

Welcome to the Wonder Trail

Children learn, grow and develop when ordinary moments that you share with them are used as opportunities to learn.

Look for signs along the trail that have ideas for encouraging young children to imagine, explore, create and have fun. These learning moments will prepare your child for lifelong learning and success.

Let your child lead the way!

Brought to you by:



Talk, Listen, Sing

Talk with your child as you follow the trail. Ask questions. Listen and respond to your child's observations. Talking and singing with children teaches them words and gets them ready to read.

- ◆ Listen to the birds. Ask, "What are they saying? Can you sing like them?"
- ◆ Make up silly stories and songs about what you see on the trail. Sing, "Swing, Swing, Bo Bing!"

Children are likely to live up to what you believe of them.

-Lady Bird Johnson

See, Say, Point, Read

Start your child on the road to reading. Playing with letters and sounds helps children develop skills for reading.

- ◆ Point to letters painted on the path. Say the sound each letter makes.
- ◆ Think of words or names that start with A, B, or C. Name plants and animals along the trail and teach what letter starts each name.
- ◆ Point and say, "I see a tree. What rhymes with tree?" Take turns.

*A young branch takes on all the bends
that one gives it.*

-Chinese Proverb

Jump, Clap, Skip, Move

**Encourage your child to be active!
Physical activity exercises a
child's body and mind.**

- ◆ **Pretend to move like an animal.
Walk like a duck or jump like a
frog.**
- ◆ **Take giant steps. Take baby
steps. Skip and jump. Ask your
child to do the same.**
- ◆ **Ask your child to do what you
do. Clap your hands. Point.
Smile.**

*Only love can be divided endlessly and
still not diminish.*

-Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Hop, Toss, Shake, Wiggle

Get your child up and active with fun games. Games like these will get children's brains and bodies moving.

- ◆ Play hopscotch. Toss a small rock on one of the squares and then hop over to it.
- ◆ Wave your arms and tap your head as you hop.
- ◆ Call out a number and ask your child to stand on it. Take turns.

What can you do to promote world peace? Go home and love your family.
-Mother Teresa

Describe, Compare, Learn

Turn simple ideas into learning games. Looking at the world in new ways helps children get ready for reading and math.

- ◆ Look at the shapes on the ground. How are they the same? How are they different?
- ◆ Can you find anything else in the area that is shaped like a circle or a rectangle?
- ◆ Ask your child to stand inside a shape and name that shape.

Give curiosity freedom.

-Eudora Welty

Look, Listen, Touch, Think

Learn about the world around you. Exploring the things around you helps children learn how to solve problems.

- ◆ Look at a flower or a tree. Touch it without hurting it. Talk about it. Is it soft or hard; rough or smooth?
- ◆ Compare things like flowers and leaves. Which are bigger and which are smaller?
- ◆ Talk about natural items that you see along the trail. Did they fall from a tree or grow up from the ground?

What its children become, that will the community become.

-Suzanne La Follette

Look, Observe, Conserve

Encourage your child to be kind to the park. Look with your eyes and leave only your footprints. Children learn by watching others. You can be their best example.

- ◆ Throw bottles and other trash into the proper containers.
- ◆ Natural areas in the park allow you to see birds, insects, and plants in their native way. Be very quiet with your child and look and listen to the sights and sounds of nature.

Treat the world well. It was not given to you by your parents, but lent to you by your children.

-Ida B. Wells

Laugh, Imagine, Be Silly

Being silly is a wonderful way to encourage a love of learning and an understanding that learning happens through fun.

- ◆ Sing your favorite silly songs as you walk along the trail. Make up your own songs.
- ◆ Look for shapes in the leaves and bark of the trees.
- ◆ Jump like a frog on your way to the next sign. Say "ribbit, ribbit."

If people did not do silly things, nothing intelligent would ever get done.
-Ludwig Wittgenstein

Explore, Count, Learn

Learning occurs as you play, explore and talk about what you see. This is a very natural way to learn and one that children enjoy.

