

- 1) Songs, especially those that pertain to the weekly theme, are a great way to get children to settle down and be attentive. They can also ease transitions, teach concepts, vocabulary words, and dramatic expression as they release energy and relieve stress.
- 2) A hands-on demonstration of a concept must precede a worksheet in order for children to fully grasp and internalize the concept. For example: If the worksheet calls for them to color the triangles blue, first have the children sort objects according to color and then by shape.
- 3) Vocabulary Words – Choose a few each day and have the children repeat them after you, define them, play guessing games/riddles with them, etc. Children need to learn 5,000 words between birth and the time they start kindergarten – get busy!
- 4) Kids need to say the Pledge of Allegiance, with one hand over heart and one child holding the flag, every day. We are all a part of something bigger than ourselves.
- 5) Kids need classroom chores to do every day. Helper chores reinforce routine and consistency, teach self-help skills and self-discipline, They also allow a child to feel like a positive leader in the classroom. Each child should have a regular turn to be a classroom helper in each of the helper roles
- 6) Flashcards of letters or numbers have more meaning if they include real pictures of real items rather than cartoons or drawings. Make them yourself with pictures of items the children see at school every day.
- 7) Be loud, quiet, silly, serious and dramatic when you read aloud to children. Also, give them a repetitive line and a hand or body motion to repeat at the end of each page so they have a speaking part in the story. It adds fun and helps keep their attention on the story. Write the lines directly in the book or on sticky notes.
- 8) Weather discussions are more meaningful if done outdoors.
- 9) Calendar lessons should include repeating the day, date and year; discussions of “yesterday,” “today,” and “tomorrow;” and counting the days leading up to a field trip, birthday or holiday.
- 10) Tying shoes is a skill *most* children master at the age of six. Cutting is a skill *usually* mastered at age 4. Two’s, 3’s and 4’s need activities that help fine motor control such as clothespin activities, sorting small items, using tweezers or tongs, sticking pipe cleaners through the holes in a colander, sewing cards and other lacing activities. That is how we prepare them to tie shoes and use scissors successfully.
- 11) Rainbow Tracing is a great way to teach pre-writing skills and also make those little muscles in the hands stronger. It simply means to trace over the same line, shape, letter or path several times with several different colors of pencils or crayons.
- 12) Scribble Writing is a child’s own writing that only s/he can “read” to you and to her parents. Scribble writing is useful to get children interested in expressive creative writing.
- 13) When teaching children to write letters, teach the proper strokes. Letters start at the top of the line, not the bottom. Do not be alarmed if a child’s writing is backward or even a mirror image of what it should be. It is perfectly normal. The brain is still forming the necessary neuron connections required to accomplish the skill correctly. Do not make him do it over, just keep providing the proper examples for him to copy.
- 14) Get away from the art table! Children need to create! Children need to express themselves through their “art.” Art utilizes the right side of the brain, develops and strengthens fine motor skills, engages a variety of the brain’s areas that help children learn emotion, cognition and memory. Children should receive many opportunities to draw, paint, craft and create using many different types of art supplies with no pre-determined “end product” or model to follow.
- 15) Use the ding of a timer, a special hat, silly shoes, a particular song, and/or music as signals that tell the children what to do. You probably already use the “Clean Up Song.” A teacher of young 3’s silently puts on her magic hat as a signal for the children to clean up and join her at the circle. A teacher of 4’s noticed that as she changed her shoes to go out on the sandy playground each day, the children would begin to clean up. She took the idea a step farther and bought some cute houseshoes that looked like lambs and put them on for 30 minutes in the late afternoons to signal “quiet time” for her class.