



happy, healthy,

REAdy
for school!

A magazine for
parents and caregivers



Learning Is
Everywhere

At home • On the go • Outdoors



A service of PNC Grow Up Great
In partnership with Sesame Workshop
Helping children get ready for school



Architect? Astronaut?

Give kids the right tools early, and who knows what they'll become? That's why we founded "Grow Up Great," a 10-year, \$100 million program dedicated to preparing young children for school. From grants and sponsorships to tips, we're helping get kids ready for school, life, and everything else.

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Sesame Street Smarts

You're walking through the neighborhood with your child, when she points out a plump, orange cat. You could just let the observation pass, or you could use it as an opening to explore. Ask what color the cat is. Make a game of spotting other animals. Ask the colors of the other animals, too.



There may be dozens of moments like this in each day when your child's natural curiosity can spark exploration. To help you encourage your child's joy of discovery, Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street, has created this "Learning Is Everywhere" magazine. It contains three sections: **morning**, **afternoon**, and **evening**, because your daily routines are ideal opportunities for spontaneous learning together.

Whether you're a parent, grandparent, or caregiver, you play a role in your child's learning—in ways that may seem simple and fleeting, but which have an important and lasting effect. You can use these ideas, most of which take little or no extra time, anywhere and at any point in your day. Try them on weekdays or weekends, while your child is dressing, going to school, or cleaning up. Use the activities over and over: children love and learn best with repetition.

 *Look for the clock to find ideas that you can fit in when you're especially busy.*

Remember, you know your child best. Choose the ideas that suit your family and your schedule. Start by introducing just a few new ideas. Add more, if and when you and your child are ready. Each learning moment you create can be an exciting voyage of discovery—for both of you. Enjoy!

Learning in the morning

You can show your child that learning and fun go together – no extra time required. Getting dressed, eating, traveling to day care: all are chances for discussing, doing, and exploring.

Wake Up, Sleepyhead!



Build language skills as you create your own fun way to welcome each day. For instance, “Hello, terrific Tuesday” or “Good morning, silly Saturday.” What other greetings can your child think of?

- **Talk about the day’s plans:** “What will we do today? What will happen, first, next?” Ask questions that prompt choices: “What would be a good thing to wear to school? What shoes would be good for playing in the park?”





- Help your child figure out which clothes go on where and in what order. Ask, “Which goes on first—your socks or your shoes?” Be silly if you like! Say, “Does your shirt go on your head?” He can also practice zipping, buttoning, and telling left from right.
- Investigate the concepts of “same” and “different” when your child is getting dressed. As he gets out his shoes, have him notice the difference between your foot and shoe size and his. Ask, “Would my foot fit in your shoe? Why not?” Tell him, “My foot is too big for your shoe!” As he puts on his socks, talk about things that are the same. Ask, “What color are your socks? Can you see other clothes in the drawer which are that color, too?”

Breakfast Time

- **Math can be tasty:** Ask your child if she has more strawberries or blueberries. How many is five banana slices minus the one in her mouth? She can also learn the relationship between a whole and its parts as you cut a piece of fruit in half and then in quarters.
- Enjoy a five-senses breakfast. For instance, encourage your child to see, smell, touch, and taste her toast. As she eats her toast, ask if she can hear it, too.



As your child eats, help her learn where foods come from and how they get to the supermarket. Talk about community helpers with jobs that bring us the foods we eat. Ask, “Who grows our food?” Talk about what farmers do and discuss the foods on the breakfast table. Ask, “What drink comes from a cow? Where do apples grow? What food do chickens lay?” Ask your child how food gets from the farm to the supermarket (trucks and trains).



CLAP AND TAP!

Sing a favorite song as you head out for the day's activities. You'll be fostering listening skills. Help your child clap along and she'll be learning music, math, rhythm, and motor skills, too. For extra fun, give her a pair of spoons to tap along to the beat or one spoon to pretend to lead the orchestra.

Going to School



- On the way to school or day care, play a game of What Do You See (a blue mailbox, a shiny car, a tall tree, etc.)? Your child will improve his powers of observation. Can he spot something round? Something that is moving? Work on helping your child recognize and name letters and numbers by having him find them as you go along.
- Use your child's arrival at his child-care program or a friend's or relative's home to practice social skills, such as greeting the teacher, neighbor, or family member. Encourage him to look around the room and talk about activities that would be fun to do with a friend.

Learning in the afternoon

Afternoon is a busy time – shopping, errands, preparing dinner. Continue the fun and the learning as you look forward to evening family time. These ideas can create learning moments during your afternoon routines.

Talking Together

- You can enjoy another learning experience by discussing the afternoon's plans. Most children like knowing the schedule in advance. As you talk, ask questions to encourage further discussion: "Where are we going now?" "What will we do at the library? What book would you like to look for?" "Who will we see when we take the dog for her check-up? What kinds of animals will we see?" "What do we do at the gas station? Who will we see there?"





