




Things to Do While You're Waiting: Learning Activity Kits





It's happening again! You're running errands with your children and suddenly you're stuck—in traffic, at the clinic, in the checkout line. Homemade learning activity kits can engage a child who hates to wait.


-  **All of these kits** slip easily into a purse, glove compartment, backpack, or diaper bag. The kits are for ages **3 and up**. Cost depends on what parents include. Every kit needs:
 - a zipper pouch or resealable plastic bag big enough to hold everything
 - smaller bags to organize the parts of the kit
 - pencils or pens
 - a memo tablet for notes, counting, games, lists, drawings (**NOTE:** To make your own tablets: Cut pieces of blank scrap paper the same size. Staple them together across the top. Add a piece of stiff cardboard to the kit to support the tablet while in use.)

-  **A math kit** lets your child play with numbers and problem solving. You might include:
 - a lightweight tape measure
 - an assortment of items to count and sort—coins, beans, buttons, coupons, checkers, game pieces, playing cards, dice, dreidels, etc.
 - a list of favorite fingerplays and action rhymes that involve numbers
 - puzzles made from cut-up postcards or magazine photos glued to thin cardboard

-  **An art and literacy kit** encourages creative expression. A child can practice making letters, write and illustrate a book, cut out paper dolls, or play games like Tic-Tac-Toe. You might include:
 - gel pens, washable fine-point markers, or crayons (*Don't leave crayons in a hot car.*)
 - transparent tape or washi tape
 - stickers, stencils, or stamps
 - colorful paper (such as bright magazine pages) for folding or cutting
 - scissors—safe but not frustrating to use

-  **A science kit** encourages children to look at the wider world. You might include:
 - a small, inexpensive magnifier
 - paper and a marker or pencil for sketching specimens
 - pipe cleaners
 - sandwich bags for collecting specimens
 - an assortment of items to study—keys, pebbles, seeds, nuts and bolts, etc. (**NOTE:** You can change the assortment from time to time.)

-  **A music and sound kit** helps you and your child investigate sound. You might include:
 - small plastic containers with seeds or buttons inside for shaking
 - a variety of rubber bands
 - small scarves or 24-inch ribbons to wave
 - a paper towel roll (for a mini-drum or a “voice changer”)
 - a list of favorite songs and poems

-  **For related Web resources, see “Things to Do While You're Waiting: Learning Activity Kits” at <http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tips.htm>.**

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.



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