

General Vacation Advisory for Children **(Ages 2.5 to 10+)**

Dear parents,

It has been a week for some and close to a month and half for some others since they last came to the environments. Hope all are doing well and staying safe in these testing times. Following a brief set of ideas that can help you in the coming three weeks or more depending on how things pan out.

Note

The time spent now (atleast for the next 3 weeks) is part of the children's vacation from the environment, so it is best if they do not use any classroom materials at home. If they ask for it, please talk to the corresponding guide to fix a time and take the material. Some children went away on vacation early and they may work with classroom materials as per their choice.

So if we are not going to suggest any materials, what to do then?

Take some time now and reflect on the time spent at home with children in the past few days. Identify some common areas of interest to engage them.

What is a common area of interest?

An area of work in which the child has tried to repeatedly involve him/her self and YOU (mother or father) also like doing that work.

Why should the mother/father like any area of interest?

When you like working on something, children are naturally enthused by your interest. Artificially generating interest on something just because the child likes doesn't help much.

What if we cannot identify anything common in the current state of mind?

Well, it is time to explore for yourself along with the children.

The Ideas

Note: These are suggestions. You may find some other ideas based on your home environment and your interests.

Living Space

The living space is one area that could be looked at. Over the past year, there could be a lot of unused objects that have gathered. It is a good time to identify those (both belonging to parents and children) and plan to dispose of them whenever possible. Dresses could have become shorter, books could have been torn, toys (if any) could have been broken, the bed used could have become shorter, etc. Help the child to understand that these are either not needed or can be fixed. For very young children (< 3.5 years) or some older children, reasoning may not help. In that case, observation helps. If children don't use something of theirs for a long time (~1month), please remove it when they are asleep/away.

If not needed, the way of disposal can create a lot of interest in terms of the language and math. The number of things to dispose, making a list of which goes where, if there is any money involved and if so counting that up when it is disposed, the names of the different places involved in the process, when they are open if not now - all these can interest the child.

If there are some that can be fixed, hand work like sewing, gluing, painting, cleaning, wiping, washing, dusting may be areas where children can be engaged.

The other aspect of the living space is the beautification. The parent and the children could think of beautifying the place with additions of art, claywork, rangoli, flower arrangement, etc. There could also be a possible movement of furniture to rearrange the items in the house. All these can be done in collaboration or in some cases independently by the children.

Thick chart papers cut into A5 size is appropriate for painting when placed on a hard board. Water colours (primary shades - red, yellow, blue) alone should suffice. For colouring or pasting, the paper or card size should not be more than a quarter of the A4 size. Shapes for colouring may be made by tracing outlines of bangles, little boxes, and other solids with defined edges. The same can be shown to them if they find tracing difficult. Please provide them with colour pencils only. Crayons should be avoided. Clay or dough can be given to the children to manipulate it into shapes.

Journaling

One big request to parents is to start journaling their thoughts on the day's events on a regular basis for about 15 minutes everyday. Why? Writing as an everyday activity has been missing in our lives for a long time with the advent of technology. Unless children see us use it regularly, it is very difficult for them to feel the need to write.

When to do this? Anytime during the day when the children are awake and involved in something independently. This is a time of personal work and let no one disturb you when you do this. Children may get a paper and sit next to you to write, but let them know that they cannot disturb you when you write.

There could be a separate time when you write along with them on blank papers slowly.

Play with Children

There are a variety of simple games that can be played with children.

[ஆக்கு பாக்கு வெத்தல பாக்கு](#) (Aaku paaku vethala paaku) is a traditional game that can help in counting with words and dexterity of fingers apart from concentration and fine motor coordination.

The regular board games Snake and Ladders and Ludo are also very interesting for children of this age group.

Playing cards can be introduced for children who are 4+. Simply distribute a pack of cards equally and keep flipping open the cards one by one. You can decide if same shape/number comes together, the one who matches takes all the cards opened. The game keeps going on and on. 5.5+ children may like playing UNO type game as well.

Language Games

All the children in this age group are in the process of analyzing the sounds in a word. In any Language, you can wonder out loud about the sounds in a word and look for words having same

sounds. Look for sounds with same first sound, last sound, common middle sounds. It is important to keep connected to the idea, perfection can come later. For older children, the same game can be played with challenges. Collect 5-8 objects from the home and ask for an object starting with a sound, ending with a sound or having a sound

The simplest would be - word Antakshari - where you say a word and the children say another with atleast one sound from your word. Slowly you can increase the difficulty to have only the last sound in your word in their word. And later more particularly to start with the last sound as in Antakshari. The ultimate one would be to consider spellings. You can find out where your child fits in and play accordingly, starting with the first level of challenge.

Action games can be played where we mimic an action and they name it. Any Language is good for this purpose. For younger children, you can name it if they don't know. They may also repeat after you. If it can be played looking at a mirror, even better.

Objects in the house can be found with adjectives. A long spoon, a wide bowl, a small tumbler of water, etc. This could be in collaboration with a food preparation activity. Think of adjectives to focus on the exact material needed, making sure that you have those as well :). (**For older children**)

Cleaning activities invites a lot of prepositional usage. So those could be used in conversation to convey ideas with precision. (**For older children**)

Songs, Conversations

Feel free to read out/sing small songs, poems or rhymes about real life in any Language. Though it is not mandatory to sing, it is yet another way to improve their vocabulary, the reason why we strongly recommend songs familiar to the family to be sung together if possible.

Conversations can also be had about objects and happenings around the house. With older children, the conversations will get into a lot of details and questions. Not everything needs to be answered, but try to answer it in short simple sentences or show them where they can find answers.

While all of the above are going on, it is very important for the child to contribute in daily chores like cooking, cleaning, washing, drying, folding and arranging in shelves. Your child may be doing some part of each task already. Say cleaning a table interests her -initially she may be dependent on the adult for filling water but now she can be helped to do that independently. If you find certain movements are difficult for him/her, collaborative effort should be used. Routines to eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner as a family (siblings and mother or child and mother at least) can be introduced.

- **Compiled by Guides of CASCADE FLS.**