 Talk about the people in your neighborhood and the jobs they do. Not only will this conversation provide your child with new vocabulary words, it will help her appreciate the many ways people contribute to their communities. You can talk about the people in your family in the same way: What does each member of the family do to help the others?

Going on Errands

- Taking your child along on errands needn't be a chore; it can be a great learning opportunity. Enlist his help in creating a list of the stops you need to make. He can add drawings or pictures cut from old magazines—such as an envelope for a trip to the post office or a book for a library visit. Then, as you go along, let him “read” the list to you.

 Tempt your child's taste buds. In the grocery store, ask him to pick a new food to try, giving him two or three choices, such as a kiwi or avocado. He's more likely to nibble on something he himself selected.

- Back home, make putting away the items a fun activity. Where do the library books belong? What's the best place for the box of oatmeal? Where do you store the stamps and envelopes?

Outside...

- Find learning moments while walking the dog or running an errand. Can your child waddle like a penguin or stomp like an elephant? Walk in patterns, such as: giant step, giant step, baby step. In order to play, your child has to follow directions. In this way she's not only learning patterns, she's also practicing good listening skills.

AT THE STORE:

*Waiting in line can be a seemingly endless chore. Make it an opportunity for learning and the time will fly: **POINT TO** items around you that match the color of clothing your child is wearing. **COUNT** other people in line, subtracting one person each time someone checks out.*

And remember to praise your child for his patience.



- Observe the similarities and differences of different things, such as a tree and a house: one is living but the other isn't. Or look at the various homes people and animals use: houses, apartments, nests, and so on. These activities help your child build an understanding of the world and encourage language skills, too.

...and Inside

- Cleaning up not only teaches your child where things belong but can also help him practice problem-solving. Can the big ball go into the tiny box? How many blocks fit in the bin or box?



While your child is doing his chores, use his favorite music to help make the task fun. Let him straighten his books by the time a certain song ends. Helping builds a child's self esteem.

Learning in the evening

As you wind down, there are many chances for you and your child to connect. Remember the fun you shared during the day and start anticipating the new moments to come.

Let's Eat

- A child who helps out in the kitchen has part ownership of the meal. As you prepare foods together, talk about their flavors, smells, and textures, increasing vocabulary with words such as "spicy" and "crunchy."
- **Let your child be assistant chef. First, make sure she washes her hands. Then she can stir, pour, and wash vegetables. Following your directions for measuring and counting will enhance her math and listening skills. Observing what happens to food as it cooks or cools is part of science.**



TABLE TALK:

Talking and listening to others without interrupting them are important social skills and help build vocabulary. Try one of these conversation starters: What's your favorite food at the table tonight, and why? What was the funniest thing about today?



Table setting can teach patterns and sequencing. Have your child follow you around the table, adding a napkin at each place. Set out each place setting in the same order, pausing every so often to ask, "What comes next?"

Scrub-a-dub-dub!

- Bath time is the perfect time to review names of body parts. Ask, "Can you wash your neck?" Let your child identify where that is. Besides the obvious (arms, legs, tummy), challenge him with ear lobe, elbow, and ankle.
- Encourage your child's inner scientist with a game of "What Floats? What Sinks?" Have him predict which objects (soap, washcloth, rubber duck, etc.) will float and which will sink.
- Lather up some letters! Let your child use bath foam or shaving cream to write letters, including his name, on the tub wall.

Snuggle Up

- Encourage your child to say good night to objects around her room (clock, toys) and also to the moon and stars. Then it's your turn: Say good night to your child's nose, elbows, and belly button! It's fun, it's cozy, and it's a terrific way to build language skills.
- Follow a calming bedtime routine. Go over the things you and your child did during the day. What did she see? What did she learn? End with a story, a special good-night song, or whatever you like. Have her make choices that allow her to shape the routine with you: Which song or story does she want to hear? How does her toy lamb say good night? Soon, bedtime will become deliciously anticipated, as a time of sharing and fun.

Learning is...
magical!



Happy, Healthy, Ready for School: Learning Is Everywhere was developed by Sesame Workshop and funded by *PNC Grow Up Great*, a ten-year, \$100 million investment in preparing children, from birth to age five, for school and for life. So that an entire generation won't just grow up...but grow up great!

PNC recognizes that learning in a child's early years is essential for his or her long-term success. Through *PNC Grow Up Great*, we provide the leadership, advocacy, funding, tools, and volunteers to help educate parents, caregivers, and communities on how to prepare young children for school and for life. Learn more at www.sesameworkshop.org and www.pnc.com

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www.sesameworkshop.org/readyschool

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