

Summertime is Play & Learn Time!

Children love the summer, but did you know many summertime activities also provide great opportunities for early learning? Babies, toddlers and preschoolers learn best when they are actively doing things. This doesn't mean you have to sign your child up for a bunch of classes or schedule academic activities to fill up the summer days. Instead, try to enhance everyday summertime activities in ways that promote early brain development. Smart Beginnings has a few suggestions to help get you started....



Water Play – Water play provides some great opportunities for learning early math and science concepts. Set up a sprinkler, or put a little water table in your backyard. Provide buckets, bowls, measuring cups and spoons. Talk about things that sink & float. Add food coloring to the water and let your child experiment with color mixing. Bring some ice outside and compare how fast ice melts in the sun vs. the shade.

Bugs – Build on your child's natural curiosity by encouraging them to stop and observe bugs in action. Develop their attention span by talking about what the bug is doing and asking questions. Keep a couple of bug jars on hand so that you can watch the bugs for a longer period of time. And, even if your child typically goes to bed before dark, allow them to stay up late at least once or twice this summer so you can catch fireflies together and look for other 'nighttime' insects.



Frozen Treats – There's no better summertime treat for little ones than something cold and sweet. But rather than buying them, you can easily make your own. By involving your child in the process of making homemade frozen pops or fruit smoothies you'll be helping them learn how to follow directions. Allow your child to choose the type of juice, fruit or yogurt and experiment with different colors and flavors to boost thinking skills.

Books – Reading books is always a great way to improve your child's vocabulary and listening skills, but picking books that relate to summer activities can further enhance learning. So if you're going to the beach, gather a few ocean related books, or if you're spending the day at the lake, get some books about boats. (Visit your local library for more suggestions).



Most of all, have fun and spend lots of time reading, talking and playing with your child this summer and you'll be helping them be ready for school and ready for life!

For more ways to help your child play & learn this summer, visit the SBGR Pinterest page www.pinterest.com/SBRoanoke/ or "Like" SBGR on Facebook!



United Way's Day of Action is coming up on June 21, 2012

Everyone is invited to come out for a work day in the Hurt Park neighborhood! Volunteers will be working to improve areas around the Elementary School, Head Start, and Community Gardens. Or you can take part in one of our drives – school supplies, books, food, clothing and sports equipment. For more information visit www.uwrv.org or call 777-4200