

Fun Activities at Home & Outdoors to Support Learning

I have put together some fun and alternative activities you can do at home and outdoors with your children to help support and develop the following areas: Fine motor skills, Gross motor skills, Literacy, Numeracy, Social Skills, Sensory Processing skills and Life Skills . I hope you and your children enjoy them!

1. Hopscotch

This is a fun and easy way to practice sight words, numbers, letter sounds and sums. It is also great for gross motor development.

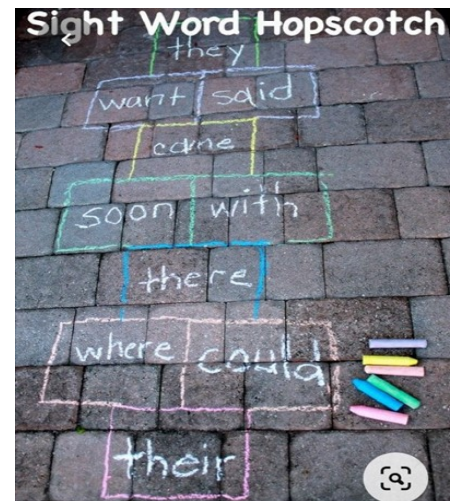
What you need:

Chalk, a small stone

What to do:

1. Using chalk make hopscotch.
2. In each square write target sight words, spelling words, letters, numbers, sums etc.....
3. Whichever word the stone lands in is the words you read.
4. Repeat until all words have been read at least once.

Alternative ways to play include: Read every word he/she hops on or use the word in a sentence, or for letter sounds say a word beginning /ending with the target sound. They could try and spell the target word after reading it to the tune of B.I.N.G.O.



3. Put out the fire word spray

For those children who like playing with water they will love this activity. Put letters, numbers, maths tables (sums), or words on flames using chalk. Give your child a water gun or watering can. Call out the target word/ number/sound /table, the child has to put out the flame on the sound/ word/number called out with the water gun !.

An alternative to this activity is to write the target words/sounds/numbers/ sums on your garden wall or fence using chalk.

Call out the sight word/sound/table/number/spelling

The child erases the sight word/sound with a sponge or spray bottle.

Once the words are erased the child can write or draw creatively on the wall. Drawing with wet chalk is a fantastic sensory activity!.

For children who do not like water play, eliminate the water. Have your child stand a distance from the sight word fence. When you call out a word/sound/maths table, your child runs and tags the word/sound/maths table on the fence and then runs back to the other side.

Use harder sight words for advanced students or write an entire sentence on the wall/fence and the child erases one word at a time from the sentence as you call them out.



“ Put out the fire that says 'the' ”



Sight Words
Outdoor Activities

3. Word Ladders

Using chalk, word ladders are a great way to help practice word families such as words ending in -an, -at, -ap, -am, -all, -ant, -ank, -in, -it, -ill, -ink, -op, -ot, -en, et, -ell, -un etc... . The children can hop up and down the ladder saying and spelling the target word. This can be used to practice spellings, sight words, numbers etc...also while also encouraging gross motor development.

4. Sight Word Soccer

This is a great way to get your child moving while learning their letter sounds/ words/numbers etc... All you will need is a ball and some cones (or buckets, cups etc..). Write the target words on card and attach them to the cones. The child can dribble the ball around the cones while saying the word as they pass each cone and when they get to the end they get to take a shot at the goal. Alternatively they can aim the ball at the cone when the target word is called out to try and knock it down.

5. Sight word Bowling

Blank labels and a toy plastic bowling set is all you need for this bowling sight word game. It can be used as a fun way to learn sight words/sounds/numbers. Have the children bowl, then read out the words they knock down. Keep score, or just play for fun!

6. Sight word treasure hunt

Make a map of your house and hide sight words or letters all around. You could also draw a map of your garden to take this game outside. Kids will have a blast reading the map and running around looking for "treasure."

7. Sight word Twister

For this variation on the classic game, you can tape flashcards to a real Twister board if you have one, or just draw your own with chalk. Read a word, and have kids find it on the board and put a hand or foot on it. You can call out a body part (right foot, left hand), or to make it easier for young kids, let them decide. The children are developing their gross motor skills at the same time.

8. Inspector Phonics

Children will love this detective game. Place letters, words or numbers into a tray or basin with sand or rice. Try and target up to 4 or 5 sounds or words. The child has to locate the words/sounds/numbers/sums with a tweezers and sort them (e.g put all the 's' together)

9. Flower Threading:

This encourages Fine motor development, shape, pattern and creativity.

What you need:

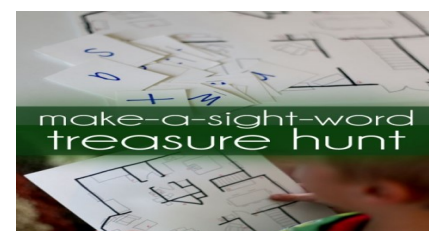
Punch holes in cardboard shapes

Gather flowers

Thread flowers through the holes



Sight Word SOCCER



From Precious Play

Inspector Phonics



10. Sound matching sensory activity

Write the target sounds on card (e.g s,a,t,i,p,n).

