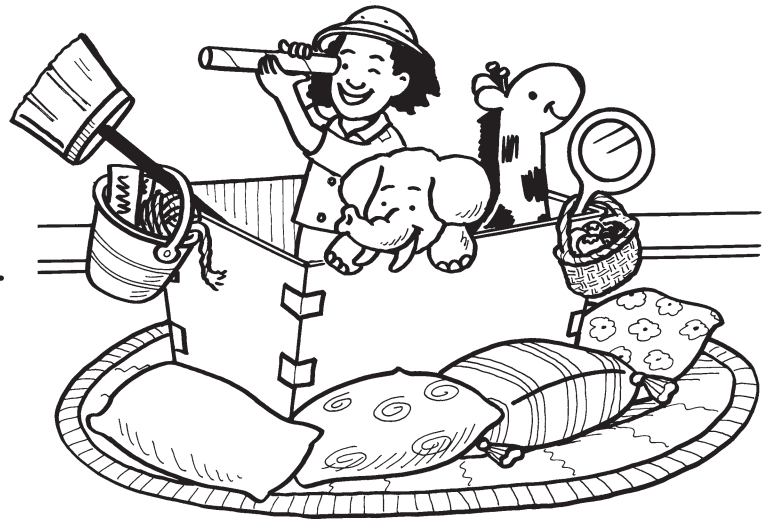


# Everyday Discoveries

From the vegetables in the kitchen to the stuffed animals in your youngster's room, your home is full of opportunities for her to discover words, math, science, and more. Try these activities together, and watch her build valuable skills she'll use in school and beyond.

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## LANGUAGE ARTS

### Secret sound bag

Practice beginning sounds with this alphabet guessing game. Ask your youngster to put magnetic letters or letter tiles in a brown paper lunch bag. She could also write consonant combinations (*br, ch, fl, gr, kn, pr, sh, str, th, wh*) on individual slips of paper and add them to the bag.



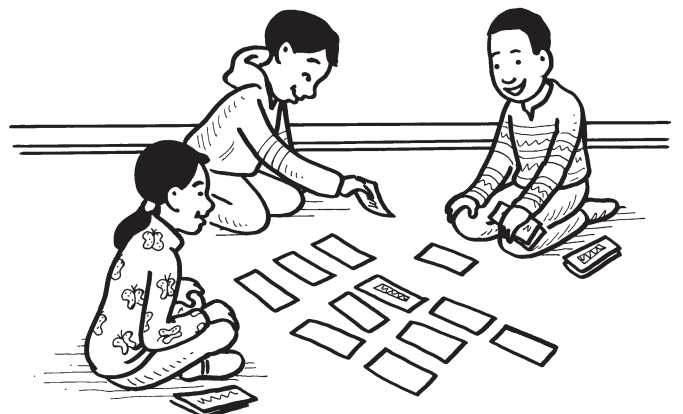
Have your child shake the bag and hold it out to you. Without letting her see what it is, pull out a letter or combination. Act out words or point to objects that start with it. For *R*, you might choose *road, roof, and run*. Or if you select *ch*, you could point to a *chipmunk*, hold up a *chestnut*, and act out *chewing*. See if she can guess the letter or combination. Switch roles, and let your youngster pick a letter. *Variation:* On slips of paper, write words your child knows, or have her draw pictures of familiar objects. Take turns pulling out a slip and reading the word or identifying the picture. Then, the other person says what letter or combination it starts with.

### Vocabulary match

Make a memory game using words related to a topic your child is studying in school.

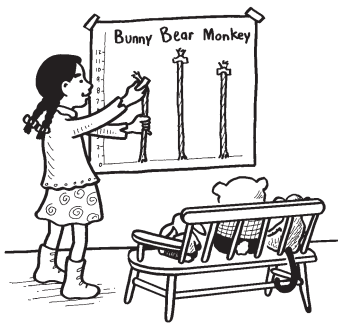
Let your youngster cut words out of old magazines, catalogs, and newspapers and glue each one on an index card. If he's learning about weather, he might choose *precipitation, climate, barometer, and humidity*. He should write each word on a second index card so he has matched pairs.

