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April is the perfect time for you and your young child to...

Play outdoors while beginning to look for the first signs of Spring




- On sunny days, try playing with different small take-along toys outdoors such as a bottle of bubble-blowing solution, a pack of sidewalk chalk, or a soft and bouncy ball.
- Point out early flowers and talk about them, saying their names (crocus, snowdrops, etc.), touching them, and describing their colors, shapes, and sizes.
- Listen for songs of birds in the early morning. Try to imitate their tunes together!



Interact with animals

- Visit a petting zoo.
- Have your young child help you gather leashes, baggies, and other supplies needed when you take your pet dog—or a neighbor's—for a walk/exercise.
- Show your child how to begin helping to care for a family pet. Let him/her take on (with supervision) simple tasks like adding food to a dish or aquarium, filling a water bowl, brushing, helping with a bath, etc.
- If you're a summer gardener, plan to add some shrubs and flowers that are especially attractive to butterflies (Buddleia, Aster, Joe Pye Weed, Goldenrod, Butterfly Bush, and more). Ask friends to share seedlings or starts. Search "butterfly garden" on the Internet for ideas. When they are in bloom, watch for visiting butterflies, make up stories about the butterflies' lives and travels, finger paint with colors that match the butterfly wings you've observed together.

April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Help your child gather flowers and arrange them in a cup of water or vase for your family table. Talk about their colors, shapes, and scents.	Sing "The Eensy-Weensy Spider" and do the hand motions for the song.	Help your child try taking on a new job in the kitchen. For example, show him/her how to stir batter for pancakes or to fold napkins for setting the table.	Make up funny rhymes about what you're doing as you dress your child. For example: "Here's Danny's cap / It's so red / It looks like an apple / On his head!"	Spend time playing on the swings and slides together at a community playground.	While out on a stroll or riding in the car, point out a stop sign and explain what it means. Ask you child to find as many stop signs as possible during the outing.	Let today be Blue Day. Dress in blue clothes, play with blue toys, create funny shapes with blue play dough, and point out the color blue everywhere you see it!
Together take a sweet treat or a small bouquet to a favorite neighbor. Help your child practice waving or using words to greet him/her, shaking hands, and other social skills of visiting.	Try something new! Serve a food your toddler has never tasted before as a snack or part of a meal today. Name the food and describe its taste. Yum!	After an April shower, let your child splash and play in puddles—with rain boots or barefoot! 	Check out new picture books from the library to read with your child. Talk about the cover of each book and ask your child to guess what the book is about.	At least five times today, praise your child for something he/she does. 	Be sure to use the words or signs for "please" and "thank you" as you interact with your child.	Enjoy favorite lap games or songs with hand motions, and learn a new one! Some possibilities? "Five Little Ducks," "Where Is Thumbkin?" or "I'm a Little Teapot."
Create a special family tradition for Sundays—Grandma coming to lunch, religious services, a front-porch sing along, etc. Let it be something your child will anticipate happily every week.	Label the drawers in your child's room with printed words and simple pictures. Let him/her help you put away laundry—socks in one drawer, shirts in another drawer, etc., by following the labels.	Take your child on a "kindness hunt." On a walk or outing, look for opportunities to be kind. For example, visit someone who is sick, pick up litter, or put a neighbor's newspaper on their porch.	Ask your child to bring you his/her very favorite storybook to read together. Afterwards, suggest pretending to be characters in the story.	Make up a little rhyming chant to give your child the giggles during diaper changes. It might be something like, "Off with the dirty, on with the clean! You're the sweetest-smelling baby I've ever seen!"	Make it a good morning by greeting your child with a special song. Some fun choices might be "Good Morning, Starshine," "Put on a Happy Face," "You Are My Sunshine," and "Feelin' Groovy."	Watch your child at play, trying to find ways to join in and "extend" what he/she is doing. Add a step, try something different with the toy or materials your child is using, or add words to the play, etc. Go to "the next level"!
Use your child's name in the game "Whoops, Johnny." Bounce him/her gently on your knee 3 times as you say his/her name, then pretend to let your child slip down your leg and say, "Whoops, <u>(name)</u> !"	Teach your child the sign language sign for "I Love You." "Say" it to each other often! 	Find opportunities for your little one to listen to music, and especially to watch people making music—a neighbor practicing piano, a choir at church, a busker on a city sidewalk. Stop, listen, and enjoy!	Find a new way to let your child be a "helper." Perhaps he/she could hand you clothespins as you hang laundry or sort forks and spoons in a silverware tray. Provide lots of praise!	Try homemade play dough for creative fun: 1 cup flour 1 cup boiling water 2 T cream of tartar ½ cup salt 1 T vegetable oil Mix and play!	Give your little one a bubble bath. See what you can make with the suds. How about a bubbly beard?	Come up with a few ways your child can help you prepare a meal...pouring? sifting? sprinkling? stirring? With a very young child, place his/her seat close by and chat away about what you're doing.