Place object which begin with the target sounds into a box, cover the objects with rice to make it fun for the child to have to find the objects. When the child finds an object he/she has to say the sound that the object begins with and match the object with the target letter sound (e.g 'car' begins with the sound 'c').



11. Race against the clock

Select 10 sight words that your child has been taught e.g I, me, like, he..... Write the selected sight words on individual cards. Then, draw circles with chalk on the ground. Write one of the selected sight words inside each circle. There will be 10 cards with words and 10 circles with the matching words. Finally draw a line 3 feet away from the circles. Set the word cards near the start line facing upwards. Then, the child picks up a sight word card. They read the card out loud, then race to place it on the matching sight word circle. They run back to the stack of sight word cards and repeat. This is repeated until all of the word cards have been placed in the circles. After playing the game once, consider adding the element of speed to the game by using a timer. Start the time when the first card has been turned over and stop it when all sight words have been read and matched. Repeat the game to compare times. This game can also be played by matching a lower case letter to an upper case letter or matching a number to its value.



12. Sight word bean bag toss

This game has a similar layout as the game above 'Race against the clock'. You will need to write the target words or sounds on individual cards. Then, draw circles with chalk. Write one of the selected sight words inside each circle. There will be 10 cards with words and 10 circles with the matching words. Finally draw a line 3 feet away from the circles. Then, the child picks up a sight word card. They read the card out loud then he/she throws the bean bag trying to hit the target sound/word.



13. Mini Shell Counting

Make a number line of shells or stones. Make a cover using a larger shell or egg cup.

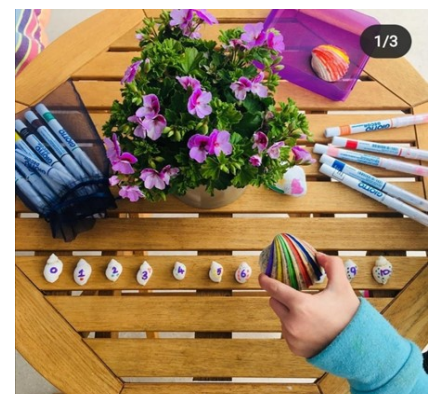
Activities include: -

Identify and order numbers

Point to and count numbers aloud

Hide a selection of numbers with a cover– identify number before/after– count on from .. 2 more/3 less.

Matching visual pattern with corresponding numeral



14. Shell/Rock Memory Match

You can use rocks or shells to play this game. Write numbers/letters under each rock/shell. Make sure you write two of each number of letter. Turn them upside down. The child has to turn the rocks/shells over 2 at a time and if they match they keep the pair. The winner is the person with the most matches.



15. Don't touch the lava

This game can be used to practice different skills from number recognition to sight words./letter sounds. It is also a great game to develop gross motor skills.

Materials needed:

- Placemats (or sheets of paper, pillow etc..) to be stepping stones through the lava.
- Cards/papers with numbers, letters or words written on them (whatever academic skill you want to practice)

Directions:

1. First, scatter your "stepping stones around on the floor of whatever room you want to play in. You could do it in the garden in Summer!.
2. Designate a safe starting spot to be "home". E.g the couch.
3. Scatter your learning cards around the floor, preferably on the opposite side of your lava river from your "home".
4. Explain to your child that you are going to pretend that the floor is lava, and their job is to rescue the cards from the lava one by one.
5. Call out a word/number/letter for your child to rescue. They can only step on the stepping stones. If they successfully get the card, pick it up and return to "home" without touching the floor, they get to keep the card and get a point.
6. If they touch the "lava" at any time, they must put the card down (if they have gotten it), and return to "home" to try again.
7. Continue calling out the cards for you child to rescue until all the cards have been recovered. Then celebrate your triumph over the lava!.



16. Other Chalk Numeracy activities :

- Match numeral to visual pattern.
- Addition and subtraction snake (Practice tables). Draw a snake with chalk, divide the snake into ten parts. Next, write a sum in each part . The child can jump along the snake and call out the answer to each sum. Alternatively you can throw a bean bag/ stone and call out the answer to the sum in which the bean bag/stone lands.
- Jump along a chalk number line and count forwards and backwards.



17. Obstacle Courses

Obstacle courses are a great way to help develop your child's gross motor skills. These can be made in your garden.

Sensory Chalk Obstacle Course

An alternative sensory obstacle course can be made with chalk: draw squiggly lines to follow, straight lines to jump over, boxes to hop on, spirals to spin on!.



