

# Parenting NEWS & VIEWS

EARLY LEARNING AND  
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## Practicing Math with Your Child

When young children play and participate in activities or projects, they are developing and practicing skills that prepare them for future learning. Play offers children the time and space to practice new skills without feeling any pressure to excel. During play children have time to ask questions, think about answers, form opinions, and try new ideas.

Children begin to understand basic math concepts and skills through daily play. They sort toys and materials and put items that are similar and different into separate groups. They also practice recognizing patterns and shapes, estimating the space around objects, measuring, and solving everyday problems in logical ways.

These skills form a solid foundation of mathematical understanding that will lead to later success in school.

Support your child in learning math concepts while you complete chores, prepare meals, or run errands. During these routines you can engage your child in conversations that draw their attention to noticing and using math. For example, children can learn how to count, match objects, and sort them into groups by helping with laundry. They can sort light and dark clothes to wash them, match socks up and roll them together, or fold towels and stack them by size. As you count socks, talk about how two socks make a pair, or discuss the different colors, patterns, and sizes.

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### WHAT IS SELF-REGULATION?

Children use their senses and knowledge from previous experiences to respond to new people, places, and situations. Self-regulation, or self-control, refers to a child's ability to evaluate an environment, activity, or other people in order to respond in a socially appropriate manner and control her thoughts and feelings.

Children gradually develop routines and coping techniques that help them learn how to control their thoughts, feelings, and bodies. Help support

children by playing games and doing activities that involve stopping and starting such as:

- Duck, Duck, Goose
- Red Light, Green Light
- Freeze Tag
- Simon Says
- Musical Chairs
- Follow the Leader
- Taking turns blowing bubbles
- Clapping and singing the song "B-I-N-G-O"



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# Encouraging Empathy

Empathy allows us to understand another person's emotions and perspective. People who are empathetic are able to form strong relationships, resolve conflicts, value the uniqueness of others, and practice kindness. Children are not born with empathy; it is learned over time as they develop their social skills and knowledge of emotions.

Parents and educators can help children develop empathy by building strong and loving relationships, and by being a role model of how to treat others. Help children learn to identify and manage their emotions by reading books about feelings and developing strategies for dealing with strong emotions, like taking deep breaths or listening to music. When you visit the library, choose books that illustrate a variety of cultures, ages, and abilities. Children who understand their own emotions are more likely to empathize with the feelings of others.

Talk about similarities and differences. One way to do this is to give your child a small bucket and ask her to find things that are red. Spread the items out on the floor and talk about what the objects have in common, and then look at the ways the objects are different. Developing your child's ability to identify similarities and differences teaches her to understand and value uniqueness; not just in objects, but in people as well. When she asks questions about the differences she notices in others, answer them honestly and without judgement so that you are modeling tolerance.

Encourage your child to develop friendships. Through friendships, your child will learn to care about how someone else thinks and feels. She will learn to negotiate, consider the perspectives of another person, resolve disagreements, work as a team, and empathize. Offer your child opportunities to perform acts of kindness and nurture others. For example, she can make a card for a sick friend, take care of a pet, or plant a garden. Children can also learn empathy by practicing care-taking routines and nurturing baby dolls or stuffed animals during pretend play. Each time a child is helpful, kind, or nurturing, she is learning how to think of others and is developing empathy.

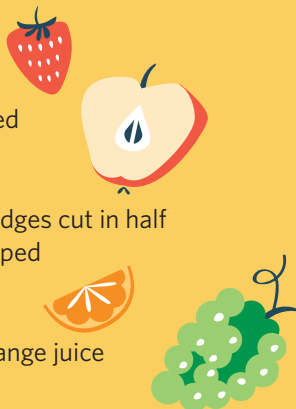


## RECIPES Summer Salads

### Fruit Salad

#### Ingredients

- 1 lb. strawberries, quartered
- 6 oz. blueberries
- 6 oz. raspberries
- 2 oranges, peeled with wedges cut in half
- 2 apples, peeled and chopped
- 2 c. grapes
- 1/4 c. honey
- 1/4 c. freshly squeezed orange juice
- Zest of 1 lemon



In a small bowl, whisk together honey, orange juice, and lemon zest for the dressing. Add fruit to a large bowl and pour the dressing over, tossing gently to combine.

