

# January's playful learning Checklist

- 1.** Read Ezra Jack Keat's classic "The Snowy Day". Then take a walk outside together. Make footprints, drag a stick through the snow, make snowballs... Brainstorm other ways you could play like the main character, Peter. {If it's warm outside, encourage your child to use her imagination and pretend that she's walking in snow.}
- 2.** Help your child develop gross motor skills. Roll up white socks to make "snowballs". Then have your child throw the snowballs into empty buckets or cooking pots.
- 3.** Teach your child how to follow multi-step directions by playing Simon Says. When you say "Simon says \_\_\_\_\_" and tell her to do something, she should do it. But if you just give her the direction without saying "Simon says" first, she should not do it. Once your child has mastered single directions, make the instructions more complicated. For instance, "Simon says hop on one foot AND stick out your tongue."
- 4.** Help your child build fine motor skills that she'll use later when she's writing by giving her a pasta strainer and a pile of pipe cleaners. Invite her to stick the pipe cleaners through the strainer holes.
- 5.** Read the book "The Dot" by Peter H. Reynolds. When you're finished, show your child how to make a dot picture using the pink eraser on a pencil and a stamp pad. Press the eraser in the ink and then stamp it on a blank piece of paper. By stamping the dots together side-by-side you can create lines, shapes or pictures.
- 6.** Teach your child the math word "dozen". Explain that it means "12". Help her count out 12 objects {pennies, pebbles, pom poms, etc.} Brainstorm things that come in groups of 12 including eggs and donuts.
- 7.** Check out a set of children's books on CD from the library and listen to them while your family is riding in the car. A few of our family's favorites are "The Magic Tree House Series" and "Winnie the Pooh".
- 8.** Give your child a handful of Q-tips and encourage her to build shapes with them. For instance, she could make a triangle from three cotton swabs or a square from four.
- 9.** Make a DIY puzzle for your child. Take a spare family photo and cut 5 or 6 vertical lines across it to make strips. Give the pieces to your child and help her arrange them in the correct order to reassemble the picture.
- 10.** Write your child's name on a piece of paper. Help her count the number of vowels in it. {Vowels are the letters A, E, I, O, U and sometimes Y.} Then, help her count the number of consonants in her name. {Consonants are all of the other letters in the alphabet.} Repeat the activity with the names of other family members.