

Family Connection: *Keeping it Routine*

Focus Skill

Identifies daily routine activities

About the Focus Skill

A child’s understanding of their daily routine activities contributes to a sense of safety and independence. Helping children establish and maintain daily routine activities provides them with consistency which is a key ingredient to happy and helpful learning!

Do	Say
<p>Explain to your child that when they are at home they have certain activities they will do just like they do at school.</p>	<p><i>“When we are at home, we will do similar activities everyday just like you do at school! What are some things you do at school?”</i></p> <p><i>“All of those things help you learn and grow. You do so many things throughout the day at school. We are going to do many things at home that will help you learn and grow, too!”</i></p>
<p>Support your child in identifying the things they will do at home and creating a visual schedule.</p>	<p><i>“When we are at home we will have a routine. It will start every day by waking up! What do you think we will need to do when you wake up?”</i></p>
<p>To create a visual schedule, get a piece of paper and make a two-column grid on it. One column will contain a picture of the activity drawn by your child and the other column they will use to put a checkmark when the activity is complete.</p>	<p><i>“We are going to make a schedule of all the activities we will do each day. I need your help to draw a picture of each activity, so we know what we are going to do.”</i></p>
<p>Talk your child through the routine activities you will do with them and have them draw a picture in the first column. Write the name of the activity next to the picture.</p> <p>Example of schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get dressed - Eat breakfast - Play - Clean-up - Read - Learning activities - Walk - Eat lunch - Nap - Play - Clean-up - Outside time - Play 	<p><i>“So the first thing we have to do every day is get dressed. Can you draw a picture of some clothes in this box?”</i></p> <p><i>What do you think will come next?</i></p> <p><i>What picture could you draw to show [name of activity]?”</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Eat dinner- Take a bath- Read- Bedtime	
Once the schedule has pictures for each activity, use it to help your child keep track of their day!	

Providing the Right Support

If this activity is too challenging for your child, take turns drawing pictures or break the activity up and complete it throughout the day.

If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, set a timer at the start of each activity throughout the day. Once the timer goes off, ask them what activity is next.

Family Connection: Segmenting Savvy

Focus Skill

Identifies separate words within a sentence

About the Focus Skill

Identifying separate words within a sentence requires a skill called sentence segmenting. This is the ability to break sentences into words when you hear someone say a sentence out loud. Sentence segmenting is the first level of segmenting children learn. It will start them on a path to identifying smaller parts of sound, such as syllables and letters. We use syllable and letter segmenting when trying to spell words.

Do	Say
Share a two- or three-word sentence with simple words (e.g. <i>I run.</i> ; <i>We can jump.</i> ; <i>I love you</i> ; <i>I eat</i> ; <i>etc.</i>) and have your child repeat it.	<i>"Let's practice counting words we hear in sentences. I am going to say a sentence. After I say it, I want you to repeat it."</i>
Demonstrate using your fingers to count the number of words in the sentence by holding up a finger for each word you say.	<i>"Now we are going to count the number of words we hear in the sentence. Watch as I hold up a finger for each word I say."</i>
Invite your child to try holding up a finger for each word they say in the sentence.	<i>"Can you count the number of words you hear in the sentence, too? Hold up a finger each time you say a word."</i> <i>"How many words did you hear?"</i>
Continue providing two- or three-word sentences with simple words to your child. Repeat the sentence and hold up a finger for each word they say.	<i>"Let's try counting some more words. I will say a sentence. I want you to repeat the sentence and use your fingers to count how many words you say."</i> <i>"How many words did you hear? How do you know that there are that many words?"</i>

Providing the Right Support

If this activity is too difficult for your child, model how to clap each word in the short sentences you share and count the number of words they clap (and that are in each sentence).

If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, include four- or five-word sentence and/or have them choose their own sentence.

Family Connection: Awesome Athletics

Focus Skill

Carries out a one-step request (in an unfamiliar situation)

About the Focus Skill

Successfully following directions is an important life skill both at school and in the home. Help your child strengthen listening skills and build verbal processing while playing a game and having some fun!