Gross Motor Skills

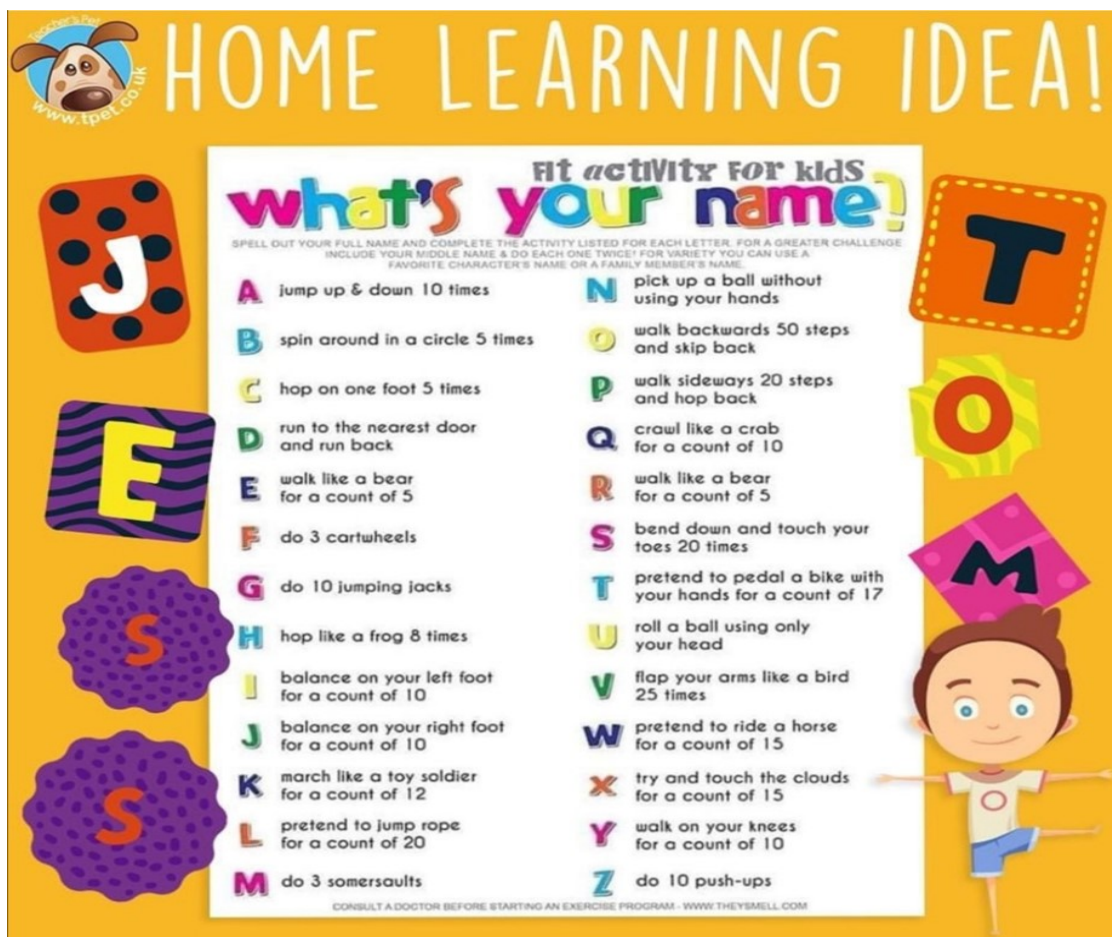
- Running- Pump the arms, and lift the heels off the ground. Stop (before hitting the wall/object/person) and turn.
- Galloping-Hold the reins (join hands in front, peep out through the reins), lead with one leg and foot facing forward.
- Skipping- Aim for high knees. Practise the sequence of 'Step, Hop and Step, Hop and Step', and so on.
- Animal Walks are an excellent activity to develop gross motor skills and can be found with visuals online.



Provide your child with as many multiple movement experiences as possible to provide them with the opportunity to try a variety of different experiences.

Aim for at least 1 hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. Include walking /cycling where possible extra to this hour. The playground is an excellent location to practice skills like climbing, jumping, swinging and balancing. These can now be practiced in the garden also. Play Simon Says: e.g. Simon Says do a star jump; run to the wall and back; skip around your garden/ yard.

More resources for motor skills for primary school children can be found on the website <https://ncse.ie/parent-primary-motor-skills>



Baking

Baking is a fun activity for all the family and can support your child's development. Baking can tap into a child's motivation and promote the development of learning, play, life skills, motor skills and social skills. It encourages Fine Motor Skills, Hand Eye Coordination Skills, Develops reading and maths skills, Sensory Processing Skills, Develops life skills, planning, problem solving and independence living skills, Develops confidence and social skills, Healthy Eating, Provides fun bonding time for parents and the family

<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/An-Introduction-to-Baking.pdf>



Gardening

Gardening is a great way to connect with nature and it offers ample opportunities to support your child's development and skill building: thinking skill, whole body movement skills, fine motor skill, senses, curiosity.

<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Gardening.pdf>

<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Gardening-Cutting-and-pasting-sorting-activity.pdf>



Sensory Processing – Information for Parents

Spending more time indoors due to social distancing measures can be challenging for all children, especially those who find processing sensory information difficult. This information booklet explains the importance of the sensory systems to learning and behaviour. It also provides advice on creating a sensory friendly space at home that can help children stay calm and regulated during these testing times.

<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Sensory-Processing-booklet-for-parents.pdf>