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TECHNOLOGY

Coding: Follow the Path

Coders use commands to write instructions for computer programs. They write each command in order, so the computer knows what to do. This activity will give your child practice with writing step-by-step instructions for coding.

Create a grid or use large graph paper. Place a sticker on a box in the grid, then mark a starting point somewhere else on the grid. Color in a couple of spaces in the grid, indicating places on the path that cannot be passed through. The goal is for your child to use commands to reach the sticker from the starting point.

Help your child establish the commands they can use to move through the grid, like these:

- Go forward 1 space
- Turn right
- Turn left

Guide your child to draw an arrow in each box of the grid from the starting point until they reach the sticker, avoiding the blocked off spots on the grid. Then, on a piece of lined paper, have them write the commands they used in order.

Play again by creating a new grid with a new starting point and even more obstacles to avoid.

LITERACY

Cursive: Write a Thank-You Note

Help your child write a formal thank-you note in cursive to someone they know. They can write a note to a friend, relative, or someone who works in the community, like a teacher or librarian.

If your child needs support forming specific words in cursive, write the words on scrap paper for reference. Guide them to write a first draft before using their best cursive handwriting to write the actual note. To make it feel extra special, encourage your

child to write on stationery or to use art supplies to decorate the message.

Reading: Context Clues

Reading books aloud with your child exposes them to vocabulary and syntax that are more complex than the language in books for beginning readers. When reading with your child, pause on new words and phrases and ask them what they think the words mean based on the context of the story. If they need help, give them a simple definition, connect it to a similar word or phrase, and use it in a sentence. Then ask your child to say their own sentence using that word.

Language Arts: Antonym Scavenger Hunt

Before starting the scavenger hunt, review what an antonym is. “Antonym is another word for opposite. For example, happy and sad are antonyms.” Point out an object at home and describe it using an adjective, like “This pillow feels soft.” Ask your child for the antonym of soft. When they name the antonym, give them 10 or 15 seconds to find an item that matches that description: “Can you find something that feels rough? 10 seconds starts now!”

More examples include:

- The light on the ceiling is high.
- My pencil is short.
- The air conditioner is loud.
- These grapes are sweet.

Phonics: Play Word Ladders

Practice phonics and flexible thinking by playing Word Ladders. To play, pick two three-letter words: a “start word” and an “end word.” Change only one letter at a time and form a new word at each step. The goal is to change the start word into the end word in the fewest steps. Here’s an example with CAT and DOG:

CAT COT DOT DOG

MATH



Addition and Subtraction Through 20

Do math on a number line! Draw a number line with numbers from 0 to 20 on the ground with chalk or tape. Call out addition and subtraction problems. Have your child physically jump on the lines to solve the problems. For example, if your child is standing on the number 6 you might call out, Six minus 4.” Your child would model the subtraction by moving 4 numbers to the left and then naming the number they land on (2). Using a number line will help your child to visualize the problems and provide them with a common subtraction and addition technique they can continue to use.

Place Value

Play “Name that Place Value!” Next time you are on a walk or at home and spot a 3-digit number, ask your child how many hundreds, tens, and ones it has. You can make this into a game to see who can spot as many numbers as possible and say the place value of every digit in the number.

You might extend the game by trying to find a 3-digit number greater than the number your child found. Switch roles so that you each have an opportunity to find the original number as well as the number that’s greater in value.

Comparing and Counting

On index cards, write the symbols “<,” “>,” and “=.” From a standard deck of cards, select the ace cards, which will serve as 1s, and the cards for numbers 2 to 10. Get your child to draw 2 cards. Then, have your child use the index cards to compare the numbers. Encourage your child to read the comparison statements out loud.

Once your child has gotten comfortable comparing small numbers, challenge them to compare 2-digit and 3-digit numbers. You can create these numbers by having your child draw 4 or 6 cards per round and arranging them to represent a 3-digit number.

2-Digit Addition and Subtraction

Play “Speed Solver!” Call out addition and/or subtraction problems and challenge your child to solve them as quickly as possible using different strategies. You can extend the activity by writing the names of the strategies, one to an index card, and then turning the card face down. Have your child pick an index card and then use the strategy written on the card to solve the next problem you call out. Use strategies such as, using a number line, decomposing the addends or subtrahend, make ten, and use doubles and almost doubles.

Money: Count the Change

To help your child practice counting money, have them count the change you receive after a purchase, the change you have in your pocket at the end of a day, or even the change in a piggy bank. Once they have successfully counted the change, challenge your child to think about the different ways they could make up that amount of money. For instance, if they said that it was 45 cents, ask them to say what other coins they could use to make that amount.

Telling Time

To help your child practice telling time, ask them what time it is throughout the day. Challenge your child by asking them what time it will be in 5 or 10 minutes or what time it was 15 or 30 minutes ago. Once your child has become comfortable telling time and figuring out what time it was or will be, guide them to use phrases like “o’clock,” “5 minutes to,” “half past,” and “quarter past.”

Building Block Bar Graph

Gather building blocks of the same size and various colors. Ask your child to tell you which color is the most common without counting the blocks. Have them create a stack of blocks for each color and put them in order of height to determine if they were correct. Then encourage your child to make observations about the towers of building blocks. For example, “There are more yellow blocks than red blocks.” This activity will help your child practice analyzing data.