Do	Say
Invite your child to participate in a variety of athletic endeavors.	<i>"I want to see your awesome athletic skills! Awesome athletes must be good listeners. Listen to my instructions and then show me your awesome athletic skills."</i>
Provide your child with a silly or real task that only contains a one-step request.	(Examples) <i>"Do five jumping jacks to warm up."</i> <i>"Skip to the fence."</i> <i>"Run around the tree."</i> <i>"Do three hops."</i>
Continue providing directions and escalating the number of steps for as long as your child is interested. Switch up the directives to match your child's interests, or to better suit your location (i.e. if you are in the car, ask your child to "clap once or slap your knees three times").	

Providing the Right Support

If this activity is too difficult for your child, model the directions for them. Children process visual images much faster than they process verbal directions.

If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, add an additional step to the directions. For example, you might challenge:

- Hop two times on one foot and then hop two times on the other
- Run to the end of the yard and then walk backwards on your way back
- Bounce the ball four times and then throw it in the air
- Run to the tree, do a jumping jack and skip back

Family Connection *Spill the Beans*

Focus Skill

Uses 1-to-1 correspondence to count sets of 4 or less objects

About the Focus Skills

One-to-one correspondence is the understanding that when counting a set of objects, you say one number for each object you count. For example, if a child is counting three toys and says the number name aloud for each toy he/she touches, “One, two, three,” he/she is demonstrating one-to-one correspondence. Accurately counting objects requires that children can use one-to-one correspondence. It is easiest for children to demonstrate one-to-one correspondence when the objects they are counting are in a line or some other organized arrangement.

Do	Say
Place four or less small objects (beans, buttons, paper clips, etc.) into a plastic cup. Have your child cover put his/her hand over the top of the cup, give it a good shake, and spill the objects on to a table or the floor.	<i>“We are going to practice counting! I am going to place objects in this cup. Can you cover the cup with your hand and shake the cup? Then I want you to pour out the objects so we can count them!”</i>
Support your child in either arranging the objects into a straight line before counting or moving them into a pile as they count.	<p>Option 1 <i>“I want you to count how many objects we have. Let’s first put them in a straight line. Now count how many objects there are.”</i></p> <p><i>“How many are there all together?”</i></p> <p>Option 2 <i>“I want you to count how many objects we have. I want you to pick one object up at a time and move it over here as you count them.”</i></p> <p><i>“How many are there all together?”</i></p>
Continue playing, changing the number of objects in the cup each round. Focus on helping your child master one-to-one correspondence with up to four objects.	<p><i>“Let’s try again. Shake the cup and pour out the objects. Now count them!”</i></p> <p><i>“How many are there all together?”</i></p> <p><i>“How do you know there are that many?”</i></p>

Providing the Right Support

If this activity is too difficult for your child, support your child by moving their finger as they count the objects.

If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, have them count the objects in the random arrangement the objects are in when poured out of the cup instead of lining them up or having your child move each object as they count it. You can also add additional objects to the cup.

Family Connection: *Word Pairs*

Focus Skill

Shows understanding of many different words

About the Focus Skill

A strong vocabulary supports children's reading comprehension skills as they only have to focus on sounding out a word and not the word's meaning. You can support your child's vocabulary development through reading books and talking with your child throughout the day. Understanding the relationship words have because of their meaning will help children when they are using context clues to read new words.

Do	Say
Explain to your child that you are going to play a word game.	<i>"Let's play a game that makes us think about words. I am going to say a word and I want you think of a word that either means the same thing, or a word that means the opposite, or just a word that goes with it."</i>
Provide your child a word and ask them to think of another word that goes with it.	Examples Fast/quick Peanut butter/jelly Hot/cold <i>"What word goes with [insert word]?"</i> <i>"Why do they go together?"</i>
Switch roles every few words so that they are providing you with a word. Make a "mistake" every now and then to see if your child will correct you.	<i>"Now I want you to tell me a word and I will think of a word that goes with it. Let me know if the word I say does not go with the word you gave me."</i>

Providing the Right Support

If this activity is too challenging for your child, provide them with two options to choose from. For example, if you provide them with the word "banana," ask them if "apple" or "basketball" would go with "banana."