### Watermelon Feta Salad

#### Ingredients

- 1/4 c. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 3 c. cubed seedless watermelon
- 1 c. medium cucumber, chopped
- 1 c. crumbled feta cheese
- 1/2 c. red onion, thinly sliced
- 1/2 c. chopped mint



In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, red wine vinegar, and salt for the dressing. In a large bowl, combine watermelon, cucumber, feta, red onion, and mint. Pour the dressing over, tossing to combine.





## Take Care of Yourself

It can be easy to fall into the routine of taking care of everyone but yourself, especially if you are responsible for the care of others. Parents can often put their child's needs ahead of their own and may end up feeling exhausted and overwhelmed. Investing in your own physical, mental, and emotional well-being will make it easier to care for children because your body will be healthier, you will feel more energized, be better equipped to handle stress, and find it easier to maintain a calm and positive outlook.

Take care of your physical health by eating nutritious meals, getting enough sleep, and staying active. Physical activity promotes fitness, feelings of happiness, and more restful sleep. If possible, try getting up a little earlier in the morning and start your day with a few yoga poses or stretches. When you get home at the end of the day, invite your family to dance to a couple of songs to get a little exercise.

Model healthy eating and ask children to help prepare a salad or wash fruits and vegetables for a meal. Eat dinner together and encourage your child to try new foods. Enjoying healthy meals and family conversations during dinner allows you to get the nutrition you need and check in with what is happening with the rest of your family. Keep yourself healthy and model healthy habits by washing hands before and after meals and after using the bathroom, and covering coughs and sneezes with your elbow.

Practice activities to release stress throughout each day. If possible, find some time each day to do something you enjoy like reading a magazine, calling a friend, working on a craft,

meditating, deep breathing, or listening to your favorite music. If you are near a park, try taking a short walk or simply sitting outdoors for some fresh air.

Model self-care for your children by showing them how to spend time alone doing something they enjoy. For example, set aside time before bedtime for self-care. Tell your children what you plan to do for self-care (for example, "I'm going to read a book and listen to music"), and ask them what they would like to do. You can suggest reading a book, drawing, listening to music, looking at baseball cards, or taking a bubble bath. Taking care of yourself and talking to your children about self-care will help both you and your family enjoy good mental and physical health.



Invite children to help write a grocery list. Create columns by drawing lines on a piece of paper and at the top of each column write the name of a section in the grocery store such as: dairy, produce, frozen, or canned. Ask children what groceries are needed and which columns they should go under. Children can clip coupons, find groceries at the store, or put canned food on shelves. Explore patterns by teaching your child how to set the table. Skills like sorting, matching, and patterning form a strong base for learning algebra.

Use cooking activities to practice identifying numbers, counting, measuring, and following directions. Start with recipes such as a nut butter and jelly sandwich or a green salad. Read recipes together and point out how numbers are used. Cooking teaches children how to measure, estimate quantities, and follow step-by-step directions. The kitchen also provides instruments for making music. Children can count out beats as they bang a wooden spoon on a large plastic bowl, or shake a plastic water bottle filled with dry beans or rice.

Identifying shapes and colors and understanding how to physically maneuver through spaces

and around obstacles are skills that help prepare your child for learning geometry. During walks your child can identify and count shapes. For example, counting blue cars or looking for things that have a square shape. You can also do this activity around your home or while waiting in lines. Invite your child to draw a map of your home or another familiar place using shapes and colors to identify the different rooms and objects. Spending time moving and exercising also helps develop math skills. Dance to music, try yoga, or visit a park where your child can play ball, swing, or climb to develop spatial awareness.

Visit your local library for books that introduce math concepts like *The Ants Go Marching* by Dan Crisp, *The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins, or *Mouse Paint* by Ellen Stoll Walsh. Whether it is working on chores, reading a book, or playing a game, the time you spend with your child is valuable. Your enjoyment of each other's company will show your child that you are there to support him, and that you care about his learning and well-being.

Source: *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1* by the California Department of Education (Sacramento, 2010).

## ABOUT CHS

For over 129 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 child care 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](http://www.chs-ca.org).

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