



Parenting on the Outer Banks

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Inside this issue:

- ◆ Old Time Rhymes
- ◆ Development: The Magic of Blocks
- ◆ Tips for Block Play
- ◆ Parents as Teachers eNewsletter
- ◆ Block Fest & Literacy Event
- ◆ Creative Corner: Art & Craft Ideas
- ◆ Parenting Enrichment Program

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Old Time Rhymes

Nursery rhymes have been around for generations and for good reasons. Rhyming words attract babies' attention and help them recognize sounds that are similar. The humorous content of nursery rhymes helps older children's comprehension. Nursery rhymes are just plain fun for children and parents alike! Here are some ways to enjoy nursery rhymes with your child.

With babies: Pick one or two rhymes to croon to your baby before bedtime. She will like to hear the same rhyme over and over and will begin to associate it with being sleepy. This will help her go to sleep.

With crawlers: These little ones are on the move! Hold their hands and clap to the beat of a nursery rhyme, or grasp those little legs and guide them in a bicycling motion! Movement makes muscles strong.

With toddlers: One-year-olds are developing language rapidly. Put lots of inflection in your voice as you say nursery rhymes to children this age. Use a funny voice; draw out the words that rhyme to emphasize them.

With two-year olds: Look for picture books that illustrate classic rhymes. Read these to your child and let him look at the pictures. When he is familiar with the rhyme, pause before saying the rhyming words to let him think, and later to supply the word.

With young preschoolers: These children are nursery rhyme pros! Encourage them to learn rhymes by heart by saying part of a line and letting them finish it from memory. But don't push your child to perform in front of company. That's overwhelming for some children. You will know when you have a little ham that loves performing!

With older preschoolers: Leave out a word of a rhyme and let your child think of funny alternatives. For example, you say, "Bah, bah, black sheep, have you any _____? Your child supplies, "Bubble gum!" or something equally silly. Finish the rhyme with lots of laughter, and expect this game to go on for a long time!

Development: The Magic of Blocks



Playing with blocks provides one of the most valuable learning experiences for young children. Research shows that playing with blocks enhances all areas of development, especially math and science. It is an open ended activity that enhances learning, sorting, matching, counting, measuring, balancing, estimating, adding, subtracting, problem solving and critical thinking. Block building stimulates children's imagination and creativity as they try out an idea and see what happens with their idea. Blocks should be introduced to the youngest learners and made available to children throughout the early childhood years. The lessons learned in block play are fundamental to the growth and development of children.

Babies love to bang blocks and knock down towers that you have built. By 12 months of age, babies can put blocks in and out of a container and begin to stack. By age 2, children can stack 6 blocks for a tower and lay blocks side by side to build a road. This simple stacking is followed by children building bridges and making enclosures and other structures. By ages four and five, children will build elaborate structures together and often use cars, and animal and people figures to pretend as they play and build.



Tips for Block Play

Provide a good supply of blocks, such as "unit" blocks in different shapes, including ramps, curves, cylinders, as well as squares and rectangles. Wooden or foam unit blocks are a good investment as your children will play with them for many years in a variety of ways.

Store blocks, if possible, on shelves at your child's eye level, and group blocks by size and shape. Label the shelf with a cut-out or picture of the blocks. This will help with clean up and will teach matching.

Add props and other accessories such as cars, trucks, plastic people, animals, paper and crayons, etc. to encourage children to extend their play.

Look at and talk about the child's creation. Comment using math words, "You used 2 square blocks to make a rectangle." "Let's count how many blocks you used in your tower."

Expand math vocabulary. Talk about circles, squares, triangles, rectangles, cubes, hexagons, spheres, in, out, above, under, more, less, equal, add, etc.

Ask open-ended questions, "How did you get the big block to balance on top of the other blocks?" Avoid asking "What is it?" and instead use a phrase such as "Tell me about..."

Follow the child's lead during block play. Remember that your child needs to experiment and create using his or her own ideas.

Offer support and help children problem-solve by asking leading questions, "Do you think another shape might work better here?"

Show genuine interest and comment on construction details. "Your castle has more rooms than the one you built before," or "Look how tall your tower is!" Specific comments let children know that their play is important and that their hard work is appreciated.