- ◆ Look for four different leaves. Count them. Discuss how the leaves are the same and how they are different.
- ◆ Find your favorite color in the things you see in nature. Count each item that is a particular color.
- ◆ Turn around in a circle three times on the walkway and count each movement.

It is a happy talent to know how to play.
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Stop and Watch

Simple activities, like taking turns, counting, and rhyming, lead to increased interest in learning and school readiness.

- ◆ Take turns finding rhyming words, such as tree and bee.
- ◆ Act like your favorite animal. Move like that animal and make the sounds it would make.
- ◆ Gently touch leaves of grass, tree trunks, or flower petals. Describe what you feel.

If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.

-Dorothy Law Nolte

Play and Imagine

Encouraging creativity while you play develops the sense of wonder, curiosity and positive attitudes.

- ◆ Make up a story to describe something you have seen or done today.
- ◆ Fly like a butterfly over the grass.
- ◆ Reach for the sky as you walk. Try to touch a cloud. Balance on the tips of your toes.

Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.

-Pablo Picasso

Look and Laugh

Remember that play is a child's way of learning about the world. Play gives children a sense of confidence about themselves.

- ◆ Find a patch of grass. Name all the different things you can see in that patch of grass.
- ◆ Hop, Skip or Jump while you count to 10.
- ◆ Sit in one spot and look for bugs (ants, beetles, grasshoppers, ladybugs).

Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.

-Margaret Mead

Stop and Learn

Asking children to use their senses requires them to observe and listen. Observing and listening are important ways of learning.

- ◆ Use your eyes. Name all the colors you see around you.
- ◆ Use your nose. What do you smell?
- ◆ Use your ears. What do you hear?

*That's what being young is all about.
You have the courage and daring to
think that you can make a difference.*

-Ruby Dee

Wonder Together

Take a moment to give a hug or a pat on the back and share your favorite part of the walk.

By sharing times together and letting young children safely take the lead in their activities and interactions with others, you can help your children develop healthy relationships which provide feelings of belonging now and throughout life.

Share a Wonder Walk again soon!!

Watching the Weather

When children are encouraged to observe the weather, they use all of their senses.

- ◆ Stand still and use your senses to feel, see, and hear the weather conditions in your area.
- ◆ Is it sunny or cloudy?
- ◆ Can you feel and hear the wind or is the air still?
- ◆ Is it warm or cool?
- ◆ Look up at the clouds. Describe the clouds. Can you find shapes in the clouds?

When you teach your child, you teach your child's child.

-The Talmud

Watching the Water

By observing and describing the lake, pond, or stream you see along the trail, you can teach about the life that lives in and along the water, while also teaching about water safety.

- ◆ Describe the plants you see growing beside the water. Many plants actually grow in the water.
- ◆ Do you see bugs skating on the water? Do you see fish, tadpoles or crayfish living in the water?
- ◆ Remind your child to be safe around the water. Never leave a child alone around a body of water.

At every step, the child should be allowed to meet the real experiences of life; the thorns should never be plucked from his roses.

-Ellen Key

Learning about Point of View

Helping children to see things from different points of view opens their minds to the idea that things look different, depending on how you look at them. An object is large or small depending on what angle or distance you use to look at it.

- ◆ Pretend to be a bug and look at the world from the bug's point of view. Imagine how large trees, people and the sky must look to a bug.
- ◆ Pretend to be a bird. Imagine how small trees, people and the trail must look as a bird flies above and looks down.

As the most recently arrived to earthly life, children can seem in lingering possession of some heavenly lidless eye.
-Lorrie Moore

Move Creatively

Showing children how to move in creative ways helps to exercise their bodies, their minds, and their imaginations. Here are some ideas about how to travel from this sign to the next.

- ◆ Walk like an animal. Are you a horse? Gallop and prance. Swing your tail. Make a “neigh” sound, like a horse.
- ◆ Walk backward. Skip. Spin. Hop. Dance.
- ◆ Clap each time you take a step. Count the number of steps between this sign and the next.

It's very important to give children a chance.

-Nikki Giovanni