


Engaging Learning Experiences for Children and/or Families at Home

Below are possible activities to carry out with children and/or families while at home. If it seems a little overwhelming, you can begin working within just one category/section or focus on choosing one activity from each category/section. There are many different ways to approach this. What is most important is to be engaged and have fun together!!

- Kristin and Karen

 Sense of Identity, Community & Place

 Math

 Well-being

 Language & Literacy

 Science

 The Arts & Materials

SENSE OF IDENTITY, COMMUNITY & PLACE

- Make a self-portrait 3 different ways. Examples could be drawing, painting, collage, etc.
- Can children develop interview questions for parents about their job?
- What is your favorite thing to do with your family?
- Have a dialog about where names of family members come from or what names mean.
- Parents share a story with their children about what they were like when they were younger.
- Parents and children work together to design a special place using constructive materials (recyclables, blocks, etc.)
- What is a special celebration you and your family enjoy?
- Explore where each family members name came from.
- Create your own superhero. If you could become any superhero who would you be? What would your powers be? Where would you live? What would you look like? Create a drawing or dress up like him/her.
- Share favorites and least favorites. What is your favorite ice-cream, color, story/book, place to go, etc. Then ask what you don't like, what food don't you like, what story don't you like. Could you make drawings to go along with responses and make a little booklet of Favorites and/or Not Favorites.
- Can everybody in the family name one thing that they can do well? Can the children make related drawings?
- Can you have a discussion about the virus. How are is everyone in the family feeling about it? Share feelings about it and talk about who are all "the helpers" (a term Mr. Rogers talks about) with the virus.
- What is unique or special about your family?
- What is your favorite thing to do with family in your neighborhood?
- Have a dialogue about your family's favorite place in the community? If everyone does not choose the same place, share why each is special.
- Parents can share about the work they do/the job they have or any volunteer work in or near the community.
- Design a new park for your community.
- Write a letter to a neighbor or someone in your neighborhood.
- Recreate your favorite place in the neighborhood.

IDENTITY, COMMUNITY & PLACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can parents and children recreate their favorite place in the neighborhood using materials. Ask your child, what is their favorite place in their home and why it is their favorite? Invite them to create a drawing of that favorite place. Parents can share their favorite place also.. • Invite parents to share a childhood memory of a building or place. • Ask your child what is your favorite place in the house and why? Invite them to create a drawing of that place. Parents can share their favorite place too. • Parents share a memory of the home they grew up in as children. What questions do children have about it? Are there any photos to share? • Create a special or magical place in your house, someplace you can go to take a break. (This can even be in a small corner.) What can you add to make the place special? Lighting? Fabrics? Pillows? Etc. • Find the most interesting view out a window of your house. Each day draw something interesting that you see out that window. • Find interesting objects and surfaces in your house. Using an oil pastel or a crayon and white paper creating rubbings of those surfaces.
MATH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a group and do you belong to any groups? Can we find any groups of things in the house? • Gather a collection of materials for the children to sort. Sort by color. Sort by shape. Sort by texture/feel. • Find a larger picture/image, glue it onto another piece of heavier paper and cut it into interesting pieces to create a puzzle that you can put back together. • Search for patterns in your house or through the window. Create your own pattern using drawing materials or any other material. • What is the longest line you can draw, what is the shortest, widest (fattest), skinniest, etc • Find an object other than a ruler to measure things in your house. For example, how many pencils tall are you?
WELL-BEING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you draw how “this virus going around” makes you feel? • What was your favorite thing to play when you were a child (parent)? And what is your favorite thing to play (child)? Teach each other how to play it. • Parents share what is your favorite food now and as a child? What is your favorite food and what do you think you ate when you were a baby? • What is your favorite meal to eat with your family? • What makes you happy and what do you think makes your child/children happy? • Parents tell a story about the day their child was born. • Invite parent and child to recreate their favorite fruit/vegetables (or food) out of any medium • Invite children and parents to invent a game together. Create rules and instructions. Play together as a family. Exchange game ideas with another family over the phone or via email.

- What is your favorite letter and why? Can you create your favorite letter using different materials found at home? Can you make a letter with your body?
- Everyone share, what was your favorite childhood book and why was it your favorite? Parents read one of their favorite childhood books or their child's favorite to the family. Talk about favorite parts of the story. Create a different ending. Act out the story together.
- Everyone in the family can share their favorite nursery rhyme. Can you act out that nursery rhyme? Create a new nursery rhyme together.
- Set up a possible conversation between the children/families or community members using Skype, Google Hangout, etc. if you have Internet access.
- Create a story about a favorite stuffed animal if he/she came to life one day. Share your story with family members or email it to a family/school friend.
- Children can choose an object from the house. Place it on the table. Invite the family to sit at the table. Together make-up a story about that object.
- Write a special note to your child for them to find/receive in the morning when they wake up. Encourage them to write or draw a note back to you or someone in the family. You could even create family mailboxes where anyone in the family can leave a note for a parent, sibling, pet, etc.

