



Early

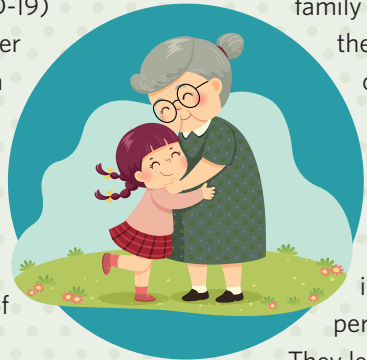
Learning & Education PROGRAMS

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School Age Social-Emotional Learning

When children enter elementary school, there are a variety of new expectations such as completing homework, doing more computer work, learning through group instruction, and sitting for longer periods of time. During the last year, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic resulted in children either learning from home or engaging in a hybrid school program that included both distance and limited in-person learning. Even if children are distanced from each other, they can still socialize and develop their understanding of emotions and empathy.



Staying at home with family members has offered children the chance to strengthen their

family relationships. This is valuable because as they learn about their family history, they develop their own identities. Encourage the families you work with to share stories and photos of relatives with their children, prepare favorite family meals together, and share skills they may have learned from their own parents and grandparents.

Interacting with family members of different ages and with varying abilities helps children develop empathy, the ability to intuitively understand another person's emotions and perspective.

They learn that they need to slow down for elderly relatives or adjust the rules of a game for younger children.

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LEARNING ABOUT OTHERS

Children notice similarities and differences in people from infancy. Using books to start conversations about different races and cultures helps children develop empathy for others.

- *Carmela Full of Wishes* by Matt de la Peña
- *Eyes That Kiss in the Corners* by Joanna Ho
- *Fry Bread* by Kevin Noble Maillard
- *I Am Every Good Thing* by Derrick Barnes
- *Jayden's Impossible Garden* by Mélina Mangal
- *Milo Imagines the World* by Matt de la Peña
- *Our Skin* by Jessica Ralli and Megan Madison
- *The Proudest Blue* by Ibtihaj Muhammad and S. K. Ali





Building Resilience

Children build resilience through supportive relationships with trusted adults and by developing emotional literacy, independence, and critical thinking skills. A child who is resilient is able to work through challenges and manage stress while keeping a positive outlook. One of the most important elements in building resilience is for children to experience a supportive and responsive relationship with at least one trusted adult. This is valuable because it is easier to maintain a positive outlook when you are not alone.

Through relationships, children learn how to regulate their emotions and behavior. Help children learn to identify emotions and develop coping skills for managing stress, anger, or frustration. Label emotions and teach children coping techniques for calming down. Teach coping strategies when children are calm and receptive to learning them. Try deep breathing exercises like Cooling the Soup. For this exercise, children cup their hands and take breaths to cool their pretend soup. Create a space with prompts that remind children of breathing techniques and provide materials they can squeeze and pound like clay or sponges.

Encourage children to develop independence by performing tasks alone and making choices when appropriate. Observe children in order to learn when they are ready to perform tasks such as dressing or feeding themselves and helping to clean up toys. Guide children in making decisions by allowing them

reasonable choices such as: choosing between two activities, deciding which food to eat first at lunch, or selecting clothes to wear the next day.

Children encounter small challenges daily, such as disagreeing over a toy or figuring out how to stack blocks without them falling. Adults need to give children the time and space to try and work through problems on their own, and step in only to offer encouragement or suggestions when necessary. Learning to control their emotions, solve problems, and seek guidance helps children develop confidence. That confidence and the support they receive from loving adults will build the resilience children need to persevere.

Source: The website <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/resilience/> was accessed in April 2021.



What's Under the Mask?

In order to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), early educators and the community at large have been wearing face coverings for over a year. Wearing masks can make it challenging for children to identify and interpret emotions, but there are steps adults can take to support them. Consider asking parents to take advantage of mask-free time at home to talk with children and express feelings. Parents can also play peek-a-boo with a mask, asking their child to guess how they feel, and then removing their mask to reveal the emotion. Invite parents to share mask-free photos you can make into books or posters for children to read and discuss.

Put a mask on in front of a mirror. Practice different emotions and notice visual cues you can point out to children, such as lifting your eyebrows to indicate surprise. You can ask children, "How can you tell I feel happy?" Try changing your tone of voice and using your whole body to illustrate emotions, such as waving, using gestures, or learning American Sign Language (ASL). Take pictures of yourself expressing emotions with and without a mask. Place the picture with the mask on one side of an index card and the corresponding picture without the mask on the

other side. Hold them next to your face when you talk about feelings or use them to start conversations. You can also involve children in taking pictures to make a class set of emotion cards to explore. Sing songs about emotions and select children's books that explore friendship and include a wide range of feelings.