If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, ask them to provide you with two words that go with the word you have provided them.

Family Connection Activity: *Counting Cupcakes*

Focus Skill

When asked to produce a set of objects, counts out 10 or fewer objects.

About the Focus Skill

Young children need frequent and repeated opportunities to produce a set of objects that correspond with a number they have been given. This helps solidify their understanding that the last number counted represents the whole of the group. Young children often think that the object they touched when they said the number five is five. They aren't yet able to conceptualize that all of the objects they counted collectively represent five, not just the last object they counted.

Do	Say
<p>For this activity, find a muffin/cupcake pan. Write the numbers 1-10 on a piece of colored tape or a sticky-note and place one number on the bottom of each muffin/cupcake hole. (You may want to cover the remaining two spaces with a piece of paper or tape if the pan is made for a dozen).</p> <p>Gather objects that you have a good number of like paperclips, buttons, beans, cotton balls, etc.</p>	
<p>Explain to your child that they are going to fill each muffin/cupcake hole with the number of objects that correspond with the number on the bottom of the hole.</p>	<p><i>"We are going to practice our counting skills. What numbers do you see in the bottom of the muffin holes?"</i></p> <p><i>"Can you fill each hole with the number of objects that represent the number?"</i></p>
<p>Have your child select one number to start with, count out objects, and place them in the hole.</p>	<p><i>"Which number are you going to start with? Can you count out that many objects?"</i></p> <p><i>"How many do you have all together? How do you know?"</i></p> <p><i>"You counted [insert number]. Can you put those in the [insert number] hole?"</i></p>
<p>Continue until each muffin hole has been filled. Repeat several times.</p>	

Providing the Right Support

If this activity is too challenging for your child, focus on the numbers 1-5. Take a piece of paper and write the numbers 1-5 along the bottom then draw a line of dots on top of each number that correspond with the number. Have your child place objects on the dots to help them count out the correct number.

If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, have them select one number to start with and count out that many objects. Then have them choose a second number. If that number is greater, have

them practice adding objects to the first group and counting on to create a set of objects that matches the second number. If the second number is less, have them practice subtracting by counting backwards as they remove objects until the set of objects matches the second number.

Family Connection: *Takeout Takeaway*

Focus Skill

(Deletes a word from a compound word, without the support of pictures)

About the Skill

Deleting a word from a compound word (e.g. when you take “butter” away from “butterfly” it becomes “fly.”) is a segmenting skill. Segmenting is the ability to divide sounds we hear into smaller sounds. Learning to segment begins with identifying words in a sentence and then moves to parts of words (e.g. syllables or words within compound words). Children use segmenting when learning to read and write.

Do	Say
Before you get started, think of several food items that happen to be compound words (e.g. strawberry, watermelon, grapefruit, cupcake, peanut, oatmeal, etc.). Invite your child to segment the names of some of your family’s favorite foods.	<i>“Food is so yummy! I like to eat food to help my body have energy. Did you know that some of the names of the foods we eat are two words put together? We call these compound words. For example, the word cupcake is the words cup and cake put together. Do you hear those two words in cupcake? Cup – cake.”</i>
Explain to your child that you are going to play a game in which they takeaway part of a word.	<i>“We are going to play a game! I am going to say the name of a food that is a compound word. I am going to ask you to take away part of the word and you are going to tell me what part of the word would be left.</i>
Practice together before having your child delete words independently.	<i>“Let’s try one together. How about we start with the word “blueberry”? Can you say blueberry? Now let’s think about what would be left if we take away the word “blue” from blueberry? Think in your brain what would be left if you took the word “blue” from blueberry. What are we left with? Berry. That’s right.”</i>
Provide your child with other food names that are compound words. Ask them to either take the first word away or the second word away.	<i>“Let’s try some more words. I will tell you a name of a food I like to eat and which word to take away.” “How do you know that is what will be left?”</i>

Providing the Right Support

If this activity is too challenging for your child, use two small objects (buttons, cups, etc.) to represent the two words forming the compounding words. Touch each object as you say each word in the compound word. Remove one of the objects to help our child takeaway a word from the compound word.