Source: Parents As Teachers

Subscribe to Parents as Teachers free Parents eNewsletter to receive valuable information tailored specifically for your child's age. Each newsletter focuses on one of five developmental areas (Motor, Language, Intellectual, Social-emotional and Pre-writing) and what changes you can expect to see. It also gives parenting tips and examples of activities you can do with your baby to encourage growth and learning. Visit www.parentsasteachers.org

BLOCKFest January 29th & 30th



Block Fest™ is a building extravaganza for parents and children ages 8 months to 5 years of age. Bring the young children in your life to play and learn with lots and lots of blocks including little blocks, big blocks, square blocks, round blocks, wooden blocks, foam blocks, cardboard blocks.

Children & Youth Partnership for Dare County invites you to attend our Block Fest and Literacy Event*!

Friday, January 29th

Time: 9am-10am, 10:30-11:30am, 1pm-2pm

Saturday, January 30th

Time: 9-10:45am and 10:30-12:15

Location: Nags Head Church (Milepost 13)

Bring your children ages 5 and under to enjoy five block-play stations designed to maximize your child's enjoyment and learning. You will receive information on the stages of block play and tips to help your child learn math and science concepts while you play at home. Block Fest is designed to accommodate 30 children and their parents in each one-hour fun packed session. Children may not attend without their parents. Sessions will be filled on a first come first serve basis- **space is limited!** Sign up now to participate in this great family event.

***Saturday only-Join us for a ride on the Imagination Library "railroad" with a special story time and snack!**

PARTICIPATION IS FREE

Pre-registration required!

Call Children & Youth Partnership for Dare County at 441-0614





Creative Corner: Art & Craft Ideas



Research continues to demonstrate that children under the age of five learn best through play. Here are some ideas for homemade toys and play activities that promote intellectual, social-emotional, motor and language skills in young children as playing and learning go hand in hand.



Homemade Blocks—

Children love cardboard boxes and often prefer them to the toys that were inside.

Empty food boxes make great building blocks, collect

a variety of small boxes such as juice boxes, pasta boxes, individual cereal boxes, gift boxes, jewelry boxes, card boxes, etc. Stuff the boxes with newspaper to make them strong, cover boxes with colored contact paper or decorate them with paints, stickers, crayons or markers.

Bean Bag Toss Game— Sew 4 inch squares of fabric into bean bags. Fill with beans until you get to your desired weight. Decorate a large box and cut out a hole that is large enough to throw your bean bags through. For an easier version for younger children, just have them throw the bean bags into the top of the box.



My First Words:

Add photos of familiar objects and people to a small photo album or make your own by connecting a few index cards with metal rings. Label each photo with words.

Stuffed Animal Puppet-

Make the forgotten stuffed animal found in the back of the closet into a puppet. Open the seam or cut a long slit in the bottom of the stuffed animal and remove the stuffing. The old stuffed animal might just become their new favorite toy.



Textured Play Mat- Sew on bright pieces of fabric in different textures onto an old blanket to create a play mat that will give your infant something interesting to look at and touch during tummy time.

Fishing Game- Cut fish shapes from different colored cardstock or foam paper, put a paper clip on each fish shape to form its mouth. Make a fishing pole by tying a magnet onto a 2-foot string. Tie the other end of the string to a wrapping paper tube. Place the shapes in a plastic bucket, or scatter them on the floor. Your child will love the challenge of catching the fish.

Keep safety in mind; magnets, beans and other small objects can pose a choking hazard to young children.

Workshops presented by Parenting Enrichment Program

“Kids and Substance Abuse – Tips and Tools for Parents” - January 22, 6:30 to 8:00pm

Presenters: Tim Hill & Mike Damoth

“Cyber Nightmare: Youth & Technology in 2010” - February 19, 6:30 to 8:00pm

Presenters: Brian Strickland & Melinda Mogowski

“Survival Skills for Parenting your Teens” - March 19, 6:30 to 8:00pm *Presenter:* Kathy Burrus

Participate in these fun and interactive workshops at the Outer Banks YMCA in Nags Head **free of charge**. For more information visit www.darekids.org or call Children & Youth Partnership for Dare County at 441-0614.

