

Early Childhood Education

Daily Activities: Doing the Laundry

Category: Early Childhood Literacy

Grade Band: Ages 3 to 5

Topic: Daily Activities

Concept 1: Strategies to help your child build mathematical and literacy understanding.

Context: Completing chores can be difficult undertaking for parents, especially when there are young children at home begging for attention. One of the most challenging chores to complete is doing the laundry. From sorting, to washing and drying, to folding, this can be a tedious, routine, and often boring task. However, if one is aware of the possible educational opportunities that are available during the laundry process, one is able to completely change the focus of this routine chore into a great learning opportunity for children. In addition, completing chores together helps create a safe environment conducive for close parent-child bonding and the overall improvement of family dynamics.

Rationale: It is important that children have a basic awareness of many mathematical literacy, and social skills as they prepare to start school. By taking part in daily family activities, such as doing the laundry, children gain exposure to these academic and social skills through hands-on activities while being led by their most important teachers—mom and/or dad. When a parent engages a child in the laundry process (sorting of dirty clothes, washing and drying of clothes, and folding clothes) he or she can emphasize key mathematical, literacy, and social skills to the child.

Opportunities for building mathematics understanding

- I. Sorting and Classifying
 - a. Dirty clothes into piles based on their color—light, dark, and multi-colored
 - b. Clean clothes into specific piles—pants, shirts, socks, towels, etc. OR mom, dad, brother, sister
 - c. Definition--To group or separate objects based on their characteristics.
- II. Measurement/Spatial Awareness
 - a. Putting clothes in the washer until it is half full.
 - b. Measurement of soap
 - c. Weight of dry clothes going in and wet clothes coming out.
 - d. Water temperature
 - e. Spatial language: inside, outside, up/down, on top/underneath
 - f. Definition--Spatial Awareness--The understanding of where ones body is in relation to other people and objects.
- III. Matching
 - a. Socks
 - b. Definition--The skill of recognizing two things that are equal in appearance, size, or other quality.

- IV. Counting
 - a. Clothing items
 - b. Number of baskets for the number of loads of laundry
 - c. One-to-one correspondence=Every sock needs a partner
 - d. Definition--Ideas or skills involved in numbers and quantities

- V. Size and Shape Discrimination
 - a. Definition--The ability to compare and relate objects based on their dimensions or form.
 - b. Thinking about size of specific clothing—who has the longest pants? Who has the smallest shirts?

Literacy Connections:

- I. Vocabulary Development
 - a. Naming the different types of clothes and laundry products
 - b. Folding

- II. Language Development
 - a. Talking to your preschooler
 - i. Vocal tones, patterns of language, and new words
 - b. Opportunity to ask and answer questions
 - c. Opportunity for the child to listening and following directions. For example, “what steps to follow in order to fold a towel?”
 - d. Turn taking

- III. Beginning Reading
 - a. Environmental Print associated with the laundry process (pictures to words)
 - b. Letter sounds and letter recognition
 - c. Number recognition

Social/Emotional Development:

Doing the laundry helps develop confidence, motivation, curiosity, persistence, cooperation, self-control, importance of helping the family, responsibility of completing chores, a job well done. It is a good life skill.