

A Workbook for Parents of Infants and Toddlers

Windows to Wide-Open Learning



My Child's
Interests + Everyday
Activities = Learning
FUN!

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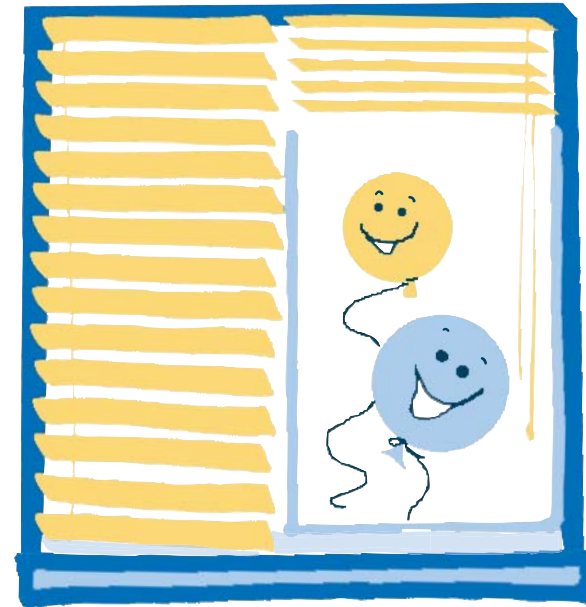
Carol M. Trivette

More Learning

Date	Activities that match my child's interests	Place(s)	What my child will get to do

Windows to Wide-Open Learning

My Child's Interests + Everyday Activities = Learning FUN!



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Adapted from *Spotting My Child's Very Special Interests: A Workbook for Parents* by Carl J. Dunst, Kaki Roberts, and Donna Snyder (Asheville, NC: Winterberry Press, 2004) and from *Promoting Young Children's Participation in Interest-Based Everyday Learning Activities* by Jennifer Swanson, Melinda R. Raab, Nicole Roper, and Carl J. Dunst (Morganton, NC: CASEtools, 2006, http://www.fippcase.org/casetools/casetools_vol2_no5.pdf).



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WELCOME

Matching your young child's special interests with day-to-day activities and experiences that help her learn is an outstanding way to promote all areas of growth and development.

This workbook gives moms and dads a quick and easy way to pinpoint their young child's special interests. By jotting down responses to a series of simple questions, and identifying activities that could give your child chances to use or express his interests, you can develop a plan for letting your child's interests lead the way into a world of exciting opportunities for learning. When you respond to and build on your young child's interests, the results are powerful learning **and** plenty of **FUN!**

You can also use Windows of Opportunity's family-friendly handouts for helping your young child enjoy a variety of other experiences of interest to her at home and in your community. Once you've identified your child's interests, you'll be able to choose the handouts that are **just right** for your young learner!

We invite you to spend a few minutes completing the workbook, using it to see how matching your child's special interests and your family's day-to-day activities creates **Windows of Opportunity** for learning! Enjoy the benefits of this approach to early childhood learning for yourself and your child. The possibilities are wide-open!

My child's name _____ Age _____ Today's date _____

Special Interests

What gets my child excited?

When given a choice, the kinds of activities my child chooses or prefers are:

#1 _____

#2 _____

#3 _____

What makes my child laugh or smile?

Actions my child enjoys doing (for example, jumping):

People my child prefers to be with:

#1 _____

#2 _____

#3 _____



Learning Opportunities

What I can do to help my child learn

- Bring a scoop and measuring cup. Let him stand on a chair at the work table to easily reach and scoop the soap powder. Mark a bold "fill mark" on the cup to show where to stop filling.
- Show him how to hold quarters and let him push them into coin slots.
- Hear and say word pairs like *wet/dry, clean/dirty*: "This shirt was wet; now it's dry!"
- Make a game of finding matching socks.
- Sing "This is the way we wash our clothes" on the way home in the car.

Expanding My Child's

Date	Activities that match my child's interests	Place(s)	What my child will get to do
12-6-07	Helping Mommy and Daddy wash the family laundry	Corner Laundromat	Scoop and pour soap powder Sort coins; put coins in machine slot Watch clothes spin Talk about bubbles Pull warm clothes from the dryers Help pack clean clothes in baskets

Young Children's Everyday Activities

The following is a list of activities many children experience as part of day-to-day life. Keeping in mind your child's interests from the previous page, make a check mark ✓ next to the activities that you think would give your child chances to do things he or she likes. Add activities that are not included here that are important to your family and would be interesting to your child. Don't forget about activities that young children can learn from by "tagging along" with an older sibling or adult.

