

Choosing Lids

You found a lid that fits just right!

Offer your child a variety of jars with screw-on lids and talk about what he's doing as he experiments with them.

Your child will practice turning the lids to open and close them and may begin to make thoughtful choices about which lid to use for each jar.





Why this is important

Giving your child the opportunity to experiment with containers and screw-on lids encourages him to use a trial-and-error approach to solving a problem. When given choices, your child may choose randomly at first. However, through repetition, he will begin to develop problem-solving skills and make more selective choices. This activity also encourages him to coordinate his hands to help him select and screw on the lids.

What you do

- Show your child a plastic container with a screw-on lid. Slowly unscrew the lid so that he can see the motion.
- Drop a toy in the jar and replace the lid so that it will open easily.
- Encourage him to get the toy out of the container. If he does not try to unscrew the lid, place your hand over his and open it together. *We use our hands to turn the lid. Now it's open.*
- Notice how he tries to screw the lid back on. He may just push the lid onto the container. With practice, he will be able to use his hand to successfully turn and close the lid.
- Talk about what he is doing. *You're turning the lid to close it.*
- Provide time for him to play with the containers, lids, and toys while he practices his new skill.

Ready to move on?

Give your child several small containers with various kinds of lids. Give him small objects to put in the containers. Offer direction when needed, but let him choose how to play with the objects. Talk to him about the choices he is making. *You put the small lid on the small jar and the big lid on the big jar!*

Let's read together!

Elephants on Board
by Suse MacDonald

Painting on Paper

I see you using purple paint.

I'm painting.

Provide your child with paper, paintbrushes, and one or two colors of paint.

Your child's creativity will grow when you offer her a variety of painting experiences.



Why this is important

At this age, your child may naturally experiment with many original ways of doing things. With paint, she has many opportunities to express her original ideas without instruction. Early creative experiences can help to enrich the later, more cautious stages of your child's artistic development.

What you do

- Place painting materials on a low, flat table surface protected with newspapers, or put a few newspapers on the floor to use as a work space.
- Offer your child a paint smock. An old adult shirt worn backwards also works well.
- Allow your child plenty of time to explore with the paint and brushes.
- Stay nearby as your child paints, but wait until she finishes before offering comments: *You made a big red shape and some long blue lines. That's a wonderful painting!*
- Increase the number of paint colors after she feels comfortable with the painting process. You also can offer different colors of paper and different sizes of brushes or sponges to paint with.

