

Building Blocks: Week 1

Look at all of the Kindergarten skills we worked on today! Keep up the good work with these activities below.

Self-Regulation

Studies have shown that being able to pay attention in class, complete tasks, sit still, and listen without interrupting are more important than academic skills for success in life.

We worked on this today by singing "Open, Shut Them" and "I Wiggle My Fingers", talking about our jobs (expectations) during storytime, taking deep breaths, and reading *Waiting Is Not Easy*.

The next time your child feels full of energy, remind them that there will be a time for them to get their wiggles out. Let them know what behavior you **do** expect of them. Ask them to take deep breaths, give themselves a hug (pressure and compression help), and reward them with verbal praise when they do show self-control.

Scientific Method and Exploring the Natural World

When we used magnifying glasses to observe, describe, and talk about what we saw, we were really practicing the scientific method!

Try this at home with items you have found around your house or neighborhood, especially if your child helps you gather them. Talk about what makes them the same or different. Look out the window and make predictions about the weather and the season.

Gross and Fine Motor Skills

Get those bodies moving! Studies have shown that when kids move, they retain more information, since they're using more of their brain.

Fine (small) motor skills are practiced when we sing songs with hand motions, hold a shaker, or write with markers and crayons. You can work on these by using a variety of writing tools to make marks on paper, picking up small objects individually, or playing with blocks.

Gross (large) motor skills are tuned when we sing songs with large body movements and use our arms to shake our shakers. Going outside to play, especially with balls to kick or throw, can help develop these skills even more.

Self-Concept: Identifying Personal Characteristics

Making our All About Me books helped your child think about their personal information. It's also important for them to know a family phone number and address in case of an emergency.

- Put your phone into airplane mode and let your child practice dialing.
- Make a map of your neighborhood with major cross and side streets around you.
- Set information to music to help your child remember easily. Sing this song to the tune of "Frere Jacques" with either your address or phone number: 303, 303, 542, 542, 7279, 7279, That's my number, that's my number! (from lastingthumbprints.com)



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Self-Efficacy: Confidence

Showing children that you love them can go a long way towards boosting their self-esteem. Here are a few ways to help:

- Talk to your child regularly about what you love about them.
- Get interested in the same subjects they're interested in.
- Give them options when choosing their clothes for the day.
- When they display unwanted behavior, try to rephrase your requests in a positive way by saying what behavior you DO want to see. For example: instead of "Don't jump on the couch!", try "Couches are for sitting."

Each Building Blocks child will be given a copy of the book below to help you start talking to your child about themselves.



It's Okay to Be Different

by Todd Parr

Illustrations and brief text describe all kinds of differences that are "okay," such as "It's okay to be a different color," "It's okay to need some help," "It's okay to be adopted," and "It's okay to have a different nose."

Book Appreciation

Taking an interest in books and knowing how they work is another Kindergarten skill. Children need to know how a book is held, in what direction words are read depending on the language, who helps to create a book, and must be able to retell the story in their own words.

In the storytime portion of our program today, we talked about the roles of the author and illustrator, the title of the book, we guessed what the book was about, and, at the end of the book, discussed what it was about. Try this as you read at home, too.

Creative Arts: Music

Singing and playing an instrument are building blocks to Kindergarten, too! Shakers help children feel rhythm, while singing gets their bodies AND minds moving. Try singing the songs we learned today while clapping out the rhythms or syllables.

Every Building Blocks child also received a magnet for the website StoryBlocks.org. This site is full of fun songs in six of languages. Pick a song that you've never heard before and learn it together with your child.

Next Meeting

BUILDING BLOCKS
Smoky Hill Library
02/08/17, 02/15/17
1:15 pm to 2:15 pm

Questions? Feel free to contact me (Mollie) at
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I look forward to hearing from you!