



**A Day in the  
Life of \_\_\_\_\_.**

Writing activity: **A Day in the Life of \_\_\_\_\_**. Participants write about all the activities they've done with their children on a typical day. It could be in the form of an agenda:

6:15 am _____
7:00 am _____
etc.

Advanced writers could write a story about a day in their lives.

**Parenting  
Pointers**

Many hours of interesting reading can be found on the PBS/parents web site. Direct the participants to this page: [www.pbs.org/parents/earlylearning/parenting.html](http://www.pbs.org/parents/earlylearning/parenting.html) where they will find a list of nine **Parenting Pointers**. Assign each person a specific pointer to read, then have them report back to the whole group. Those with strong reading and Internet skills may prefer to browse independently and choose more than one section to read.

**Three Little  
Lambs**

Ask if anyone remembers learning to read. Most people will not remember and you can explain that this is quite normal because the process began when we were very young. If anyone remembers learning to read, ask them to tell the group what they remember about the process. Chances are that each person will remember something different. This is because there is no one 'right' way to learn to read. Now tell the group that they will take part in a simulation of learning to read. You will give them a booklet in which the letters are unfamiliar. As they learn to read this new type of writing, they should pay attention to **how** they are learning. Then give out **Three Little Lambs**. Begin to read the first page slowly, then let them try the other pages on their own. Remind them to think about **what** they're doing to learn to read. Finally, ask people to talk about their experience. Guide the discussion to these conclusions:

- When we are learning to read, it helps to hear it read first by someone else.
- We use pictures to make meaning from the print.
- We recognize words that we see over and over (e.g. little lamb).
- We use familiar language patterns (e.g. big, bad wolf) to guess new words.

- We start to connect the letters to the sounds they make.
- Reading a lot to children and letting them see the pictures and words helps them learn to read. They will begin to learn the sounds that some letters make.
- If we know a bit about how children learn to read, we can better encourage them as they pick up these skills.

**Choosing Books**

Bring a collection of children's books to the group. Make sure you have a good variety, including books for the four age groups on this handout. See the children's book list ([give link to Catherine's book list](#)) for ideas. Invite parents to bring some of their children's books to the group. Give out **Choosing Books**. Ask participants to put the books into categories according to criteria on this handout.

**The Struggle for Literacy**

Find YouTube videos that show very young children handling books and beginning to read. One such video is **The Struggle for Literacy** at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=hL97m-qnyQo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hL97m-qnyQo), but you may come across other good ones too. View them with the group and ask participants to comment on what the babies already know about books.

**Read to Your Kids!**

The handout **Read to Your Kids!** contains ideas for how to make reading time a richer learning experience for children. Read it out loud to the group or take turns with some of the strong readers. Then model the ideas using a few children's books from your collection. Remind them that children also have to learn how to handle books, which side to start from and how to turn pages. Each parent could then choose a book to read to their child at the end of the class, or at home. Encourage them to use the ideas you've presented, rather than just reading the words from cover to cover.



**Early Math Skills** Explain that you are going to do a word association; you will say a word and another word will pop into each person's head. Hang onto that word. Now, the word is: **math**. Ask everyone to share what other word they associated with the word math. Some people may have negative associations (fear, boring), others may think of numbers or algebra. Most people think of math as something we do in school. Your group may be surprised to learn that math skills begin to develop at a very young age. When a child understands the concept of *more* and *no more*, when they play with shape-matching puzzles or know how far to reach to pick up a toy, they are showing signs of early math. Math is part of everyday life!

This link below takes you to a site about how children's early math skills develop: [www.pbs.org/parents/earlymath/](http://www.pbs.org/parents/earlymath/). Ask participants to click on the 'Infants & Toddlers' link, then browse the four milestones (Numbers, Geometry, Measurement and Patterns) to get a sense of what is meant by **early math skills**. They will spend more time on the site in the sessions on Growing and Learning.

### **Math Goes Shopping**

Children learn all day long. They'll watch and listen as the adults go about their daily tasks. They help with shopping and cooking. They make crafts and play games. There are thousands of ways that parents can help them become school-ready. Hand out the worksheet **Math Goes Shopping**. Ask parents to be as creative as they can be to think of things they can talk about with their children and things they can ask them to do in the daily routine to build math skills. In the first column, they write ideas for shopping time; in the second column, they write kitchen ideas. They can then take them home and try them out. They could cut out their favourites and bring them back next time to give out to others in the group.

### **Wrap-up**

Celebrate all the good things that the group members are already doing to help their children learn. Go around the group and ask for an example of how they are helping their children develop:

- Math skills
- Fine motor skills
- Gross motor skills
- Reading and writing skills
- Listening and speaking skills