

THRIVE

DEALING WITH THE PHYSICAL, COGNITIVE, SOCIO-EMOTIONAL
AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR CHILD



LANGUAGE

Spark your child's imagination with a zoo visit!

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Off to the ZOO!

A trip to the Singapore Zoo is fun and educational, and will spark your child's imagination.

Packing up the family for a trip to the zoo might seem a little daunting, especially if you're dealing with a young child, but it is well worth the effort. Even babies in prams can benefit — not only is a trip to the zoo a tonne of fun, it is an educational experience that's second to none.

Curious and curiouser...

At this age, your child has probably started to ask lots of questions: Why is the sky blue? Why does a monkey have a tail? Why does an elephant have a trunk? Curiosity is a normal developmental milestone for a three- to four-year-old, and you want to do all you can to encourage your child to take an interest in the why's of the world around him.

A trip to the zoo can really pique his interest in the animal world. What's more, seeing live animals in their natural habitats can help your child work out a few answers on his own. Watching an elephant use its trunk to eat a bunch of bananas, or seeing how a monkey leaps from tree to tree, can

explain the idea of a trunk or a tail better than words ever could.

Vocabulary building

Going to the zoo is a pretty novel experience — and is a great way to build up your child's ever-expanding vocabulary. Not only can you teach him all the animal names, your child can learn new words for colour (a **brown** bear, a **grey** elephant, a **pink** flamingo, etc) and new verbs (see that monkey **swing**, hear that lion **roar**, watch that crocodile **float**, etc).

Don't just limit your child's learning to the animal displays — the zoo environment itself is rich in learning. Each animal habitat is unique — point out the interesting features of each habitat, for example the moat in the lions' den.

A sensory boost

Head over to the Rainforest Kidzworld



Learn to think

Another good activity at the zoo is to encourage your child to learn to categorise things — this builds his cognitive skills and encourages critical thinking. Perhaps you can ask your child to count the legs on all the animals he sees, and to group them based on if they have four legs, two legs or none at all.

Another tip to encourage your child to think critically is to play the game of "Same or Different". At this age, your toddler is learning all about what makes some things similar, and what makes them different — get him to point out what animals are almost the same (lions and tigers, maybe) and then ask him what makes them different (lions have manes, tigers have stripes). Again, this will create fantastic opportunities to introduce new words as well!

But while a trip to the zoo can be a tremendous eye-opener for your child, don't forget to be safe and have fun. Pack plenty of water, sunscreen and snacks, and take plenty of pictures (you can talk about it days after the trip)! Enjoy! ♥

exhibits to encourage your child to use all his senses — this will really engage your child's interest and help him learn (while he's having fun). Over at *Rainforest Kidzworld*, your toddler can feed gentle goats. Kids can also pet rabbits, but only when keepers are present. There are daily rabbit-petting sessions at 1.30pm and goat-feeding sessions at 11.30am and 3.30pm.

To boost the experience, ask your child to think about his different senses. Which animal is the biggest at the zoo? (**Elephant!**) How does the bunny feel? (**Soft!**) Point out each animal's unique features and encourage your child to think about the reasons why. For example, why does a bunny have big front teeth?

For more tips on preparing for a trip to the zoo, head online to <http://www.ecda.gov.sg/growatbeanstalk/Pages/ArticleDetail.aspx?type=1&articleid=74>.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WILDLIFE RESERVES SINGAPORE



WIN TICKETS to SINGAPORE ZOO!

Answer the following question and stand a chance to **WIN** a family pass which comprises two adult tickets and two child tickets.

YOU CAN BOOST YOUR CHILD'S SENSORY EXPERIENCE AT THE ZOO BY ASKING HIM TO PET THE RABBITS.

TRUE OR FALSE

Email your answer to beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg. Entries should reach us by 30 April 2014. Please include your name, NRIC number, mailing address, email and contact details.

*The family pass is valid for 3 months from date of issue.





Fun with fingers!

Boost your baby's creativity, motor skills and more with this simple activity that engages all five senses.



At this stage, your two year-old is totally fascinated with the world around him — he's likely to touch or grab just about anything that interests him. Why not engage all five of his senses with a fun session of finger painting? Get the consistency right and he can make the paints go "squelch" in his hand.

