



VOLUME 6 • MAY 4

BEACON HEIGHTS AT HOME

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES FOR PRESCHOOL FAMILIES



TAKE A PEEK!

AWAKENING THE SENSES

- 1

SIGHT

- 2

HEARING

- 3

SMELL

- 4

TASTE

- 5

TOUCH

- 6

SONGS & STORIES

- 7, 8

LAST WEEK'S FUN

- 9

YOUR SENSES

Our children are natural scientists, and they have been learning through their senses since birth. This week, we're going to practice building on those natural instincts and help our little ones explore their world through hands-on fun! Focusing on our senses also encourages children (and grownups for that matter) to slow down and pay attention to their environments and their bodies. This kind of mindfulness helps preschoolers practice self-control, self-regulation, and sensory processing skills. Pretty impressive! So let's enjoy a week of getting back to the basics of scientific discovery, using all our senses to explore and learn!



AWAKENING THE SENSES

Hands on learning environments help create critical thinking skills in young minds. A way we can apply this to our focus on the senses is with POPCORN! Yes, popcorn!

1 Grab a bag of popcorn or some corn kernels from the cabinet and place it in your child's hands. Ask them these questions:

- Using your eyes, what do you see?
- Using your hands, how does it feel?
- Using your ears, how does it sound? What do you hear?
- Using your nose, what do you smell? (We will omit taste on this step as we don't typically recommend licking popcorn bags.)



2 Next, cook the popcorn as directed. **As it is cooking**, again ask your child the aforementioned questions.

3 When the popcorn has fully popped, carefully open the bag. Once cooled give the popcorn in a bowl to your child. Again, ask the same set of questions from above but add the best prompt of all: Using your mouth, how does it taste?

Ways to expand: This hands on experience is also a perfect opportunity for vocabulary building. *Steam, salty, buttery, crunchy, savory, anticipation, eager* are just a few examples of words you can bring into the conversation with your child.

SENSES COUNTDOWN

Little kids have BIG emotions. And at times they need a little help to move through an emotion that may be causing them distress and reconnect to their surroundings.

Here is the 5-4-3-2-1 method:

 **WHAT ARE FIVE THINGS CAN YOU SEE AROUND YOU?**

 **WHAT ARE FOUR THINGS YOU CAN TOUCH?**

 **WHAT THREE THINGS DO YOU HEAR?**

 **WHAT TWO THINGS CAN YOU SMELL?**

 **WHAT IS ONE THING YOU CAN TASTE?**

(Lingering taste in your mouth)

-OR- Name one thing you like about yourself

I-SPY

Try playing a variation of I-Spy with all your senses!

I spy something red...
I spy something smooth...
I spy something loud...
I spy something sweet...



1

Beyond just our physical senses, we also understand the world through our emotions.

At Beacon Heights, we believe that identifying emotions (your own and others') is a valuable life-skill. Try printing out the attached **"Feelings Book"** to have another great way to discuss emotions with your children!



SIGHT

SENSORY JARS

Sensory jars (or calming jars) are simple to make and can provide lasting entertainment and a visual aide to calming down.

Materials:

While there are infinite ways to make calming jars, some of the materials I have used are:

- Clear containers (plastic bottles, jars, etc.)
- Water
- Food coloring
- Oil
- Glitter
- Sequins
- Dish soap
- Clear glue or hair gel (to thicken the water)
- Any small object that will fit in the container (several small objects will provide a fun searching game!)



Process:

Have your child experiment with any of the listed materials (or materials not listed!), pouring them into the container. What happens when you mix oil and water? When you add food coloring? Can you make the sequins swirl around? What happens if you mix soap and water together then shake the container? What does it look like? Does it look different when you hold it up to the light? What does it make you feel like? What does it sound like? *Note: Before letting a child shake or swirl, make sure the lid is secure (heavy duty tape or super glue can help with this!).*

BLINDFOLDED FUN

We use our sense of sight so much! How can we navigate through the world without it? What other senses can we use when we can't use our sight?

DRAWING

Have your child try writing their name or a simple picture while blindfolded.

GUIDED WALK

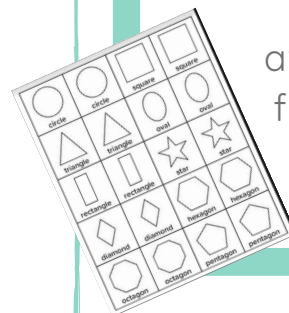
Lead your child through a familiar environment while they're blindfolded...