Another idea

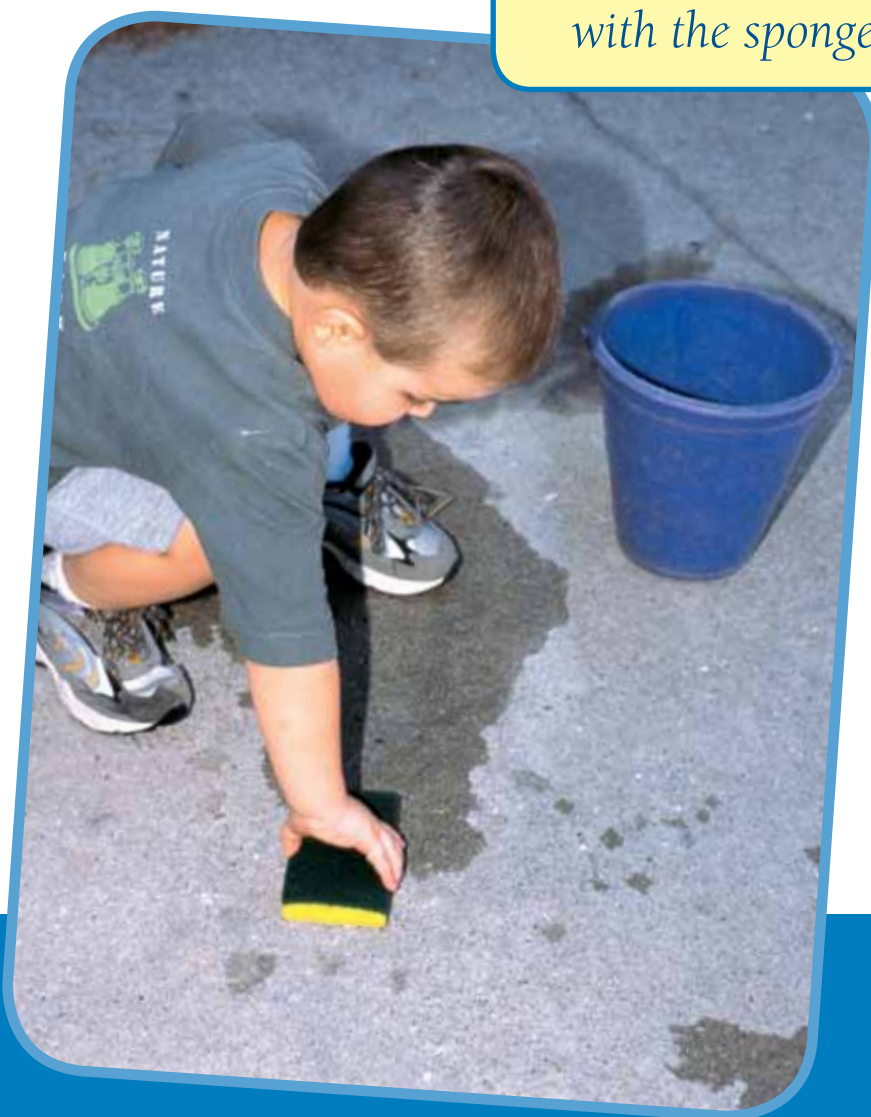
Find a space in your home to display your child's art. You can talk about her work and encourage her to describe it to others.

Let's read together!

The Dot
by Peter H. Reynolds

Painting With Water

*You made a mark
with the sponge!*



Encourage your child to explore what happens when he rubs a wet sponge on different surfaces.

You will be giving your child a chance to direct his own play and discover that he has the ability to change his environment.



Why this is important

For young children, each new activity provides chances for decision making and creativity. By experimenting with water and sponges, he will begin to notice changes his actions make to the environment. Self-directed play helps your child develop confidence in his ability to make decisions. Holding the sponge and moving his hand and arm in a purposeful way to make marks are good practice for later when he will hold a pencil for writing.

What you do

- Find a place where your child can paint with water and you will not have to worry about the mess. An outside wall or sidewalk work well.
- Fill a bucket, no more than halfway, with water, and find a sponge that your child can easily hold in his hand.
- Show him how to dip the sponge into the water and squeeze before he begins painting.
- Point out the wet surface he creates. *You made a line on the wall!* Allow him to decide what to paint next.
- Notice how your child begins to control his movements in order to direct the sponge in a specific way. He may try different arm movements to create different strokes with the sponge. He might also become more interested in the sponge and practice dipping it in the bucket and squeezing out the excess water. Let him direct the activity.

Another idea

If your child needs a few suggestions of what to paint on, let him try steps, tree trunks, or rocks. In the house, the kitchen floor is a good surface. You can offer him a paintbrush with a bowl of water and let him paint a few toys and plastic dishes.

Let's read together!