Lay all the cards facedown in rows. Take turns flipping over two cards. If the cards match, the player reads the word and gives its definition. Check the dictionary—if he's correct, he keeps the pair and takes another turn. If they don't match, or if he says the wrong definition, he turns them back over, and the next person takes a turn. The player with the most pairs at the end of the game wins.



# MATH

## Stuffed animal graph



Which of your youngster's stuffed animals is the tallest? She'll find out by graphing their heights.

Have her write the names of her animals across the top of a piece of poster board or cardboard and use a ruler to mark off inches up the left side. She can measure each animal by stretching yarn from

head to toe. She should carefully cut the yarn to fit each animal.

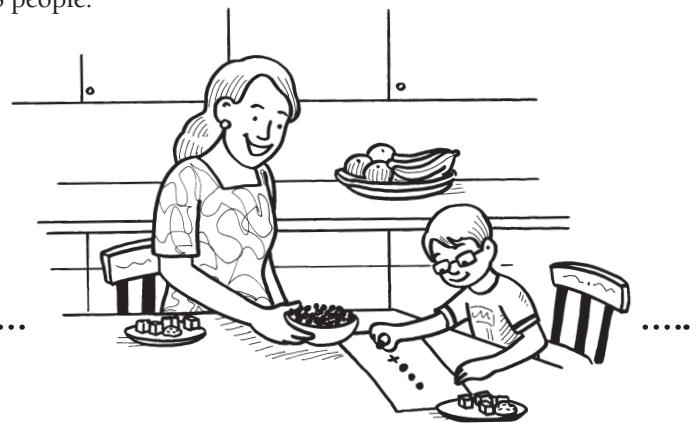
Then, your child can tape the pieces of yarn on the poster board under the correct animal name, making sure that the bottoms are lined up. Let her use the graph to tell you which animal is tallest and which is shortest. Ask questions like "How many inches taller is the bear than the bunny?"

**Addition:** Encourage your youngster to count out three blueberries. Ask how many berries he'd have if you gave him two strawberries ( $3 + 2 = 5$ ). *Tip:* If he isn't sure, put them on his plate, and let him count.

**Subtraction:** Give your child four cubes of cheese and ask how many will be left if he eats one ( $4 - 1 = 3$ ). After he answers, he could check by eating and then counting.

**Multiplication:** Ask your youngster to calculate how much food you'd need to feed a crowd. *Example:* "If all 26 students in your class were here, and you gave each person 4 pretzels, how many pretzels would you need in all?" (104, since  $26 \times 4 = 104$ )

**Division:** Suggest that he count the mini rice cakes in a bag and figure out how many people could share them if each person got 3. Say there are 24 rice cakes—he could solve  $24 \div 3 = 8$  and see that there are enough rice cakes for 8 people.



## Tasty arithmetic

What's almost as much fun as eating pretzels or yogurt-covered raisins? Doing math problems with them! Turn snack time into math time with these ideas.

# SCIENCE

## Veggie magic

Let your child see for herself how plant parts grow with this "sweet" hands-on activity. She can stick four toothpicks around the sides of a sweet potato and put it into a wide-mouth glass jar. The toothpicks should rest on the jar's rim so the potato doesn't touch the bottom.

Have her pour in enough water to cover half of the potato. Then, she should place the jar in a sunny window. Remind her to check the water level daily and add more if it's getting low.

After about a week, she'll see the potato growing plant parts—leafy "sprouts" on top and roots from the bottom. Ask your youngster to describe these parts (size, color, shape) as they grow.

## Mirror, mirror

Making his own mirror teaches your child about reflection. Explain that a mirror reflects light—or makes it bounce back—so he can see himself.



Then, help him make a basic mirror by taping a piece of black construction paper to the outside of a window. Your youngster will be excited to see his reflection when he looks in this "mirror." Tell him that the dark paper absorbs the light and the window reflects it back.

He can have more fun with mirrors by exploring how they flip images around. Ask him to write his name or draw a simple picture on a sheet of paper and hold it up to a mirror. It will look backward—this is called a "mirror image." You can illustrate this idea by pretending to be a mirror. Face your child and copy his movements. For example, if he holds up his right hand, you hold up your left hand. Trade roles, and ask him to be the "mirror."

# Recipes for Success