

Help Your Baby Learn - 5 to 6 Years

Social-emotional Development

- Give your child a daily or weekly 'job'. She can make her bed, set the table, or feed the cat.
- Teach your child and remind him of ways to control his temper: use words to say how he feels, leave the room, or begin a different activity. Try using these to show him how you can control your own temper.
- Prepare your child ahead of time for a new situation. Before going to the library or a movie, remind her to use her softest inside voice and to listen quietly. Explain that it is so she can hear better and so can others.
- Give your children and their friends, or siblings, a chance to work out their conflicts. Offer suggestions when you are asked or when a resolution doesn't seem likely.

Language Development

- Ask your child to tell a story that you have read to him to a younger brother, sister, or an adult family member.
- Tell a story together. Ask your child to help you tell somebody else about something you both saw or something interesting that happened.
- Occasionally point out letters when you are reading out loud to your child.
- Make sure materials to write with are always available to your child. Encourage him to make a grocery list or a list of things for you "to do" together.

Motor Development

- Play hopscotch. Let your child hop to the different numbers. Later on, use a rock and play the game as it is traditionally played.
- Work interesting movements into the daily routine: "Hop to your room and get dressed." Tiptoe to the bathroom and get a kleenex." "Jump to the kitchen and grab a banana."
- Help set up an obstacle course. Pretend you are walking through the jungle. Make narrow lines with chalk, and walk over the "river with alligators in it."
- Draw around your child's hand, and then let him try. Suggest that you might hold his hand in place while he traces.

Intellectual Development

- Use the words less and more to talk about amounts of food. Do you have more or less peas than you brother?
- Show examples of opposites every day: big/little, old/new, far/near, high/low, rough/smooth, loud/soft. Then play a "fill in the blank," game. "the mouse is little, and the elephant is_____."
- Build/draw a pattern with 3-4 parts. Such as AABB or AAB. See if your child can recognize it and continue with it: AABBAABBAABB. Let her make one up for you to try.
- Make your child aware of the times of day when regular activities take place. "It's 5:00. It's time for us to start making dinner."