

# Tips and Tricks, A Grab Bag of Ideas

## Class running tips

- When doing classwork, if a student is getting unfocused, or flustered it's ok to take a brain break. See brain break ideas\*.
- Please also remember that these packets contain a variety of difficulty levels so if you do not do every piece in the packet it is ok. These packets had to include work fit for students at all levels. It is ok if some of the work is too hard or too easy for your student. It is ok to put it to the side and try again later or talk to your student's teacher guidance and ideas. We are here to help.
- Using timers can help students see how long an activity will be and when the timer ends, blame it on the timer. "I'd love to let you play more, but Timer... (point at the timer.) I have to listen to it too."  
<https://www.online-stopwatch.com/classroom-timers/>
- It's ok to remind your kids that you are not their regular teacher and that you do things differently than we do in the classroom. This isn't a bad thing. Its good to learn new ways to do things.
- When we say we recommend no more than an hour of work a day. It does not need to be all at once. Break it up. Do some work for maybe 10-15 min and then go do something else then come back.
- The rule of thumb with small children is they have a focus period of their age plus 2. So a 6 year old can focus for 8 minutes. After that they need some action to break it up. Try a brain break\* or some house work or a youtube video break.

- When you can, give choices. Do you want to start at the top of the page or the bottom of the page? Do you want to write in pencil or crayon? Do you want to sit or stand? Make sure you can live with both choices offered.

## Brain Breaks

- Take deep breaths and give hand moves with it. Ie: place hands on top of your head and as you breathe in you lift your hands like you are blowing up an imaginary balloon. When you breathe out, lower your hands back to your head.
- See how high they can jump. Give them a few practices. Have them crouch down low, you count to 3 and let them jump. Then you watch on the last one. Praise them for their jump and continue.
- Do some stretches.
- Take a walk around the room
- Get a drink of water, potty break.
- Change workplace. Ie: if sitting at a table, try working on the floor.

# Enrichment Ideas

## Writing

- Take small rocks, pieces of paper or things that can be written on. Write letters on them allows the child to make words or even sentences with the pieces.
- Take a sponge and a cup of water outside, let them write in water on the sidewalk
- Take a stick and write in the dirt
- Build letters and words out of objects around the house. ie use blocks, candy, noddles etc.
- Put letters or words on sticky notes or small papers around the house. Send your child off on a scavenger hunt. They must copy the letter or word on a paper as they find them.  
Bonus: have the words they find be able to form a simple sentence.
- Have the kids practice writing what you write: ie: make a grocery list, let the child make their own using the throw away ads. They can cut out the pictures and glue them on and either copy the word or sound out the first letter of the object.
- Card making. Use a paper to have them write a simple note to a friend they miss, or to a family member. It could be I like \_\_\_\_\_. Or even dedicated where you write and they trace.
- Take a sentence they wrote or a simple sentence from a book. Write each word from the sentence on a slip of paper or  $\frac{3}{5}$  card. Mix them up and let your child rearrange them back into a sentence.
- Have your child draw pictures to tell a story. Each day have them write a sentence or two to tell the story they drew.

## Reading

- Use voices when reading a piece. You can read the same sentence over and over but still have fun. ie tiger voice really deep, growly. Underwater voice take your finger and move it over your lips as you speak. Cowboy add some ye-haws at the end. Whisper read it as softly as you can etc.
- Get or make a reading pointing tool. Anything that a child can use to point to each word as they read. ie: fake finger nail, popsicle stick, stick from outside, unsharpened pencil, etc.
- Do a picture walk before reading. Look just at the pictures, have the student make predictions on what they think will happen in the story before you read based off the pictures. Then go back and read, were they right?
- Play attention to punctuation. When you come to a comma, period, question mark, or exclamation point clap, or make a sound to ensure the child is noticing them.
- Have students act out the story. They can do a puppet show (with socks) they can do it with toys or stuffed animals, they can act it out like a stage performer.
- Talk about the story after a read, is there something that happened in the story that your child might have experience with?(ie, someone felt left out in the story, have you ever felt that way? When? Someone went on an adventure with their friends? Have you ever gone on an adventure? What's something you do with your friends? etc)
- [Starfall.com](http://Starfall.com) has lots of videos, interactive activities and read alouds available
- [stories.audible.com](http://stories.audible.com) offers free kids audio books
- <https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/> has readers and questions
- [ABC mouse](http://ABCmouse.com) website offers 30 days free trial it goes over letters and basic reading.

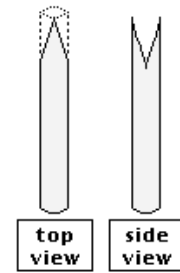
## Math

- Count laundry items: shirts, socks, pants and compare which do you have more of. You can have them sort laundry items by size, color, or type.
- Find “loose parts” bottle tops, crayons, loose sock anything a child can safely touch. Let them count, sort and pattern with the items. Even cutting out pictures of grocery items from the junk ads make fun counting collections.
- Let your child watch as you measure things out in cooking. If comfortable you can even let them measure it with you and pour it into your mix.
- Save old plastic bottles, rinse them out and let your child play with them in the bathtub. Can I pour all the water from one into the other? Or does it overflow?
- Send your child on a color or shape hunt. Can they find things that are circular? How many?
- Count how many items they got for a snack. How many pieces of fruit in the fruit cup? How many times did they need to take a drink to empty their juice box? How many licks does it take to get to the center of a tootsie pop?
- <http://bedtimemath.org> is a website or app that gives lots of cool math activities for all ages. It also includes a short story or article in daily math and three levels of difficulty for a corresponding math problem.
- Candy sort. Get a bag of candy that has color or shape variation. Sort the candies by color or shape.
- Make a necklace of cheerios or other cereal. Count as you go.

