

Providing a language rich environment for your toddler and preschooler

As parents, we are often in a hurry to complete the never ending list of daily chores and tasks. When accompanied by your toddler or preschooler, these errands are valuable learning experiences. When visiting the supermarket, for example, be sure to include your little one in the activity. Offer her the bag and count the apples as you place them in the bag. Talk about their attributes including the color, shape, size, texture and taste. Ask your child to help you decide which fruits and vegetables are most tasty and should be purchased. Be sure to look around and point out the interesting store displays. Often, adults gloss over displays (think balloons) that have become common place for us, but are thrilling for our youngsters.

Teach our toddlers and preschoolers the names of our body parts. Using a wash cloth helps to pin-point the exact location of the body part for the child. Talk about the action of washing. Speak about the attributes of clean/dirty and wet/ dry. Add some cups to help the children learn the concept of containerism, the actions of scooping and pouring, and concepts of size and measurement. Bubbles and suds are thrilling to children and you will see how excited they are to splash. Give adequate time for the bath activity and remember to enjoy and have fun!

As the weather continues to improve, take your toddler and preschooler for a community walk. There is so much to see and talk about. The most trivial encounter to an adult is a world of amazement for our children. Listen for birds in the trees, describe the dog walking by, notice the bumps in the sidewalk.

The world is new and exciting for our children. As you begin to heighten your awareness to these daily opportunities for learning, you will easily come up with your own ideas and experiences. Please share them with me. I look forward to hearing from you.