Geometry: Play “I Spy”

Play a shapes version of “I Spy” and have your child guess which shape you are describing using clues related to the number of vertices, faces, and edges these 3-D shapes have. Once they are familiar with cubes, rectangular prisms, spheres, cylinders, and cones, give clues to real-world objects by describing what 3-D shape the object is. You can challenge your child to switch places and give you the hints, too!

Measure Up!

Play a measuring game together. To start, you and your child should each gather five objects of different sizes and shapes from around the house, like books, blocks, or other toys.

Make a pile of the ten objects and ask your child to pick an item. Give your child a ruler or measuring tape and ask them to measure the length, width, and height of the object in inches or centimeters. Keep going until all the objects have been measured. Along the way, help your child record the measurements in a chart.

Once your child has measured each object, guide them to order the items from smallest to largest. Then challenge your child to use the objects to build a tower or structure, placing the larger items on the bottom and the smaller ones on top. Use the tape measure to measure the height of the tower.

This is a fun way to practice measuring and it helps children develop their spatial awareness and problem-solving skills.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Time Capsule

Inspire your child to see themselves as part of history by building a time capsule! Time capsules are a fun way to bring history to life and to think about artifacts, historical evidence, and primary sources.

Ask your child to collect 5–10 artifacts that represent their life, like a postcard from a family trip, a picture of their bedroom, or a ticket stub from a movie or play. Ask them what major events they have lived through—what artifact could they include to represent each event? Give examples of possible artifacts like a surgical mask representing the Covid-19 pandemic or an article about a recent news story.

Help your child list their artifacts on paper and write a few sentences explaining why they chose each one. Date the list and find a container for the items. Write directions for when to open the capsule on the outside of the container. Traditional time capsules are buried, but an old shoebox hidden in a closet will also work!

As you work on this project together, talk with your second grader about what kids from other time periods might have included in their time capsules. What might a kid growing up in the 1980s have included? What about a kid during the Great Depression? Or the Civil Rights Era? Share what you would have included if you were making a time capsule in second grade!

SCIENCE



Finding our Natural Resources

Explain to your child that a natural resource is a substance produced by the Earth that help to support life. Have them name natural resources, like plants, soil, sunlight, and water.

Use three sheets of paper and label them plants, soil, and water respectively. Have your child draw or list reasons why each resource is necessary for life. For example, on the plants list, a child might write that they provide food for animals, or they may draw a picture of a bird in a tree to indicate that plants also provide shelter. For the soil list they may write that it provides nutrients to plants.

Extend the activity by taking a nature walk or watching a nature show on TV and having your child point out how natural resources are being used to support life. Ask, “What natural resource do you see the animal using? How is the natural resource supporting the animal’s life?”

Encourage your child to also talk about the natural resources that benefit them as humans. Help your child connect to the natural resources around them. Ask them to imagine what life would be like without these resources. Ask, “Could we live without these resources? Why or why not?” Explain to your child the importance of caring for the planet and the natural resources it produces.

PHONICS

Build Reading Stamina

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Read in the Wild

Expanding reading beyond books and into the world is exciting for children and shows them that reading is a practical and meaningful life skill. As they encounter more complex language while out and about, remind them to use their decoding and word meaning skills to help them make sense of what they’re reading.

For example, while in the car, point out a complex word like interstate. Challenge your child to break down the word into parts. Help them recognize that the prefix inter- means between. Guide your child to use this knowledge to understand that interstate is a synonym for highway and means between states.

Try this at the grocery store too! Your child can decode the three letter blend str- in strawberry or the -tion ending in nutrition. Remind them of their growing toolbox they can use to read words anywhere they go.

Build Strong Word Skills

Children with strong reading comprehension skills usually know a lot about words—they can identify root words, prefixes, and words with multiple meanings. These skills help them understand new words as they read more challenging books. Here's how you can help at home:

Dig into root words: pick a simple word like jump and challenge your child to name related words like jumped, jumping, jump rope. Point out how each word's meaning relates to the root word.

Talk about prefixes: Review prefixes your child is likely to know like un- (meaning not) and re- (meaning again). Ask your child to list words with those prefixes like undo, untangle, review, and rewrite. Challenge them to add new ones to the list. You can do this with other, more complex prefixes like tri- (meaning three) or mis- (meaning wrong or bad).

Play with homonyms: Homonyms are words that are spelled the same but have more than one meaning. Name a word with multiple meanings like bat, cool, or play and ask your child to tell you as many different meanings as they can.

Learning to think flexibly about words and word parts leads to stronger reading comprehension, ultimately increasing the joy of reading!



Read Together

Reading with your second grader isn't just about practicing reading aloud—it's also a great way to build critical thinking skills. Even if your child can read alone, reading chapter books together gives you a chance to spend time together, talk about big ideas, and work through more complex stories.

You can also use this time together to reinforce the phonics skills they are learning in school. Help them find examples of specific phonics skills like spelling patterns or blends as you read together.

To create a positive shared reading experience:

- Choose a longer book with an interesting story or strong characters.
- Read a chapter together each night and make time to talk about what you read.
- Pause to ask open-ended questions like:
 - Why do you think the character did that?
 - What would you do if you were the character?
 - What do you think might happen next—and why?

These conversations help your child think more deeply, stay focused over time, and understand that books can have layers of meaning. Critical thinking takes practice, and you're helping build it every time you discuss a book together.