## Science

- Outside or easily cleanable area activity: take vinegar and pour it in a container. Add baking soda to it and watch it bubble and foam. \*\* for more fun, get a sealable container: old film canister, mnm mini's canister, the footed Easter eggs work well too. Pour the vinegar in, twist a tissue bit with the baking soda drop it seal the container and watch it fly! Vary ratio of vinegar and baking soda for a variety of results.
- When it rains, stick a jar, cup, or bucket outside to collect rainwater, get a ruler and measure how many inches of water fell.
- Let the kids bird watch. Set them in front of the window and make them a pair of toilet paper binoculars. They can look through the binoculars out the window and see if they can spot any birds, bugs, squirrels or other creatures.
- Make a plant out of paper, candy, blocks etc. Be sure it has all the different plant parts. (stem, leaves, roots, flower)
- Make a salad with they child. Identify each plant part you are eating. (yummy dressing helps get kids eating).
- When playing with bubbles, use a sock or glove to actually touch and hold the bubbles.
- Take a straw and blow bubbles on a table, tray or other flat surface. Carefully stick the straw against the bubble and blow trying to make more. It creates flat sides and if you surround a bubble with others it makes a hexagon.
- Pushes and pulls, create a ramp with a flat surface and roll things like toy cars, pens pencils etc down the ramp. Change the angle. Let go verses pushing, which gives the greatest distance.

- <https://www.stevespanglerscience.com/> is a site that offers free experiment ideas to do at home. It will also sell you supplies and kits if you wish to buy them. Click the experiments tab at the top for free experiments.
- Cut a drinking straw to have a triangle tip and make a straw whistle. (for more instructions google or youtube.)



## General

- Go on a "trip" pack a bag with snacks a camera and toys, even dress up in your travel outfits, pick a youtube song to set the mood in another tab and off you go. Goggle virtual tours. Many options are available. There are many museums, gardens, zoos, aquariums and countries offering free virtual tours. Hike the Great Wall of China, see the Smithsonian, Go to Machu Picchu, Peru and see the Inca pyramids, explore Hawaii, and more!
- Camp out in the living room. Pull all the bedding and have a camp out in the living room. Toss a roaring fire on youtube, roast marshmallows in the microwave or stove. Tell stories by flashlight.
- Let the kids help set the table for meals.
- Tell a story as a family, each person adds on a sentence or two as the entire family creates the tale. Bonus, make it a sound effect story - have crumpled paper to crinkle and make the sound for rustling or crunching leaves. Have partially filled water bottle to make the sound of moving water. Chewing gum can sound like sticky sounds... etc find other items to match sounds for your story. Record it using a phone or other recording apparatus
- Have relay races: hands behind their back can you roll a ball or balloon across the room only touching it with your nose?. How about having several items of oversized clothing or hats/gloves and accessories a person needs to put on before another?
- Build a fort out of pillows and blankets, use it as a work area, or used crumpled pieces of paper to toss back and forth as a snowball fight. Bonus: write questions, sight words, letters or numbers on the papers before you crumple them. After the fight, let the child answer the questions, identify the sight words, match numbers to the corresponding number of dots on another ball, match capital letters to lowercase letters etc.
- Do a family talent show, each person prepares to show a talent to the family at a given time. Set a timer to ensure it doesn't go too long.
- Paint using cut potatoes, apples, yarn pieces, leaves. Make your own paint brush.
- Play musical activities. Place a book, or something representative of each activity on a chair or in a circle. Have your child walk around the circle or spin around inside the circle pointing as you play music. When the music stops wherever they stop at is their activity to do. Bonus: you can do this for identifying letters, numbers or sight words by putting the desired thing to be identified in the circle, wherever they stop they need to identify the item.
- Theme your meal to a part of the world. Ie: If you are eating spaghetti put on some Italian music, maybe watch or talk about the tale of Puss in Boots or other Italian stories.

- Have spirit days at home! Crazy hair day, pajama day, backwards day, color days, crazy sock day, sports day etc.
- Save old cardboard boxes (tissue boxes and toilet paper rolls are soft and easy for little ones to cut) Challenge them to create something to play with out of the items. Youtube Caine's Arcade for ideas and a cool story about a 9 year old who made an arcade out of boxes, tape and glue.
- Make any board or card game educational by asking a question before each turn your child takes. It can be to identify a number, letter, or sight word, it could be to write a sentence, read a sentence, answer a math problem etc.
- <https://www.abcy.com/grades/k> is a website that has lots of activities for letters, rhyming and math.
- Search youtube for Cosmic Kids Yoga. They have Pokemon A Cosmic Kids Yoga Adventure, and Star Wars (The Force Awakens) A Cosmic Kids Yoga Adventure! For example.

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