

PLANES, TRAINS, AND AUTOMOBILES

The amount of time that children spend in the car strapped in car seats has risen dramatically over the last several years! Finding creative ways to take advantage of this time will not only foster your child's development, but keep her amused and entertained as well!

Literacy development takes many shapes and forms. Whenever possible, read, read, read, with your child. For the times when that is not feasible, here are some 'on the go' suggestions that will still foster your child's literacy development:

- ◆ **Sing songs** ~ Sing the songs you know or make up new ones by changing the words to fit your child's current interests.
- ◆ **Tell stories** ~ Children love to hear stories where they are the main character! Be creative...use your imagination...make up stories with your child as the star! Start a new adventure each time you have to travel in the car. Your child will begin to look forward to this special story time.
- ◆ **Say rhymes and poems** ~ Your child will learn to say them with you! Make some new ones up together!
- ◆ **Do finger plays** ~ Action helps reinforce learning and memory. Try a finger play such as "The Itsy Bitsy Spider" the next time you are traveling!

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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LEARNING TIPS FOR BUSY FAMILIES



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LEARNING ON THE GO

When we talk about a child's literacy development, we most often think of reading, reading, reading. While this is an excellent way of developing your child's literacy skills, there are countless other opportunities that are also beneficial!

As you go about your typical day, you will find many occasions to interact and talk with your child in ways that will promote her early literacy development. It doesn't always have to mean sitting down with a good story book. Keep in mind that children learn best through their everyday interactions with the people they love and trust and when the learning is fun!

► The Grocery Store

Think about the amount of time that you spend in the grocery store each week. Then think of the amount of time that your child is sitting in the cart observing what you are doing. What an excellent time to talk with your child and have him help you with the shopping! Read your grocery list to your child. It doesn't matter if he doesn't yet understand what you are saying...you are exposing him to language! He needs to hear the words to learn to speak them.

Ask your child to help you look for the



items you will be purchasing by describing them. For example, when you get to the item's general location you could say, "Help me find a big box that is yellow." If your child is learning his letters you could extend this idea by asking him to find a large yellow box with the letter 'C' on the front.

Counting oranges as you put them in the bag or cans of soup as you put them in the cart are also examples of what you can do while shopping.

Talk about the items you are seeking; talk about how you will use them for meals; talk; talk; talk. This not only helps your child's literacy development, it helps keep him occupied and entertained for the duration of your shopping trip!

► Sorting Laundry

No matter what, the laundry needs to get done. Here is an excellent time to talk with your child and foster her sorting and grouping skills. Have your child help you sort the laundry ~ either before you wash or after you are finished. Even very young children can be



taught to put all the towels and wash clothes together or everything that is white in one pile. Use whatever sorting methods you use for accomplishing this task. When the laundry is finished she can help you put the clothes in groups by the family members the items belong to. Your child can even help you put the items away!

These types of activities are good pre-math behaviors to do with your child. It will foster a good foundation for later formal math instruction. Starting your child on household chores early also teaches her about responsibility.

► Waiting in Line

Doesn't it always seem like you are waiting in a line for something? Whether you are waiting to see the latest children's movie at the theater, at the coffee shop, or your favorite retail store, this presents a wonderful opportunity for learning!

Count the number of people in line; ask your child what color shirt the person in front is wearing; count the number of people wearing tennis shoes or shorts; find the tallest tree in the parking lot; talk about what you see, hear, or smell; pick out letters or words on signs or menus...the possibilities are endless!