

# Early Learning Parents' Pages

## July 2018

- Nurturing your child's curiosity
- First Day of VPK
- Summer is a time for learning
- Back to school sales tax holiday



## Summer is a Time for Learning

As a child you may have looked forward to spending the summer playing outside or going on trips with your family.

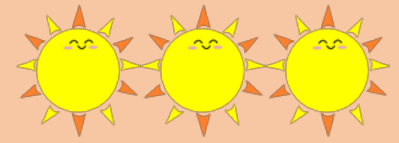
You probably thought that you were taking a break from learning and other "school stuff." The truth is, you were learning new skills and new words all summer in a relaxed, fun way. Playing outdoors is a great way for children to learn science, math and language while working on their motor skills. Running, climbing, jumping and skipping help build muscles and develop cognitive skills as well. The endorphins produced by physical activity also affect emotions. Vigorous physical activity helps children work through anger, and becoming better at physical activities makes children feel more competent and more positive around other children and adults. Traveling to new places and meeting new people offers many learning opportunities.

Help your child make the most of his summer. Visit libraries, museums and parks in your area. When it's really hot outdoors, libraries and museums offer a cool place to learn. Many have special summer programs for children or families. Contact your local library or museums to find out about these programs. It is important to read with your child every day, so let him check out books from the library to take home. Take pictures of your family as you visit the library or museums and any places on your travels. Put the pictures in a photo album and write, or help your child write, about each picture.

Read the picture album together and talk about the pictures that represent your child's "Summer Adventures."

Walking through parks or in your own yard with your child offers him opportunities to learn about math, literacy, nature and science concepts.

Give your child a bag or container and ask him to look for specific items such as rocks, leaves, sticks, feathers, shells and pine cones. Have your child sort the things in his bag in different ways and count them. Talk about the ways the objects are the same or different. Ask him if each object is living or nonliving. You can find different ways for him to measure the objects to find the longest or shortest, heaviest or lightest. Make up a story together with your child using the objects in the story. Give him glue and paper or cardboard so he can create a picture with the objects. Did you realize that so much learning would be contained in a walk?



## Additional summer learning activities:

[Office of Early Learning's Summer Learning Page](#)

[2018 Summer Literacy Adventure: Get Ready to Read Activities](#)

[Reading Tips for Parents](#)

[Early Math Matters](#)

[Math at Home Toolkit](#)

[Math Learning – and a Touch of Science – in the Outdoor World](#)



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## Nurturing Your Child's Curiosity

Your baby or toddler is very curious about the world around her. She wants to explore everything she can reach with all of her senses. This may cause you anxiety as you try to keep her from putting everything she touches in her mouth or keep her away from electrical outlets and other dangers. Her curiosity is a natural trait that can be encouraged or squelched by the responses she gets from you and other adults. Curiosity shows that your child is developing important cognitive and social skills. She wants to know all about the people and objects she sees. Researchers have recently shown that encouraging the curious nature of your child may [result in higher academic achievement in kindergarten](#) and leads to greater success in school in all grades.

Your child's desire to learn motivates her to explore the world around her. As an infant, she responded to sounds, to differences in temperature and light, to your touch and voice as she learned to recognize her family, her bed, her toys and other familiar things in her daily routine. Your positive response to her looking at you, turning toward you and babbling or crying encouraged her to interact with you more each day.

When you met her needs, talked or sang to her she learned how to get your attention and get her needs met. Her [curiosity helped her to bond](#) with you and your family.



*continued on page 3*



## Back to School Sales Tax Holiday!



Take advantage of the sales tax holiday August 3–5, 2018, (HB7087) for clothing and school supplies. During the first weekend in August, the sales tax holiday is intended to help families with the cost of getting children ready to return to school with clothes that fit and backpacks full of necessary supplies. During the weekend of August 3–5, sales tax doesn't apply to the retail sale of the following items:

- Bags (e.g., backpacks, diaper bags, and fanny packs)
- Clothing and footwear
- Wallets

The following items will not qualify for the exemption:

- Accessories (e.g., jewelry, handkerchiefs, watches or watchbands)
- Briefcases, garment bags or suitcases
- Rollerblades, skates, skis or swim fins
- Umbrellas

The exemption also applies to school supplies with a sales price of \$15 or less. Qualifying items include, but aren't limited to:

- Calculators, compasses, protractors and rulers
- Crayons, pencils and pens
- Cellophane tape, glue or paste
- Composition books, legal pads, notebooks and filler paper
- Computer disks
- Poster board and poster paper
- Scissors

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## My First Day of VPK

The very first day of voluntary prekindergarten is a huge milestone worth celebrating! No doubt, many parents will be taking a few pictures on their child's first day of VPK. Parents are encouraged to share their excitement by downloading and printing our "My First Day of VPK" flyer from our First Day of VPK webpage. Children can pose with the flyer for pictures and parents can post photos to social media using #1stDayVPK.

The Office of Early Learning will be sharing #1stDayVPK tagged pictures on our social media pages through the beginning of September this 2018-2019 school year.

We are excited to see all the #1stDayVPK pictures and hope our new VPK families enjoy the adventure of the new year!

## Nurturing Curiosity...

*continued from page 2*

You can continue to encourage her curiosity as she grows and help her become eager to learn more about everything. Follow her lead and her interests. If she likes music find different types of music to play for her. Dance with her and suggest that she dance with her stuffed animals or dolls. Make musical instruments out of empty boxes, pots, pans and spoons. Ask her how she can make the music louder or softer. Asking questions leads to more investigations and more questions.

Show her that you are curious about the things you see or hear. Be a role model by asking questions such as, "What made that loud noise outside? Let's go outside and have a look." Point out unusual sights and sounds as you take a walk. "Look at this big rock! Let's touch it to see how it feels. Is it hard or soft?" When you hear a bird singing say, "Listen, I think that is a bird making that noise." Point out the bird and tell her that different birds have different songs they sing or that birds make different sounds to warn other birds about danger.

Answer her questions as simply as possible, using words appropriate for her age. Always ask her what she thinks before you answer. If you don't know the answer tell her you don't know, but you can find out together. Then together the two of you can look in a book, search online or ask someone who may know the answer. Visit the library and let her find books that interest her. Read the books together and encourage her to ask questions about the stories or information in the books. Ask lots of open-ended questions about the books or activities she enjoys, "How did you know that your friend was sad? How do you make a peanut butter sandwich? What made you think that the grandmother in the story was sick?"

Give your child lots of materials like empty boxes, containers, sand, water, blocks and stuffed animals to use in her play. Suggest that she be the mommy or daddy and you be the child as you build with blocks or pretend to cook or drive a car. Have her give you directions on how to play a game or put away the toys when it's time to clean up. This teaches your child to solve problems and helps her learn how to explain tasks to others. Praise her for being curious, "You tried to stack the blocks in different ways. That shows me you are really thinking about the best way to make a tower."

Her curiosity and your positive support and interactions will make her an eager learner who enjoys new experiences and likes to share her thoughts and feelings with you.

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