



Norwood

Child and Family Resource Centre

ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT



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The “What is Missing?” Game

Outcome: This game helps your child improve their working memory and control their impulses, while also teaching them how to follow rules. Self-control and flexible thinking are executive function skills that will benefit your child later on in life during planning, studying, and working.

Materials Needed: A small blanket or scarf (not see-through), some small toys or objects that your child is familiar with. **For example:** a small car, a block, a small rock, a leaf, etc.

How:

- **Start your game with three items.** When your child masters playing with three items, you can add more.
- Show your child each item and name them. Make sure your child knows all the items.
- Cover the items with a blanket.
- Ask your child to cover their eyes and then take one item out without them seeing.
- Open the blanket and ask your child which item is missing.

Extension:

You can let older children lead the game and let you guess.

Host a Tea Party

Outcome: Planning a pretend tea party helps your child think and act on tasks in a certain order (planning, recalling, and processing new information), building their capacity to make decisions and find alternative ways to accomplish goals (problem-solving).

Materials Needed: Utensils, teapot, teacups, table cover, props (if you and your child want to make it fancy), and whatever else your child would like to add to the tea party.

How:

- Allow your child to take the lead. Ask what they will need to set up their tea party.
- Make a list or draw images of the objects (depending on your child's age).
- Go around your house to look for the items (toy versions or real-life objects) you need for the party.
- Help your child cross items off of your list as you gather them.
- After finding all the elements, set up together and enjoy your tea party.

Explore Objects and Shapes

(activity for around 9 months old)

Outcome: Children are building executive functioning and mindful skills as they work to accomplish a task that demands fine motor skills, emotional regulation, hand-eye coordination, and intelligence. Shape sorters help children solve problems all on their own by trying to work out which shape fits into which hole!

Materials Needed: Shape sorter bucket or puzzle (you can make your own shape sorter using a food container with a plastic lid and blocks/small balls).

How:

Allow your child to explore and manipulate toys and objects using both hands by setting out a shape sorter and shapes or a shape sorting puzzle.

Encourage your child to:

- Pick up the objects with their hands.
- Hold the objects in both hands.
- Transfer the objects from one hand to the next.
- Tap the objects together.
- Transfer the objects in and out of the matching cutouts on a shape sorter bucket or puzzle.

No shape sorter? Make one with a plastic lid and exacto knife!



Play Peek-a-Boo

Outcome: As you play peek-a-boo with your child you are helping them to understand the concept of object permanence—that when things disappear, they are not gone forever. This game is a great way to develop a stronger bond with your child. They gain a deeper understanding that people and objects continue to exist even when they are out of sight.

Materials Needed: Any items you can use to hide your face such as a blanket, bow, paper, book, towel, or even your hands!

How:

Play 'Peek-a-Boo' with your child to help them understand object permanence.

- Cover your face with your hands, then remove them to show your face and say "peek-a-boo."

You can also play by hiding behind a small towel.

- Hold the towel in front of your face and call your child's name. As soon as they touch the towel, drop it and say "you found me!"
- As you play this game with your child, they will start to realize that even when your face is covered, you remain in the room and still exist—you are just hidden.

Symbolic Creation

(activity for around 3-4 years old)

Outcome: Through this activity, your child will begin to master symbolic representation—the ability to picture, remember, understand, and replicate objects in their minds that are not immediately in front of them.

Materials Needed: Pom-poms and buttons (can be different colours, shapes, and sizes), and a tray (optional).

How:

Use the materials above to encourage your child to create! Symbolic play is about using the imagination to substitute one object for another object in play (for example, a banana becomes a phone, or pompoms lined up become a caterpillar).

- Place the pompons and buttons on a tray, table or on the floor.
- Encourage your child to use the pom-poms and buttons to create something from their imagination.
- You can also model this activity for your child, making your own creations while describing what you are doing out loud.

