

Supporting Learning at Home for Young Children with Cognitive Disabilities

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A cognitive impairment (which is also known as an intellectual disability), is a clinical term used when an individual has certain limitations in mental functioning and with vital life skills such as communication, self-help, and social skills. In order for individuals to receive a diagnosis of cognitive disability, they must have impairments in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Intellectual functioning is the process in which a person's ability to plan, comprehend, and reason are constrained. Adaptive behavior, on the other hand, refers to an individual's ability to apply social and practical skills in everyday life based on age appropriate expectations. The main examples of adaptive behavior include personal care, social problem-solving skills, dressing and eating skills, using money, and following rules.

Because cognition involves the development of knowledge, skills and dispositions, which will help children to think about and understand the world around them, it is critical that caregivers and educators have a solid foundation on how to foster support for routine activities in and out of the home setting. The ability to foster your child's cognitive development beginning at birth will provide a solid base for success and happiness at home, in school, and later on throughout their lives. Here are a few ideas of how to encourage cognitive development through different activities and ages and stages of your child's life.

0-6 months

- Talk to your baby while making sure he/she can see your face and eyes.
- Read books to your baby using different voices and show him/her the pictures.
- Change activities when or before your baby becomes fussy (which is usually when he/she is bored).
- Place toys within sight but just out of reach of your baby.

1 year old

- Begin naming colors and shapes and asking your child to point at certain objects.
- Hide toys and encourage your child to find them.
- Provide simple directions, such as "pick up your ball."

2 years old

- Play simple games of hide and seek within the same room.
- Ask your child to name colors, shapes or animals when you point to them in a book.
- Give your child simple two-step directions, such as "pick up your ball and put it in the basket."

3 years old

- Encourage your child to take part in pretend play.
- Play a parade or follow the leader with your child.
- Teach your child simple songs like "Itsy Bitsy Spider," or other cultural childhood rhymes.

4 years old

- Allow your child to help with simple chores, such as wiping the table.
- Begin counting together.
- Ask your child to tell you parts of a story or tell you about his/her day.
- Give your child choices and prompt him/her to make thoughtful decisions.

5 years old

- Help your child develop good language skills by speaking to him/her in complete sentences and using "grown-up" words. Help your child to use the correct words and phrases.
- Draw people and animals based on real family members and pets.

For more information on how to encourage a child's development, visit [Encouraging Healthy Development](#).

Great Learning Activities at Home for Children with Cognitive Disabilities Activity 1

Name of activity: Building a Fort

Ages: Any Age

Wyoming Early Learning Standard(s) addressed: Creative Arts, Language , Math, Fine and Gross Motor, Logic and Reasoning, and Science Knowledge.

Learning Outcomes: Children will use everyday materials to increase their skills in creativity, physics, language, math, and vocabulary.

Materials in the home: (You do not need every item on the list. These are just some ideas to get started) Blankets, sheets, chairs, tables, couch, clothespins, tape, flashlights, battery operated lantern, pillows, stuffed animals

Activity Preparation: Place all materials in the floor where you will have enough room to build a fort. If you have a table, couch, or bed, you might consider setting up materials near that to eliminate moving heavy furniture.

Activity description:

This activity has never-ending possibilities, but here are some suggestions to get you started:

- Use materials to build a fort
- Give children the materials and allow them to experiment.
- Have your child plan what they are building
- Have your child count the materials as they are building

After you build the fort you can:

- Use the flashlight to make shadows
- Tell stories or have child tell a story
- Sing songs
- Play simple games such as: I spy, charades, Go Fish etc...
- Read a story

Multiple ways to recruit your child's interest and engagement:

- Allow your child to freely experiment with materials.
- 2) Let your child take the lead with this activity and provide minimal instructions.
- 3) Let your child choose a story to read in the fort.
- 4) Have your child bring a favorite toy or stuffed animal to the fort.

Multiple ways to share information with your child:

- Verbally share instructions with your child.
- Model non-verbally with different suggestions for building the fort.
- Model ways to build using gestures and direct instructions.
- Verbally point out what the child is doing on their own.

Multiple ways for your child to demonstrate what he or she knows and can do:

- Verbally,
- By pointing, or
- By imitating your words or actions.

Ways to encourage language during the activity:

- Describe what the child is doing.
- Create a playful conversation with your child.
- Introduce new vocabulary: Stable, indestructible, gigantic, etc...

**Great Learning Activities at Home for Children with Cognitive Disabilities
Activity 2**

Name of Activity: Color Popping Bubbles

Ages: 3-4

Wyoming Early Learning Standard(s) addressed: domain #1 approaches to learning (Initiative and curiosity flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness.) Domain #3 language development (receptive language- by following 1 to 2 step directions and expressive language- by using complex vocabulary and express the ideas) domain #6 mathematics knowledge + skill(number relation and operations -Using a range of strategies such as counting, symbolizing

or matching.) Domain #8 science knowledge plus skill(conceptual knowledge of the natural and physical world- by observing discussing natural process)

Learning Outcomes: Children will learn about colors, counting and combining materials to make something different.

Materials in the home: Clear hand soap or white shampoo. (1/4 cup of soap to 1/2 gallon of water.) Any color of food coloring. (no more than 4 drops of food coloring per. ½ gallon of water.) A large spoon to stir. How to make a bubble blower.

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/104990235042128145/>

Activity description:

- Discuss each color of food coloring that you use.
- Experiment with colors by dropping them into the water.
- Discuss mixing Colors.
- Choose only 2 colors and use only 2 drops of each color.
- Have your child measure out 1/4 cup of soap/shampoo
- Pour soap/shampoo into half-gallon/gallon of water
- Stir four times so the soap is mixed in with the water.
- Add the food coloring until it reaches the desired color.
- Stir four times to dissolve the color into the solution.
- if you would like to create a bubble blower, check out this website by following the link:
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/104990235042128145/>
- You can also use this mixture to make a bubble bath for your child.

Multiple ways to recruit your child's interest and engagement:

- let your child choose the color of food coloring they would like to use
- let your child select the bubble blower they would like to use
- Allow your child to experiment with blowing bubbles.

Multiple ways to share information with your child:

- Verbally count how many drops of food coloring you put into the water.
- Model measuring or counting how much of each material is being used.
- Discuss each color and point out primary colors.
- Verbally model counting each bubble.

Multiple ways for your child to demonstrate what he or she knows and can do:

- Verbally expressing what they know.
- Signing the color or numbers
- Mimicking what you are modeling

Ways to encourage language during the activity:

- Verbalize what the child is noticing and knows.
- Have a conversation about mixing colors.
- Add new words to their vocabulary such as: cup, gallon, half-gallon, and combined.