BUILDING

Give your child a small number of blocks or legos. Can they build something while blindfolded?

MATCHING

Don't forget to print, color, and cut out the attached matching game for another way to have fun with sight!

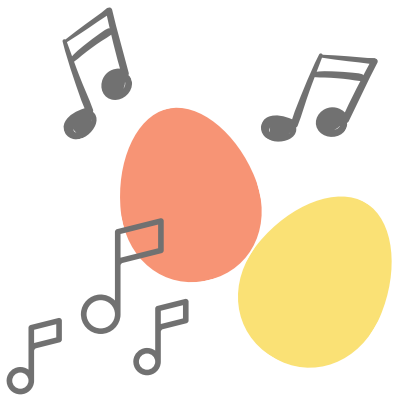


HEARING

LISTENING WALK

Go outside and take a walk. Try to stay quiet so you can hear the world around you. Can you hear birds?

Cars? Trains? Airplanes? Lawn mowers? Dogs barking? Construction trucks? Are the sounds loud or soft? Are there different sounds in different areas where you are walking? Do the sounds get softer or louder as you walk? Keep a running list and count how many sounds you can hear!



MATCH THAT SOUND!

Still have some plastic easter eggs rolling around your house? Great! Gather them up for a super fun activity for your little ones to explore their sense of hearing! (If you don't have plastic eggs, you could try using any other kind of small plastic container)

To prepare this activity, fill **pairs** of eggs with items that will make a variety of noises.

Some ideas:

- buttons
- paper clips
- pennies
- dry beans or rice
- pebbles
- dry cereal
- oats
- beads
- legos
- broken crayons

Now for the fun part! Can your child use her sense of hearing to match the eggs? Can she guess what's inside each one?



For a fun variation, let your child find items to fill the eggs and create the next round of the game for you!

SMELL

SCENTED PLAY DOUGH

(Based on the recipe we use at preschool!)

Ingredients:

- 2 ¼ c flour
- ½ c salt
- 3 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 Tbsp Alum*
- 2 c boiling water
- Food Coloring
- Flavor extract or essential oil

*Instead of 1Tbsp alum, you can use 2 Tbsp cream of tartar or 1/3 c lemon juice

Process:

Mix flour, salt, oil and alum/cream of tartar together in a large bowl. Mix a few drops of food coloring (and lemon juice if using) with water. Add the water mixture to the flour mixture and mix with a spoon until smooth.

Once it is cool enough for children to safely touch it, have children knead and play with it!



For scented play dough, add a few drops of essential oils or extract with the water mixture before pouring into the flour mixture.

Store in airtight bag or container.

SPICE IT UP!



You probably have a whole rack (or drawer or cabinet) full of the perfect sensory play materials right in your kitchen-- spices!
So let's use what we already have for some super fun learning experiences...

FOLLOW YOUR NOSE

Let your child help you clean out your spice rack! Take out all those little jars and explore them together. You'll be surprised at how engaging this simple activity can be for preschoolers-- read the labels together, open the tops, and smell what's inside!



SPICE PAINT

Using small cups or dishes, add a few drops of water to a variety of spices.... voila! You've made spice paint! Let your child explore using this smelly "paint" on paper with a brush or even their fingers!



SPICY PLAY DOUGH

Use the basic play dough recipe above without adding any color or scent. Once you have a batch of plain dough, portion it out into your desired number of sections. Use each portion to squish in a different spice, exploring the new scent and texture.

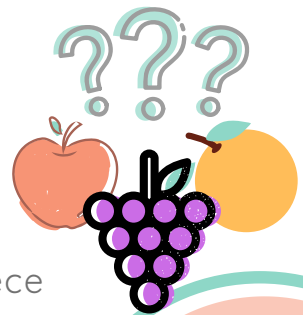


TASTE

TASTE TEST

With your child, pick a few different food items. For example - chopped up pieces of a different kinds of fruits and vegetables. Then have your child sit at the table and close their eyes. (Or if it's too tempting to peek, use a blindfold.) Hand your child a piece of food and see if they can guess what the item is using only their sense of touch? What about their sense of smell? Then let them try to determine if their hypothesis was correct by using their sense of taste.

Now time for the big reveal! Did you guess correctly? Was it more difficult than they thought it would be? Let us know!



