



Family Activity Guide

Directions: Families can support their children’s education while spending quality time together, by engaging in learning activities together. The following are some activities that students and their families can try at home.

1. Scavenger Hunt

Creating a scavenger hunt with everyday items is a simple process. Start by picking a place like the backyard, your neighborhood, or a local park. While walking around, look for items and create a list. For each item, think of two to three clues. Then, give your child the clues as you walk together. For example, you may ask your child to find different objects based on color or shape or items based on their use, such as safety items around town. Consider giving your child a camera or a checklist to keep track of their finds. After your hunt, discuss with your child what all of the items had in common and the great critical thinking they did to figure out all the clues. Even better! Let your child make a scavenger hunt for you.

2. Little Big Chefs

Cooking together is a great way to explore math and science as a family. Look up recipes; find one you’ll both enjoy making. Shop for your ingredients together and then spend time in the kitchen preparing the food. Build in opportunities for practicing reading and math by having your child read the recipe aloud to you or practice measuring with a variety of measuring spoons and cups. This is a great way to show their learning in action in real life! Enjoy your hard work by eating in a special place, such as: outside or on a blanket in another room. Younger children will be excited to complete a grown-up task and older children will appreciate some ownership over the process. Plus! What better way to understand the importance of budgeting, purchasing, and measuring than through food. When done, ask your child to write about the experience.

3. One Good Deed

As a family, start the tradition of regularly doing good deeds. Some great volunteer ideas for children include:

- donating food at a food pantry
- running an errand for an elderly person
- writing a letter to deployed service people or to children in hospitals
- cleaning up around your neighborhood
- donating money from a lemonade stand or a bake sale; and
- reading to younger children at libraries, daycares or churches.

Set a family volunteer goal where you and your child commit to volunteering monthly or make a family commitment to perform a weekly, or even daily, good deed. Have your child write about all the great things you have done together and keep a journal or scrapbook commemorating these activities. Not only will you and your child build wonderful memories together, each good deed will be a positive learning experience.



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Here is a list of 25 simple activities that families can do together:

1. Call loved ones on the phone
2. Put together a puzzle
3. Create a shopping list, go food shopping and prepare a tasty treat
4. Draw a family portrait either individually or join in to draw one large portrait
5. Drum with pots and pans or other items that you can safely bang on
6. Eat dinner together as a family and talk about your day
7. Establish a family handshake or a secret family language
8. Have an at-home talent show
9. Learn a new dance or choreograph a family dance routine
10. Have a family karaoke night
11. Search the newspaper or internet for events and make plans for the weekend
12. Take turns writing parts of a silly story
13. Memorize the 50 States and their capitals) and quiz each other
14. Make your own play dough and create sculptures
15. Paint artwork together
16. Play a board game
17. Play balloon volleyball
18. Play Simon Says, Hot Potato, or another childhood favorite game
19. Read a book together and act out parts, or independently read the same book
20. Grab cardboard and make something
21. Learn a new skill together
22. Start a garden
23. Tell scary stories by flashlight
24. Try different exercises like yoga or Zumba
25. Watch or attend a sporting event



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Here is a list of activities your program can implement to include families:

Good news cards: Send home postcards or short, handwritten notes about something you really appreciate about a child in your program or something you noticed them doing well this week.

Provide at-home projects: Create a project kit related to a theme you are covering in your program. Include all materials necessary and encourage children to share the project with an adult. Don't require that the project be brought back, this is just a way to share some of what you do in afterschool. Include information about what academic skills youth are practicing when they do the project.

School mascot: Send a stuffed animal or small toy to "visit" a different family each week. Include a disposal camera so the family can take pictures of the toy in their home. Display the pictures at your program.

Family book reviews: Send home a book that youth really enjoy. On the inside cover, tape a business envelope and fill it with blank cards. Ask youth to share the book and write down what the family thinks about the book and put the card in the envelope. The next family will get to read what others think and add their own comments.

"A Day in the Life...": Give students "reporting assignments" to document "a day in the life of" various family members. Ask youth to take pictures of their families enjoying meals, sharing customs, or doing a favorite activity. Display the photos in your program.

Family stories: Ask adults to record stories about their families in their home language. Youth can interpret the stories for classmates.

Parent newsletter: Send regular newsletters home highlighting program accomplishments.

Family collage: Make a collage or sculpture with items that families contribute. Consider themes like "food we eat" or "what we see from our window."

Staff introductions: Send home photos and short biographies to introduce staff members.

Take home menus: Keep a stack of take-out or delivery menus by the phone in your program. Invite parents to call for take-out and play or talk with youth while they are waiting for the food to be ready.

Breakfast on the go: Hand out granola bars or muffins and coffee in paper cups with lids one morning to families as they drop off youth.