If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, invite your child to think of other food items that are compound words, or you can come up with new categories of words to explore.

Family Connection: *Cereal Line Up*

Focus Skill

Pairs objects using one-to-one correspondence when given sets of up to 10 objects

About the Focus Skill

Children first use one-to-one correspondence to count objects as they say one number for each object they count. As children grow in their mathematical thinking, they then use this skill to compare groups of objects to determine which group has more or less. Pairing objects helps them make concrete connections between different sized groups of objects.

Do	Say
Invite your child to practice counting, pairing, and comparing groups of objects using cereal (or other objects/snacks with different colors).	<i>"Let's practice counting and figuring out which group has more or less."</i>
Pour about 20 pieces of cereal on the table and have your child sort them into groups by color.	<i>"Can you sort these by color? Place each color in a line."</i>
Ask your child if they can tell which color has the most or least or if they are the same just by looking at the lineups.	<i>"Can you tell me which color has the most? How do you know?"</i> <i>"Can you tell me which color has the least? How do you know?"</i>
Encourage your child to check his/her answer, by using one-to-one correspondence counting skills to determine the exact number for each color.	<i>"Count the number of cereal pieces in each group to see which one has the most."</i> <i>Why is that number the greatest?"</i>
Continue playing by changing the number in each color group.	

Providing the Right Support

If this activity is too challenging for your child, reduce the number of colors to two or three and/or reduce the number in each color group to no more than five.

If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, do not have them place the cereal pieces in a line. Rather, have them leave the cereal pieces in a pile by color and count each group. This will require them to remember the number of cereal pieces in each group and compare each group from their understanding of number words.

Family Connection: *Two-Step Tasks*

Focus Skill

Follows two-step, oral directions (that relate to a familiar activity or situation)

About the Focus Skill

Your child has been working very hard on following directions at school. Not only does the ability to follow directions make your child's time at school and home more productive, it is an important indicator of his language and communication development.

Do	Say
To continue strengthening your child's listening and understanding skills, make sure to provide two-step directions throughout the day. There is nothing specific you need to have your child do, you simply want to see how well your child can follow and complete the tasks.	Examples: <i>"Take off your shoes and place them in the closet."</i> <i>"Put your toys in the basket and place the basket on the shelf."</i> <i>"Put your trash in the trash can and your cup in the sink."</i>

Providing the Right Support

If this activity is too challenging for your child, use the phrase "First (task), then (task)." Before you send your child off to complete their two tasks, have them repeat the instructions using the "first – then" language and touching a finger for each task they are going to do.

If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, you can add a third or even fourth instruction (if your child is ready) or you can time how long it takes to complete the tasks (if he likes that type of motivation).

Family Connection: Nature Walk

Focus Skill

Identifies at least 3 living things

About the Skill

Understanding the natural world helps children develop scientific thinking skills, which is why taking a nature walk with children is an excellent way to provide you a chance to determine how comfortable they are with their knowledge of living and non-living things.

Do	Say
Get your child ready to go on a walk.	<i>"We are going to go on a walk. When we are on our walk, we are going to be scientists and find living things! Let's get our shoes on so we can go on our walk."</i>
As you walk around your neighborhood, encourage your child to identify living things.	<i>"What living things do you see?" "How do you know it is living?"</i>
Pause and study the living things your child notices.	<i>"What do you notice about [insert name of living thing]?" "How is it [same or different] from [name of another living thing]?"</i>
Make a list of the living things your child observed on your walk. If you are able, find books or educational videos to learn more about the living things he/she identified.	

Providing the Right Support

If this activity is too challenging for your child, identify the living things for your child and focus on having them observe the living things. Another option is to provide your child a choice between one living thing and one non-living thing.

If your child is ready for a more challenging activity, support them in thinking through how the living things they have identified grow and change over time.