

# The Tutor Times™

February 2011



**Showing Your Child  
Unconditional Love**

**What Your Child  
Learns from You**

**Is Your Child  
DesignSmart™?**

**The Importance  
of Hands-On,  
Interactive Learning**



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# Bring the Learning Experience Home

Tutor Time® is committed to providing an enriching learning experience to every child in our care. But we also know how important it is for families to incorporate educational activities into their home as well. Here are some great things to do with children of all ages!

## Infants

Play this fun hiding game anytime your baby is awake and active. Partially hide yourself behind a door or piece of furniture. Make sure part of your body is showing. Say the following poem to your baby, "Where am I? Where am I? Can you find me, can you find me? Where am I? Where am I? Oops, here I am." When you say the last line, if your baby has not found you, show yourself and laugh together.

## Young Toddlers

Sit on the floor or in a chair and place your child in your lap facing you. Make sure you hold her firmly under her arms. Slowly bounce her on your lap and say, "Bouncing, bouncing, let's go bouncing. Up and down, all around. Bouncing, bouncing, let's go bouncing. Whoops, don't fall down (tip her to one side)." If she seems interested, do it again and tip her to the other side.

## Older Toddlers

Sit on the floor across from your child. Place a stuffed animal that has hands and feet on the floor between you. Show your child how to take the animal's arms and shake them up and down. Let your child do it. Name some different actions and encourage your child to do them using the animal's arms or feet.

Some ideas include waving, clapping, moving the legs up and down, blowing a kiss, etc. Ask your child to come up with some ideas too.

## Preschoolers

Place some chairs in a line in the middle of a room. Make sure there are no other items around the chairs to get in your way. Name an action and encourage your child to go around the chairs that way. Examples include walking, tip-toeing, hopping, skating, galloping, skipping, etc. Play some music and join your child as you move around the chairs together.

## School-Agers

You will need to have a coin for this activity. Ask your child to see how many times he can toss a coin into the air and catch it before it drops. Remind him that the coin needs to spin in the air without touching anything and he must catch it in the palm of his hand. Count along as your child tosses the coin in the air. Now it's your turn to toss it and see how many times you catch it before it drops. Play again and see if you can beat your own scores.

## Focus on Learning

We know that children learn through hands-on activities where they can solve problems, experiment with cause and effect, and learn through trial and error. Our teachers create environments and plan activities that support children's abilities to construct their own knowledge. Look at the nearby photo of children engaged in an activity involving toilet paper. What might your child have learned through an activity like this?

In this hands-on activity, the children explored and learned more about mummies, which they were reading and learning about in their classroom. They also practiced teamwork and problem-solving skills. The children needed each other to wrap themselves up like a mummy. They had to figure out how to make the wrap stay on their bodies, and then how to get out of the mummy wrap. Because this was a fun and meaningful project, they will not only remember what they learned about mummies, but also the associated literacy and math factors.

Even more important than the scientific and social studies facts they learned about mummies, were the changes that took place in the children's brains as they worked together to solve a problem. As we solve problems and make connections, our brains develop so that we are able to make more connections and continue to learn more and more.



# Messages of Love

In February, we are inundated with messages about love. Valentine's Day has transformed from an ancient holiday about love and romance to one in which people are encouraged to send messages of love to the many special people in their lives. However, as parents, we surround our children with love not just on one day, but every single day of their lives. And, unlike the decorated cards with bows and hearts, some of our expressions of love may not feel so pretty.

A mother shared that she had to take her daughter on a jail tour due to a teenage shoplifting incident. At the end of the tour, the jail worker was talking to the families of the girls. She reported that 33% of the young women would probably return to jail ... unfortunately, not as mere visitors. This mother reported looking around the room and realizing that every single adult desperately loved the child in their lives, but she also realized that just "loving" was not enough. For the child, love needs to come in a variety of forms, some of which are not so warm and fuzzy. For the parent of a young child, love must include:

- **Setting Limits:** A child's job includes seeking limits and pushing boundaries. A parent's job is to set firm limits that are consistent over time. If the rules are always changing or being bent, a child will have no sense of what to expect and will continue to push until a limit is found. Make sure that along with setting these limits, you are letting children know the expectations. Be clear in your language so that children know exactly what you mean.

Check in every so often to make sure your limits are fair and developmentally appropriate for your child's stage in life. Of course, as a child develops and learns, those boundaries will need to grow as well (so children learn self-regulation).

- **Following Through:** Never set a limit that you have no intention of keeping. For example, "If you do not clean your room, I will take everything away" or "If you keep being mean to your sister, I will cancel your birthday party." Once limits are established, a parent must follow through if

the rule is not honored. Often this is difficult; we really want our children to be happy. However, if there is never any follow through, a child will never learn to respect the rules.

- **Allowing Consequences:** Our first inclination as parents is to protect our children from the world. Yet, if we always do this, we aren't really doing them any favors. We should also focus on providing children with the tools they need to navigate the world.

As parents, we need to allow for consequences when children are young, so they learn the lesson before the consequences become more dangerous and long-term. This may mean allowing a child to get a bad grade if they forgot a science project until the night before and just threw something together. It may mean not arguing with a coach's decision to bench a player for missing a practice. Or, it may mean not making excuses when a child behaves poorly and supporting whatever punishment school imposes. These are short-term consequences that, while painful, teach lessons without a negative impact on the rest of a child's life.

Of course, all of these aspects of love must be in a context of unconditional love and support. When a child messes up, that is when they most need to hear that they are loved. For example, when the mother (discussed above in this article) entered the police station to retrieve her daughter after her arrest, she said, "Your dad and I love you more than you will ever know, no matter what. In spite of this mistake, we love you. You are going to have to face the consequences of this decision. We cannot, and will not protect you from whatever is coming, but we will do whatever we can to support you through it."

Happily, the young girl in this story stayed out of further trouble and is now a productive member of society. This mother learned her lesson that love, at times, means being tough and at other times, standing back. In this month of love, resolve to love your child in all of the ways he or she needs.

## Creating Character

One of the books we will use this year is *All in a Day*. A group of well-known authors and illustrators of children's books came together to create it. The final few pages have a note to the adults who read this book, in which the group says that their ultimate goal in writing this book was "Peace." They believe that peace can come when people celebrate the ways that we are different, but understand that ultimately, we are more alike.

*If you would like to respond to anything you read, have parenting questions or child development topics that you'd like to see explored in future issues of this monthly newsletter, please e-mail us at [education@tutortime.com](mailto:education@tutortime.com). We would love to hear from you!*





We'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for being a part of the Tutor Time family. Whether you have just enrolled, or if your child has grown up at our school, we thank you for choosing us as your early education and care provider.

We value each and every one of our families, and look forward to inspiring your child towards a love of learning in 2011 and beyond!