Source: "Do Masks Impede Children's Development?" by Dr. Perri Klass (New York Times, September 14, 2020).



School Age Social-Emotional Learning

Educators can support these relationships by including families in learning. For example, they can share a tongue-twister (“Sally sells sea shells by the sea shore”) with children, ask them to practice it with their family, and find out if they know any others. Children can also ask relatives to teach them jump rope rhymes or games they played as children such as: Simon Says, Janken (Paper, Rock, Scissors), or Uno, Dos, Tres, Calabaza (Red Light, Green Light).

Plan activities that offer children opportunities to work in groups. For example, consider making a digital time capsule of life during the pandemic. Children can upload photos or short videos to Padlet (a digital bulletin board) or Flipgrid (a video program). They can also make a list of activities that demonstrate kindness at a distance and pledge to do one thing on the list each week. This could include weeding the garden, calling a friend, gathering toys to donate, taking care of a pet, or helping a younger student with homework.

There are a number of games that children can play in-person or face-to-face online, such as a spontaneous scavenger hunt. Children can do a quick search for specific colors, shapes, or letters in their home and bring them back to share over video. Additionally, students can create a five-minute exercise routine to do together each morning. Teachers can also make roll call fun by asking students to clap or drum the number of letters in each name as it is called.

Encourage families to socialize with each other outside of school by hosting a virtual social hour and asking for a volunteer to host the next one. This could be a story hour that includes children or a meeting with parents where you share information and facilitate making connections with each other. Supporting connections between parents can help build connections between their children and create more opportunities for them to socialize, build relationships, and engage in peer learning.

Source: *Desired Results Developmental Profile: School Age (Complete Version)* by The Child Development Division of the California Department of Education (Sacramento, 2011).

INCLUDING EVERYONE

An environment rich in language and literacy helps children develop the skills needed to successfully communicate and express themselves. Take a moment to reflect upon your program’s learning environment and the language experiences that are available.

Educators can support the language development of children by observing their interests and planning activities that allow children to investigate topics that are meaningful to them. Develop a plan for gathering materials such as posters, books, games, and music that support children in learning more about their interests.

Consider the languages spoken by the children in your care. How are all languages included? Are materials for telling stories such as books, puppets, dramatic play items, and music reflective of children’s cultures? How can children use these materials to express themselves or communicate their needs? Engage in evaluation and self-reflection regularly in order to continually improve the quality of your program.

Source: Adapted from the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume III* by the California Department of Education (Sacramento, 2013).

Summer Quinoa Salad

Salads are a refreshing and healthy meal during warm weather. This salad is loaded with protein from quinoa and almonds, and rich in fiber and vitamins from vegetables and dried cranberries. Children can help cut vegetables with plastic knives and mix ingredients.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups of water
- 1 cup of uncooked quinoa
- 1 medium red bell pepper
- 1 medium yellow bell pepper
- 1 small red onion
- 1 1/2 teaspoon curry powder
- 1/4 cup of cilantro
- 1 lime
- 1/4 cup of sliced almonds
- 1/2 cup of chopped carrots
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1/8 teaspoon of salt
- 1/8 teaspoon of black pepper



Instructions

Bring 1 1/2 cups of water to a boil over high heat in a saucepan. Pour in the quinoa, cover with a lid, and simmer over low heat until the water has been absorbed. This should take about fifteen to twenty minutes. Once the quinoa is cooked, pour it into a large mixing bowl and place it in the refrigerator to chill.

Chop the red bell pepper, yellow bell pepper, red onion, carrots, and cilantro into bite-sized pieces. Add the chopped vegetables, cilantro, curry powder, lime juice, sliced almonds, and cranberries to the quinoa. Season with salt and pepper. Serve chilled.

Source: Adapted from <https://www.superhealthykids.com> in April 2021.

Summer Fun



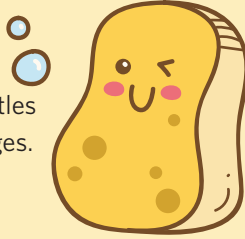
Activity: The Feel of Water

Age group: Infants

What you need: Small spray bottles and a bucket of water-soaked sponges. Use new sponges and clean, drinkable water.