- Attending a playgroup
- Attending church/synagogue
- Attending music/movement class
- Attending neighborhood gatherings
- Attending Sunday school/kid's church
- Being read to
- Being sprayed by a garden hose
- Brushing teeth
- Collecting leaves or rocks
- Creating an art project/craft
- Cuddling/rocking with adult
- Cutting/tearing pictures (e.g., magazines)
- Dancing with mom or dad
- Diaper changing
- Doing errands with mom or dad
- Doing laundry with mom or dad
- Dressing/undressing
- Eating meals or snacks
- Eating out
- Feeding ducks at the pond
- Finger painting
- Gardening/planting flowers
- Getting out of bed/waking up
- Getting ready for bed/naptime
- Going on a camping trip
- Going on a play date
- Going fishing with mom or dad
- Going grocery shopping with mom or dad
- Going on a bike ride
- Going on a hike
- Going on a stroller ride
- Going on a neighborhood walk
- Going on nature walks
- Going to a movie
- Going to siblings' ball games/sports events
- Going to the library
- Having picnics
- Helping with household chores
- Listening to bedtime stories
- Listening to music
- Listening to storytellers/story times
- Listening to/saying nursery rhymes
- Looking at and talking about photographs
- Looking at/reading cereal boxes/labels
- Looking in mirrors
- Participating in family talks
- Picking up siblings from school/childcare
- Picking up toys
- Playing at an indoor playland
- Playing chase/running

Playing dress-up
 Playing finger games
 Playing hide-n-seek
 Playing house
 Playing in a stream/creek/river
 Playing in a sprinkler
 Playing in a wading pool
 Playing in dirt/mud/sand
 Playing in kitchen cupboards
 Playing lap games (e.g., peek-a-boo, so big)
 Playing musical instruments
 Playing on park/playground equipment
 Playing on the computer/typewriter
 Playing turn-taking vocal games
 Playing with a garden hose
 Playing with balls/balloons
 Playing with bubbles
 Playing with busy boxes/baby gyms
 Playing with magnetic letters/shapes
 Playing with musical toys
 Playing with other children
 Playing with/taking care of pets
 Playing with playhouse toys
 Playing with push/pull toys
 Playing with puppets, dolls, etc.
 Playing with responsive toys (e.g., mobile, roly poly)
 Playing with shape sorters/puzzles
 Playing with talking toys (e.g., See 'n Say®)

Playing with teething toys
 Playing with trucks/cars/boats
 Playing with water toys
 Praying/saying Grace
 Preparing meals or snacks
 Renting/returning videos
 Riding in a boat
 Riding in wagon/riding toys
 Rough housing/playing tickle games
 Saying hellos/good-byes
 Shopping at the mall/department stores
 Singing
 Swimming/floating at the pool
 Taking a bath
 Taking a car, bus, train ride, etc.
 Toileting/going to the bathroom
 Using crayons, markers, etc.
 Using play dough, silly putty, etc.
 Visiting animals (e.g., pet store/zoo)
 Visiting friends, relatives, or neighbors
 Washing hands/face
 Watching mom or dad write notes/lists
 Watching TV/videos
 Watering plants/grass/flowers
 Other _____
 Other _____
 Other _____
 Other _____
 Other _____

Planning to Match Interests with Activities

Now that I've identified many of my child's special interests and activities he/she would like to do, I'm ready to create a plan so I can provide my child lots of opportunities to use his or her interests with fun activities to strengthen my child's learning and development.



Take a look at *Expanding My Child's Learning Opportunities* on the following pages. One row is filled in to show you how parents whose young child loves to be a "helper" might plan to make the most of one everyday activity—a trip to the laundromat. Use *Expanding My Child's Learning Opportunities* to jot down your own plans and ideas for maximizing your child's learning and fun during everyday activities that match your child's very special interests!

The best activities are ones that provide lots of opportunities for a child to do the things (s)he is interested in doing and learn new things. To help you choose activities that are the best opportunities for your child to learn, go back through the list of activities and **circle the activities** that do or could happen at least three times a week for your child and which best match your child's interests.