Looking for ways to rid of that Easter candy? This activity works great with jelly beans! It can also be a fun quarantine activity for adults!

FRIENDSHIP MIX

Near the beginning of the school year, we made friendship mix with several ingredients, talking about the “ingredients” of friendship as we made it.

This is a new twist on this fun snack!

Materials & Ingredients:

- A large bowl
- A mixing spoon
- An assortment of small snacks

(i.e. raisins, Cheerios, pretzels, chocolate chips, peanuts, sunflower seeds, etc.)



Process:

1. As your child pours the ingredients into the bowl, talk about what they look like and smell like. What sounds do they make?
2. Once all the ingredients are in the bowl, gently mix the ingredients and talk about what sounds can be heard. Does the mix look different?
3. Eat the mix! What does it feel like in your mouth? What does it taste like? Is it soft or crunchy, sweet, sour or salty?

TOUCH

TEXTURE EXPLORATION

Smooth, rough, sandy, bumpy, fuzzy, prickly... textures are all around us!

Encourage your child to go on a "Texture Scavenger Hunt" by looking around the house (or better yet- outside!) for different textures. For a child who needs a bit more help, start by giving them a texture to look for (*Find me something bumpy! Now how about something smooth?*) As they bring you their treasures, take time to touch them together and come up with words to describe the way each item feels.

Extend your play:

Create texture rubbings with your collection! Place a piece of paper over your item and use the side of a crayon or pencil to gently rub over the surface: what do you find? Leaves, of course, work great for this activity.

Go on a leaf hunt and see how many different rubbings you can create!

MYSTERY BOX

This is a fun activity for the whole family that relies completely on one's sense of touch.

Materials:

- A box with a hole cut out of it or any container or space where objects can be felt, but not seen (*This could be as simple as a blanket or towel over a small table or chair. Use the covered area to place your items.*)
- Safe objects in your house that have a distinct shape or texture.



Process:

Place one item inside the box. Have your child feel the item and try to guess what it is based solely on what they feel. Hints can be given, too. Try objects with different textures and shapes.

Let your child have a turn placing items in the box (you may want to lay some ground rules first!).

SONGS & STORIES

Sense songs and stories are on the site...Remember, you can always re-watch your favorites from past weeks!

Go to: kidlitcrafts.net/beaconheights-videos

Password: [beaconheightsfamily](#)

THE BEAR WENT OVER THE MOUNTAIN


























(With sign language!)

The bear went over the mountain,
the bear went over the mountain,
the bear went over the mountain
to see what they could see

The bear went over the mountain...
to hear what they could hear....
...to smell what they could smell...
to feel what they could feel

The other side of the mountain,
the other side of the mountain,
the other side of the mountain
was all that they could see,
was all that they could hear,
was all that they could smell.
The other side of the mountain was all that they could feel.



Letters				
				
				
				
				
				

Print out the attached sign language reference sheet to have fun practicing letters!

LITERACY

I USE MY EYES TO SEE

I use my eyes to see,
I use my eyes to see,
And when I want to see some grass,
I use my eyes to see.



I use my ears to hear...
And when I want to hear a bird,
I use my ears to hear.



I use my nose to smell...
And when I want to smell a flower,
I use my nose to smell.



I use my tongue to taste...
And when I want to taste some ice cream,
I use my tongue to taste.



I use my hands to feel...
And when I want to feel the wind,
I use my hands to feel.



I use my heart to love...
And when I want to love a friend,
I use my heart to love.



*What other things do you like to see, hear, smell, taste, and feel/touch?
What do they look like? Sound like? Smell like? Taste like? Feel like?*

IF YOU'RE HAPPY AND YOU KNOW IT



If you're happy and you know it see the sky
If you're happy and you know it see the sky
If you're happy and you know it and you really want to show it
If you're happy and you know it see the sky

If you're happy and you know it hear some sounds...
If you're happy and you know it smell a flower...
If you're happy and you know it taste some juice...
If you're happy and you know it feel something fuzzy...
If you're happy and you know it love a friend

*What other things do
you like to see, hear,
smell, taste, and
feel/touch?
What do they look
like? Sound like?
Smell like? Taste like?
Feel like?*

LAST WEEK'S FUN

TRANSPORTATION



Email anna@beaconheights.net with pictures of your senses week fun to be featured in our next newsletter!