






# Quick tips for keeping your child learning and happy at home

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## **TIP: Look for learning everywhere.**

You are providing your child with plenty of academic instruction every day without even knowing it! Here are some questions you can ask to boost the learning value of everyday situations.

-  While drawing: “What are you drawing? Tell me about it!” As they’re speaking, write their words on their picture. Children can start making connections between words and images on a page.
-  While unloading the dryer: “Can you find all the socks and count them?”
-  While playing dress-up: “Why did you choose that costume?” or “Can you turn your doll upside down? How about right side up?”
-  While reading: “I see a boat. What is on top of that boat?”
-  While putting together a puzzle: “What happens if you flip/turn the piece this way?”




## **TIP: Plan for quick educational activities.**

Spend a few minutes in the evening or the morning to think about any materials you’d like to have ready for the next day. Try to use materials you already have and stick to activities with low preparation time.

-  Use blocks to measure: “If you lay down, how many blocks does it take to make the same length as your body?”
-  Play with water in plastic tubes. Ask questions like, “Where do you need to stand so that you can pour the water? What direction does the water flow?”
-  Make a mailbox together so you can write letters back and forth with your child.
-  Read a book together, and then do an activity that you saw in the book. If the main character played with toy cars, you and your child can do that, too. Can you make a pattern with the cars?

## **TIP: Motivate your child by planning successful experiences.**

Giving yourself grace will help set realistic expectations for you and for your child. More than anything, it’s important to make sure children feel successful and confident throughout the day. In *Motivated Minds*, Deborah Stipek outlines three primary components of success for children: competence, autonomy, and care and connection.

-  **Competence:** Children feel capable when presented with developmentally appropriate tasks that they are excited to do. Follow tasks with specific and positive feedback like, “Wow! You put all the toys in the bucket. Great job!”
-  **Autonomy:** If your child has trouble getting started with activities or tasks, give them choices. You can set them up with their chosen activity, a prompt, and a time expectation: “I will be gone for 10 minutes, I want to know how high you can make your tower!” Follow the autonomous activity with time together.
-  **Care and connection:** Listen, observe, and acknowledge your child. Sometimes, all your child needs is your presence. When you’ve set up an independent task for them, check back in with them after time is up to see what they did. Ask kids questions about their day with specific prompts, like “What part of the day was your ‘orange’ (sweet), and what part of the day was your ‘lemon’ (sour)?”