Olivia
by Ian Falconer

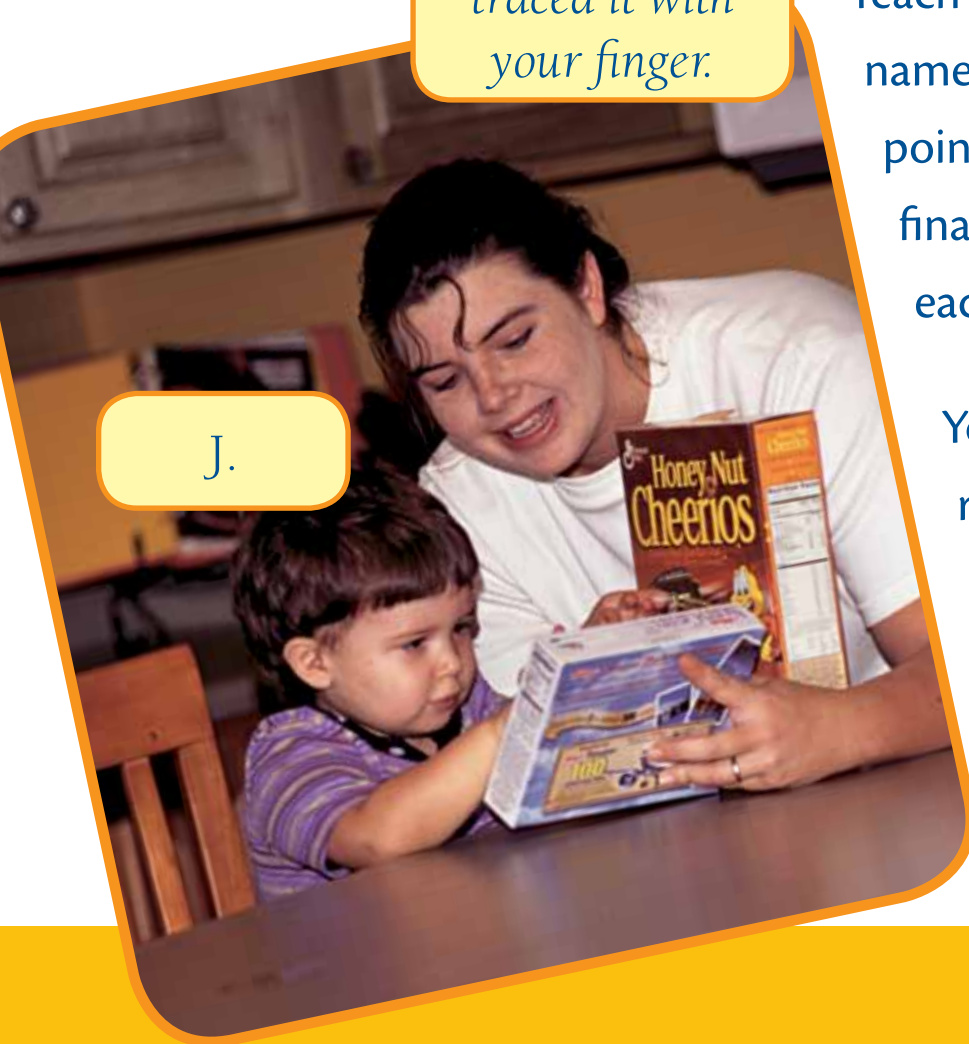
Letters in My Name

Yes, and you traced it with your finger.

Teach your child the letters in his name by first saying them, then pointing them out in print, and finally tracing the shape of each letter with him.

Your child will eventually remember the letters and begin to understand that letters make words.

J.





Why this is important

The letters of your child's name provide a good beginning for learning letters. Your child will become aware of letters as symbols and recognize the sound and sight of the letters in his name. Learning to recognize the letters of his written name is part of early literacy.

What you do

- Make a point of saying and spelling your child's name together by saying: *Joey, J-O-E-Y. Can you come here, please?* He will begin to associate the letters with his name.
- Try getting his attention using only the letters once he becomes familiar with them. The next step will be helping him learn to recognize the letters.
- Point out one letter at a time until he can recognize all the letters of his name. Cereal boxes, magazines, signboards, toys, and labels provide good sources of big, colorful letters.
- Trace the letter with your finger when you see it and encourage your child to do the same.
- Use his knowledge of circles and lines when you're acquainting him with the letter: *An O is a circle. An E is four straight lines. A J is curved at the bottom.*
- Encourage him to remember any associations he makes, such as a *J* resembles a candy cane.

Another idea

Use consistent language when he learns to write his letters. The same descriptions will help him remember the shape of each letter in his name. If his interest continues, help him recognize additional letters beyond those in his name.

Let's read together!

Matthew A.B.C.
by Peter Catalanotto