Stimulating your child's senses helps boost his learning, while the act of finger painting encourages motor skill development. Painting while sitting on the floor develops core muscles and improves his balance, while using his hands and fingers to paint helps to develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

Such play is truly a great way to foster greater creativity and boost your child's imagination. A streak of blue can be the sky, the sea, a river — or anything your child can imagine. This is also a great opportunity to expand your child's vocabulary. Talk to him as he paints — explain what he's doing and why, or ask him about what he's painting. Encourage him to speculate on the subject that he's painting; use "why/how" questions to prompt deeper thought.

To make your own puffy and edible paints, head to <http://www.ecda.gov.sg/growatbeanstalk/Pages/ArticleDetail.aspx?type=1&articleid=70>.

➔ GET STARTED

Put some newspapers down or use an old bed sheet. This is also a great way to set boundaries for messy play (no painting beyond the bed sheet, for example). Sit your child in the middle, surrounded by small containers of paint. Encourage him to touch the paint, smell, and even taste it! Make sure though that the paint you use is non-toxic.

Encourage your child to make his own custom palette. Show him how you can mix blue and yellow to make green, how red and blue make purple, and how white makes everything lighter.

➔ GET PAINTING

Besides construction paper, try newspaper, paper plates, cardboard or cloth. You can also add texture to the paints. Very young children will put things in their mouth, but with non-toxic paints this won't pose a worry. If the child is older, add glitter or sand to mix things up!

Images of fish finger painting Rob Jensen/ artforkidshub.com. Other images Gettyimages

➔ ONE FISH, TWO FISH

Blogger Rob Jensen loves creating works of art with his kids. "Finger painting with my kids is one of the best bonding activities we've ever done," he says. "It's cheap and simple, yet it makes some of the best memories."

HOW TO FINGER PAINT A FISH IN THREE EASY STEPS



1

1 Overlap two handprints to create the outline of a fish.



2

2 Use a fingertip and black paint to dot in the eye of the fish.



3

3 Pick a contrasting colour and use a finger to draw three narrow stripes on the fish body.



Tune in to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbQbfiG-Oww> to watch Rob and his kids demonstrate how.



Pack a snack

This hearty salad makes a perfect picnic treat that you and your little one can prepare together!



APPLE AND POTATO SALAD

GET YOUR TOOLS OUT

- measuring spoons
- saucepan
- cooking stove
- slotted spoon
- mixing bowl
- potato masher
- grater
- knife
- cutting board
- spatula

WHAT YOU NEED

- 2 large potatoes
- 2½ tsp salt
- 2 slices turkey or chicken ham
- 2 eggs at room temperature
- 1 small cucumber
- 1 green apple
- 6 tbsp mayonnaise
- 2 tsp sugar
- a dash of white pepper

WHAT A SPUD!



POTATOES ARE VEGETABLES BUT THEY CONTAIN A LOT OF STARCH (CARBOHYDRATES) THAT MAKE THEM MORE LIKE RICE, PASTA AND BREAD. THEY ARE A VERSATILE FOOD PRODUCE BECAUSE THEY CAN BE PREPARED AND SERVED IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS – BOILED, MASHED, BAKED, OR AS FRENCH FRIES, CHIPS AND HASH BROWNS!

FOLLOW THESE STEPS



1 Wash potatoes well under running water.

2 Place the potatoes in the saucepan and fill with water. Add 2 tsp salt and boil for 40 minutes, or until the potatoes are soft. Use the slotted spoon to remove the potatoes. Set aside to cool.



3 When the potatoes are cool, peel them and place into mixing bowl. Mash the potatoes with a potato masher.

QUICK TIP!
To check if a potato is done, insert a fork into it. The fork should slide through the potato easily.

4 Fill the saucepan with a fresh change of water. Add eggs and boil over medium heat for 10 to 12 minutes. Use the slotted spoon to remove the eggs. Set them to cool.



5 When the eggs are cool, peel and grate them.

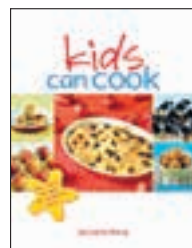
6 Grate the cucumber and green apple separately.



7 Cut the turkey or chicken ham into small pieces.

8 Mix the mayonnaise, sugar, ½ tsp salt and pepper into the mash potatoes. Add the grated eggs, cucumber, green apple and ham. Mix well.

9 Keep chilled until ready to eat.



This recipe is taken from *Kids Can Cook* (\$22.50, excluding GST), published by Marshall Cavendish Cuisine.