



**Dear Parents,**

**At North Shore Hebrew Academy, we believe that play is a critical part of learning. Now that summer is here, we wanted to share some ideas to keep your child engaged during these hot summer months. Below are a few ideas for keeping your child stimulated and curious about the world around them. We hope a few of them will spark some interest in your child and perhaps even give you a few minutes of downtime, while your child is exploring!**

**Any Day/ Rainy Day Fun:**

- **Flashlight Play:** Young children love the magic of light play. Gather your flashlights, lay on the floor of a darkened room, and look up! Have flashlight races, and make shadow puppets on the wall. Flashlight dance parties are always a good time, and help to get everyone moving and burn off some energy!
- **Sink Play:** Set your child up at the kitchen sink, and have them "do the dishes." A trickle of water, spoons, small cups, and sponges, are great sensory fun. Don't forget the medicine droppers! These activities are great for strengthening the muscles in your child's hands and improving fine motor skills.
- **Collaging:** Cutting and gluing are favorite activities for kids. Paper, yarn, ribbon, feathers--the possibilities are endless! Junk mail, old envelopes--these household items are waiting to be torn up, cut up, and re-purposed by your child. Child-safe scissors, a little glue, a paintbrush, tape, and a piece of cardboard--collage time awaits! Remember when you're supporting your child with cutting - ensure they are using their dominant hand, and that their thumb is on top. Remind them by saying, "Thumb up!" as they're cutting. Model it for them as well.
- **Icy Treasures:** Gather up some small items--bouncy balls, small dinosaurs, marbles, matchbox cars--put them in a bin of water, and freeze. Then let your child bang and chisel away (using spoons, sticks, etc), discovering the many icy treasures!
- **Obstacle Course/Fort Play:** Have your child help, and gather blankets and pillows from around your house. Create an obstacle course, where they are challenged--crawl, jump, stomp, spin roll--all the way through! Then bring over a few kitchen chairs and build a fort where they can read, relax, and be transported to a far off land!



- **Cooking:** Kids love to cook! From buttering toast, to sprinkling granola on yogurt, cutting up vegetables, and baking cookies, all cooking is good cooking for kids. In our house, we love making smoothies and my kids love to experiment with different fruits and recipes each time we make them. Cooking is also a great way to integrate mathematical thinking. For example, if a recipe calls for 2 eggs, ask your child to count 2 eggs, and then count the number of eggs left in the carton. If you're measuring flour, show your child the line for 1 cup, put some flour into the cup, and ask your child if you need more or less flour.
- **Family Photos:** Get out your family photo albums! Tell your child stories about the people, places, and things they see. Real photos are magical--connecting children to moments in time. Put on a show! Choose a story your child knows well, and act it out with him/her. Consider backdrops, costumes, playbills, and more as part of your pretend play! This is a great one for siblings to do together!**Animal Charades--** Gather lots of little animals from around your house--stuffed animals, plastic animals, pictures of animals--and place them in a basket or bag. Have each family member choose an animal from the basket, pretend to be the animal, and let the games begin!**Make some Gak:** Keep the sensory play going and make Gak! Just mix: ½ cup water & 1 cup corn starch--and you have Gak! A not quite solid, not quite liquid substance that will lead to lots of sensory fun.

### Outdoor Fun:

- **Sidewalk Painting/Chalking:** Fill up a container with water and gather a few small paint brushes. Find a warm sunny spot outside on the concrete--a sidewalk, driveway, planter stones--and "paint" with the water. If your child is interested in letters and/or numbers make it into a game. The water works like magic, and disappears in the sunshine, leaving a space for a new painting! Sidewalk chalk is another option here as well.
- **Skateboard/Bike/Scooter Pull with a Rope:** Attach a rope to your child's skateboard tricycle, or scooter---and then pull! Have your children pull each other. This is great "heavy lifting" work for both kids and grown-ups, and is sure to create lots of joyful shrieking and laughter!
- **Shaving Cream Play:** Spray foam shaving cream onto a plastic tablecloth outside, squirt in a few drops of paint or food coloring (mix two colors if you'd like), and let the sensory play begin. Children love to squeeze, squoosh, and cover their bodies in shaving cream--and that's all good!
- **Nature Gathering:** Go for a walk in your backyard with your next painting session in mind. Give your child a "treasure bag" and fill it with rocks, pinecones, acorns, twigs, and natural items. Once you are home, sort your found treasures and give them a good rinse in soapy water (your child will love this part too). Once the objects have dried they are ready to be beautified with paint, glitter, glue and gemstones, etc.



- **Outdoor Obstacle Course:** Think American Ninja Warrior--but Early Childhood style style! Using ropes, chairs, sandboxes, balls, stomp rockets, basketball hoops, and all the other things you have in your yard, create a challenging and fun physical games course. Vary the challenges depending on the age/development of your child, but this one is fun for the whole family.
- **Flashlight Campfire:** Using all of your flashlights (iphone, camping lantern, glow sticks) create a "campfire." Sing songs, eat marshmallows, and tell stories.
- **Outdoor Scavenger Hunt:** Make a list of things for your child to hunt for outside and then let them explore your backyard (and/or neighborhood) to find them. You can make a random list of things for them to find, or better yet, challenge them to find 5 things that start with the "B" sound, things in groups of 2, things that are in the shape of a square, circle, octagon.
- **Treasure Hunt:** Hide 10 items (for example, a packaged snack) throughout your backyard, and have your child find them. Riffs on this are to play hot and cold - as your child gets closer to an item you can tell them they are "hot," and when they get farther away, you can tell them that they're "cold" or to make a map of your yard and where the treasures are hidden, and show your child how to use the map to find them.

Finally, when the play is done, **read, read, read**, with your child every single day! If you're looking for some book suggestions, check out these lists:

<https://www.readbrihtly.com/must-have-books-for-3-year-olds/>

<https://www.readbrihtly.com/must-have-books-for-4-year-olds/>

To support you in purchasing books for "Roar for Summer Reading," join our Virtual Book Fair: Visit <https://www.childrensbookstore.com/welcome/north-shore-hebrew-academy/> to access the book fair. NSHA PTA will receive 30% back from your purchase and our Summer Reading lists are already uploaded to the site for your purchasing convenience. Use code ws5fe4g at checkout. The virtual PTA book fair continues through June 28th but you can continue shopping the website throughout the summer.

Have a wonderful, safe & healthy summer.

Best,

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