- What is your favorite animal? Create a drawing of your favorite animal.
- Create a recycle center in your home or garage.
- Go on a plant hunt. Draw your favorite plant in your home or one you see through the window.
- Challenge parents/children to find a new way to use a recycled item from their home. Choose one recycled material and invite your children to create something special out of it. Then try with a different material.
- If you have space and materials, parents/children work together to create a structure that includes ramps, etc.
- What is something you can do to make a friend smile while you are not together at school? Make them a gift? Send them a message? Create a song especially for them?
- Make a paper airplane. Work to fold paper in different ways to see which flies the farthest. Try using different types of paper. Later, imagine that you could take a trip anywhere right now on that airplane...where would you go and what would you do there? Draw a picture of what it would look like there.
- If you have a pet, draw a picture of your pet. Use a different material you can find at home (paint, another drawing material, play dough, etc.) to recreate the first drawing. If you do not have a pet, is there an animal you can see through a window or in a book? Or is there an animal that you wish you had as a pet?
- Design a birdhouse for the birds in your yard/community. Can you first do a drawing of what the birdhouse should look like? What materials will be needed to make it?

Collage

- What type of materials can be used to make a collage; plastic, natural items, wood, wire, cloth, string, yarn, recyclables, etc.
- Can various surfaces for the collages be used such as paper, cardboard, plastic, clay, etc.
- What collage items can make a line, shapes and patterns and adhere to a surface of paper, cardboard or wood?
- Can a collage be made using many shades of one color, allowing one to explore the depth and range of color?

Light and Shadow

- Discuss where shadows come from
- Record sunlight and shadows at different times of the day in a room of your house.
- Notice light and shadows during different weather.
- Search for shadows in your house.
- Discuss how shadows are the same or different than actual objects.
- Make shadows that move and are still. Can shadows dance together? Can shadows chase each other? How do shadows move around the room and over furniture?
- Trace shadows of people or objects.
- Explore with flashlights. Can the beam be put down to the floor, up on the ceiling or up to the wall? Can it race all around the room fast, can it move all around the room very slowly?

Color

- If you have paint at home...mix your own color. Go through your house to find things that match the color you created.
- Go on a hunt through your house to find things that are your favorite color. What is the tiny tiniest item you found of that color? And the largest? Which is the most important/special to you?

Recycled Materials

- Create a space for building with recycled materials in your house. You can use recycled items such as (but not limited to) toilet paper tubes, Kleenex boxes, shoe boxes, sections of PVC pipe.
- For young children, Place items such as keys, seashells, large buttons, etc. in jar, box or a basket. What kinds of noises do the materials make when they bump each other or when you run your hands through them? Shake them?
- Use drawing materials or paint on a recycled material. Invite each child to create their own new/enhanced material.
- Challenge parents/children to find a new way to use a recycled item from their home. Choose one recycled material and invite your children to create something special out of it. Then try with a different material.

Clay and Play Dough

- Play Dough Recipe: Ingredients to mix
 - 4 cups of flour
 - 1 cup of salt
 - 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil
 - Begin with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water and add more in small amounts as needed
 - Food coloring (can be added to the water or to the playdough as you are kneading it)
 - Keep in airtight container or large baggie
- Roll clay into snakes and attach the pieces to make long lines.
- Make balls of clay, large and small. How many small balls can be made? What is the biggest/smallest clay ball you can make?
- Roll clay into spirals both flat and ones that curve up.
- Make indentations in clay.
- Are there ways to make the clay to stand up?

Fabric

- Use fabric to create interesting spaces indoors or outdoors. Ex. drape a large piece of fabric over two chairs creating a small area for children to go under.
- Fill a small sturdy bin with fabrics for children to explore. Share a variety of textured fabrics with children inviting them to touch and experience the different ways that each might feel on their hands, feet, face, etc. Think about ribbed fabrics, velour, silk-like fabrics, etc.
- Hang fabric ribbons from a large box or cubby to create a special place where very small children can lay or sit and experience the material.
- Play different types of a music/sounds, one at a time, and invite children to use the fabric while dancing/moving to the music. Can you dance or move to this music with fabric? It is important to consider where you might have this experience so that there is enough space for children to move around. Scarves or fabrics of similar shapes work well for this.
- Invite children to run their fingers and other objects over fabrics to see what sounds they might make. Be intentional in choosing fabrics. Some can create a definite sound.
- Create a fabric texture board with your child.
- Run strips of fabric through Tempera paint on a large canvas or heavy paper/board. Explore how different textures of fabrics look when you press them into Tempera paint.
- Dip small pieces of white or light fabric into liquid watercolor. What happens when you slowly dip it in the paint? What happens if you dip it into another color of paint?