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Black Child
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ATLANTA

BACK TO SCHOOL

AUGUST 2024



ACTIVITY GUIDE

PARENTS AND EARLY EDUCATORS

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Back to School Activity Guide

Welcome to our August Activity Guide for Parents and Early Educators of Children 0 to 5 Years Old! This guide is designed to help you prepare your child for the upcoming school year with fun, engaging, and developmentally appropriate activities. Each age group features five carefully selected activities that focus on enhancing your child's physical, cognitive, and social skills. These activities are easy to do at home or at school and are intended to support your child's growth and readiness for school.

We have also included suggestions for incorporating cultural relevancy, particularly for Black families and educators of Black children. By integrating elements of your child's cultural heritage into these activities, you can help them develop a strong sense of identity and pride in their background. By spending quality time with your child and engaging in these playful learning experiences, you will help foster a love for learning and a smooth transition into their educational journey.

- 1) 0-1 Year Olds**
- 2) 1-2 Year Olds**
- 3) 2-3 Year Olds**
- 4) 3-4 Year Olds**
- 5) 4-5 Year Olds**

0-1 Year Olds

At this stage, babies are rapidly developing their senses and motor skills. Activities that stimulate their sight, sound, touch, and movement help them explore the world around them and lay the foundation for future learning. Engaging in these simple, playful activities will not only support their physical development but also strengthen the bond between you and your baby. Incorporate culturally relevant elements by using items that reflect your family's heritage, such as African print fabrics for sensory play or traditional lullabies for music time. Celebrating cultural identity from an early age helps to instill pride and confidence in your baby.

Activities

- 1 Tummy Time:** Encourage your baby to spend time on their tummy to strengthen their neck and shoulder muscles. Place toys just out of reach to motivate them to move.
- 2 Sensory Play:** Use different textures and objects like soft fabrics, rattles, and textured balls to stimulate their senses. Consider using fabrics with traditional African prints or patterns.
- 3 Reading Time:** Read simple picture books with bright colors and patterns to your baby, pointing to and naming objects. Look for books that feature Black characters and cultural themes.
- 4 Music and Movement:** Sing songs and nursery rhymes, and gently move your baby's arms and legs to the rhythm. Include traditional lullabies or songs from your cultural heritage.
- 5 Mirror Play:** Place your baby in front of a mirror so they can see their reflection and learn about facial expressions and body movements. Use this time to talk about their features and affirm their identity.

1-2 Year Olds

Toddlers are becoming more curious and mobile, eager to explore and interact with their environment. Activities that promote fine and gross motor skills, sensory exploration, and early cognitive skills are essential at this stage. These activities will help your toddler build the skills needed for more structured learning experiences as they grow. Incorporate cultural elements by using toys, books, and music that reflect your child's heritage. Engaging in culturally relevant play helps to reinforce a positive self-identity and a sense of belonging.

Activities

- 1 Exploration Walks:** Take short walks outside, allowing your toddler to explore different textures like grass, sand, and leaves. Talk about nature and its significance in different cultures.
- 2 Building Blocks:** Use soft blocks to encourage stacking and knocking them down, promoting fine motor skills. Include blocks with cultural symbols or patterns.
- 3 Simple Puzzles:** Introduce basic puzzles with large pieces to help develop problem-solving skills. Choose puzzles that depict scenes or objects from your cultural background.
- 4 Art Time:** Provide non-toxic crayons and paper for scribbling, helping to develop hand-eye coordination. Encourage your child to use colors and shapes inspired by cultural art.
- 5 Pretend Play:** Use simple toys like a toy phone or kitchen set to encourage imaginative play. Incorporate items that represent your cultural heritage, such as play food or utensils.

2-3 Year Olds

Children in this age group are starting to develop more complex language and cognitive abilities. They enjoy activities that challenge their problem-solving skills and creativity. By engaging in play that encourages sorting, counting, and pretend play, you can support your child's growing independence and readiness for preschool. Incorporate stories, songs, and games from your cultural heritage to enrich their learning experience. This not only fosters cognitive development but also enhances cultural awareness and pride.