What you do: Choose a shady area outside and dress infants for water play. Remove water-soaked sponges one at a time and offer them to infants. Allow infants to squeeze and manipulate sponges. As water is released from the sponges, talk to infants about the water. Describe how it feels, looks, sounds, and tastes. Use spray bottles to spray infants' feet with water and re-wet the sponges. Talk to them about the differences between the water in the sponges and the water from the spray bottles.

What they learn: Infants use their senses to process information and learn. By squeezing sponges, they practice using their muscles while exploring the scientific properties of water. Talking to infants about their experiences supports their language development.



What they learn: Introduce new vocabulary and provide toddlers with a safe sensory experience. Extend the activity by placing a few drops of water in a second sea bag so they can see the color and texture of the items inside change.

Source: *Making Toys for Infants & Toddlers: Using Ordinary Stuff for Extraordinary Play* by Linda G. Miller and Mary Jo Gibbs (Gryphon House Inc., 2002).

Activity: Buried Treasure

Age group: Preschool

What you need: Empty plastic bottle, sand (or rice), treasures that will fit through the mouth of the bottle such as: marbles, coins, sequins, rocks, seashells, etc., paper, and markers.

What you do: Fill the bottle three-quarters full of sand. Children can take turns putting treasures into the bottle. Place a few dabs of glue inside the lid before sealing it. Introduce vocabulary words such as: treasure, buried, hidden, map, etc. Hide the treasure and ask children to find it. Invite them to hide it again and draw a map to the treasure, marking the location with an "X." When done, you can place it in the math area for children to count and identify the objects inside.

What they learn: Practice new vocabulary, develop a concept of space, engage in critical thinking, and practice math skills such as estimation, counting, and classifying.

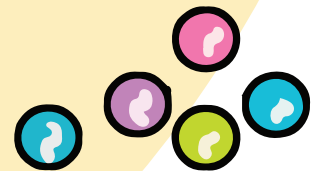


Activity: Sea Bags

Age group: Toddlers

What you need: Quart-sized plastic zip-closure freezer bags, sand, shells, colorful rocks, glue, and clear packing tape.

What you do: Pour sand inside one of the plastic bags until it is about half full. Add shells, rocks, and sea animal shapes. Make sure the objects have smooth, rounded edges. Seal the bag and tape it closed. Place the filled bag inside a second bag and seal it as an extra safety measure. Allow toddlers to touch and hold the bag. Talk to them about the things inside.



Summer Fun

Activity: Moon Winder

Age group: School Age

What you need: Lid from a medium-sized plastic tub (such as butter or cottage cheese), colored construction paper, markers, glue, scissors, craft knife (adult use only), and string.

What you do: Allow children to use the lid as a guide for tracing and to cut out two paper circles. Children can decorate one side of each circle however they choose. Glue a circle onto each side of the lid so that both sides now show a decorative moon. An adult can use the craft knife to cut two small holes in the center of the moon, like the holes in the center of a two-hole button. Each child can cut a piece of twine two feet long and thread it through one hole and out the other hole. Knot the twine to form a large loop. To wind up the moon, move the moon to the center of the looped string and grasp each end of the loop. Spin the loop in a circle several times, as if turning a jump rope. Once the twine

is completely twisted, slowly pull your hands apart and then bring them back together. Continue making the moon spin by moving your hands out and in until the spinning stops.

What they learn: Children experiment with optical illusions and centrifugal force. Encourage conversations about the rate of speed and how it causes images to change and appear to be moving.

Source: Adapted from <http://www.education.com> in April 2021.



ABOUT CHS

For over 130 years, Children's Home Society of California (CHS) has adapted to the changing needs of children and families. Since 1891, CHS has worked diligently to protect our community's children and strengthen their families through diverse programs and services.

At CHS, we view a child not in isolation, but in the context of each family's health, stability, and resources. We believe that families are fundamentally strong and resilient. The mission of CHS is to reach out to children and families at risk with a range of services to ensure every child the opportunity to develop within a safe, healthy, and secure environment.

Therefore, CHS provides a variety of services to children and families in California and nationwide, working to improve their quality of life by offering vital information, education and resource services, and child care assistance.

CHS also serves as an expert resource for childcare providers, other social service agencies, and government agencies at the local, state, and national level. To learn more about CHS and resources available to you, please visit our website at www.chs-ca.org.

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