this sing-along song with Raffi!

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=irQa3UDV\\_AM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irQa3UDV_AM)