Activities

- 1 Storytelling:** Read stories together and ask your child to point to pictures and name objects. Choose books with diverse characters and cultural themes.
- 2 Color Sorting:** Provide objects of different colors and ask your child to sort them into matching color groups. Use culturally significant colors and explain their meanings.
- 3 Water Play:** Fill a basin with water and provide cups, spoons, and small toys for scooping and pouring. Introduce objects that are meaningful in your culture.
- 4 Music and Dance:** Play different types of music and encourage your child to dance and move to the rhythm. Include music from your cultural heritage.
- 5 Shape Recognition:** Use shape sorters or cut out shapes from paper and ask your child to match them to a template. Incorporate shapes and symbols from your culture.

3-4 Year Olds

Preschoolers are full of energy and enthusiasm for learning. They benefit from activities that promote literacy, numeracy, and social skills. This is a crucial time for preparing your child for the structured environment of school. Fun and interactive activities will help them develop a love for learning and build confidence in their abilities. Integrate cultural stories, traditions, and practices to make learning more meaningful. Highlighting cultural achievements and role models can inspire and motivate your child.

Activities

- 1 Alphabet Games:** Use flashcards or magnetic letters to introduce the alphabet and practice letter recognition. Include letters and words from your cultural language if applicable.
- 2 Counting Activities:** Count everyday objects together, like steps, toys, or pieces of fruit. Use objects that are significant in your culture, such as beads or shells.
- 3 Craft Projects:** Provide materials like colored paper, glue, and safety scissors for simple crafts like making a collage. Encourage crafts that reflect cultural traditions or festivals.
- 4 Outdoor Play:** Encourage physical activities like running, jumping, and climbing in a safe environment. Share traditional games or activities from your culture.
- 5 Role-Playing:** Use costumes and props to play different roles and scenarios, enhancing social skills and creativity. Include cultural attire and scenarios to teach about your heritage.

4-5 Year Olds

As children approach school age, it's important to focus on activities that prepare them for the academic and social aspects of school. Engaging in writing, reading, simple math, and science experiments can make learning enjoyable and build the foundational skills they will need. These activities also provide opportunities for you to discuss new concepts and experiences, fostering a smooth transition to the classroom. Incorporate cultural elements to affirm their identity and enrich their learning experience. Providing culturally relevant learning opportunities helps to ensure your child feels represented and valued in their educational journey.

Activities

- 1 Writing Practice:** Provide pencils and paper for practicing writing their name and simple words. Encourage writing words from your cultural language or names of family members.
- 2 Math Games:** Use counting games and simple addition and subtraction with objects like beads or buttons. Incorporate culturally significant items for counting.
- 3 Science Experiments:** Conduct simple experiments, like mixing baking soda and vinegar to create a reaction. Explain the science behind traditional practices or natural phenomena in your culture.
- 4 Reading Together:** Read longer stories and discuss the plot, characters, and settings to develop comprehension skills. Choose books that reflect your child's cultural background and experiences.
- 5 Cooking Projects:** Involve your child in simple cooking tasks like measuring ingredients, stirring, and decorating cookies. Share recipes and cooking methods from your cultural heritage.

Conclusion

We hope you and your child enjoy exploring these activities together and find them beneficial in preparing for the new school year. Remember, the most important part of this journey is the time you spend together and the joy you bring to learning. Incorporating cultural relevancy into these activities not only enriches your child's learning experience but also affirms their identity and heritage.

Every small step counts in building a strong foundation for your child's future education. Continue to encourage curiosity, celebrate achievements, and create a positive learning environment at home. Thank you for being an active participant in your child's early development and for celebrating the rich cultural heritage that shapes who they are. Here's to a successful and exciting school year ahead!

Thank you for downloading this month's Activity Guide! Please share your feedback with us by completing this brief survey.

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