Dear Families,

In our classroom, play and inquiry are an important part of our day. Play is one of the main ways that children learn about the world around them and explore many of the big ideas we learn about in our schooling.

This packet is to facilitate this play and work at home. If at first glance this work doesn't seem "academic" enough, there is plenty of research that finds kids engaged in play are often working at a higher level then when they are doing more traditional sit-down academic tasks. The professor Lillian Katz draws a line between academic skills (the alphabet and the number sequence) and intellectual skills (curiosity, problem solving, flexibility). Play facilitates the development of intellectual skills, and also allows for the application of academic skills. For example, a child playing with water, might use intellectual skills to make a boat, but then apply academic skills to write the name of the boat on the side. Intellectual skills do not come from worksheets.

Play is also a time when children develop self-regulation, organization, and working memory. All skills essential for learning academics.

Feel free to continue to do packets, play math games online and on the ipad, and practice other academic skills, but also try to balance that with opportunities for open ended play.

What follows in this packet is some suggested play areas for your child/ren. They do not require toys, but rather materials around your apartment or house. You do not need to supervise your child at play, but check in at the beginning and end of their time. If your child gets bored quickly, do not offer something new, encourage them to work through the boredom.

Included in this packet:

- Directions
- Play areas and ideas
- Play planning and reflection sheet
- Tips for talking to your child about their play
- Tips for helping your child when they say "I am done" or "I am bored"



Warmly,

Note: Your child should also have lots of open ended, however they want to play, play time every day. To illustrate the difference, we will call this choice workshop.

Directions:

- 1. At the start of the day, ask your child what play choice they want to make for today's choice workshop, and the materials they will use (use the samples below for help).
- 2. Have your child draw, write or tell you what they think they will do with those materials.
- 3. Set the materials up and walk away. If you are worried about mess, throw down an old towel or whatever you have.
- 4. If your child comes to you, use the tips sheet (included).

5. After 45-60 minutes, clean up. Talk about how it went (see the tips sheet).

6. Use an extension (if you like).



Suggested Play Choices

Play Choice 1: Water Play		
Main Materials	Supplemental Materials	
Tupperware	Use any: • Measuring cups	
Water	 Measuring cups Eye droppers Basters Funnels Food coloring Rocks, wood, leaves Glue, paper, markers Containers Aquatic animal figures 	
Skills developed here: • Volume • Properties of water • Engineering • Problem solving	Option: Make it a sensory table and change out the materials to beans, rice, pasta, dirt, sand, etc	

- What is happening here?
- What are you making?
- What do you think would happen if....?
- What are you noticing?

Play Choice 2: Construction Play		
Main Materials	Supplemental Materials	
 Anything you can build with: Package of solo cups Blocks Toothpicks and cut sponges Popsicle sticks Legos (without direction booklets) 	 Use any: Clothespins Rug or fabric scraps Small cars, animals, or people Pictures or books with different buildings 	
Skills developed here: • Storytelling • Balance and equivalence • Engineering • 3 dimensional shapes	Option: You can print out photos of your family, or street signs, that children can use in their play	
 Questions to ask: (if you decide to a what is happening here? Tell is story here? What are you making? What do you think would happed what are you noticing? 	me the	

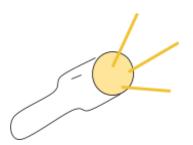
Play Choice 3: Maker Play	
Main Materials	Supplemental Materials
Your recycling bin materials	Use any: • Big cardboard boxes
Glue	 Small cardboard boxes Materials from nature
Scissors	 Pictures and books of inspiration (if your child
Tape	thinks they would like to make an airplane, try to have an airplane picture or book)
Skills developed here: • Planning and organization • Flexibility • Engineering • Problem solving	Option: Encourage your child make a bigger project: A restaurant, a school, an airport so this becomes a multi-day project

- What is happening here?
- What are you making?
- What do you think would happen if....?
- What are you noticing?
- What else do you need?



Play Choice 4: Light Play	
Main Materials	Supplemental Materials
Flashlight or tea lights	 Use any: Blocks Fabric Colored, clear solo cups Paper Markers Books (like the shine-a-light series) Toys that can cast reflections (think dinosaurs, lego figures, etc) White sheet on the wall
Skills developed here: • Storytelling • Properties of light • Engineering • Problem solving	Option: Watch some shadow puppet videos on youtube to get a sense of how people tell stories with shadows

- What is happening here? Tell me the story here?
- What are you making?
- What do you think would happen if....?
- What are you noticing?



Play Choice 5: Dramatic Play	
Main Materials	Supplemental Materials
Real life stuff (As opposed to "dress-up" or toy stuff)	 Use any: Cooking utensils Clothes from your closet Old phone Old computer Old envelopes, paper, list pads
Skills developed here: Storytelling Problem solving Oral language Fantasy play (which aids literacy development) 	Option: Tie this one to the maker play

- What is happening here? Who are you? What are you pretending?
- What are you making?
- What do you think would happen if....?
- What are you noticing?

Talking Tip Sheets

What to say if...

Your child says	You might say
I'm bored	Where could you find more ideas?
	Could you try something new with those materials?
	Set a timer for 5 more minutes. What happens in that time?
I'm done	Will you start something new with those materials or change what you made?
I can't	Give it a try! You have done hard things before.
I want you to play with me	Let's set a time for minutes. When that goes off I can play with you for minutes.
I don't know what to do next	Give it a try. Maybe you will invent something new!
(fighting with sibling)	Use your strategies: • Take space • Talk it out (I feel when) • Use a tool (a book, a sand timer, etc) to calm down

OPTIONAL: Planning Sheet

Draw or write what you will make or play today!

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Reflect: What are you proud of today? What will you change or try for tomorrow?

EXTENSIONS

- 1. Take a picture of what your child made. Ask them to use a sharpie (or the editing app in your device) to label the parts or write a sentence about what they did. Email it out to extended family and friends.
- 2. Notice what your child is interested in when they play (water, boats, working in an office). Look for books (online or paper) that teach about that thing. Do a little research together.
- 3. Have virtual planning play dates with friends. Have your child tell their friend what they will make, have them share out what they did virtually with each other.
- 4. Make a "how-to" book after your child makes something. Then post-it for others!

