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Using Calendar Activities to Extend Classroom Learning

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There aren't many items in a classroom that help teach students as many valuable skills and concepts as a calendar. In preschool and elementary classrooms across the nation, many teachers begin the school day using the calendar to teach math concepts (You may have heard your child mention "Calendar Math."). However, the calendar can help teach, extend, and reinforce a multitude of skills in other areas of the curriculum: time concepts and sequencing, language arts, social studies, science, and more.



Very young children begin reciting the days of the week and months of the year through silly songs and rhymes then progress to recognizing the words in print. Eventually, children will be able to understand the time concepts of seven days making a week, twelve months equaling a year, etc. Time concepts can be difficult for children

with developmental delays, learning disabilities, and other disorders, so simplifying and repeating school activities at home can be very helpful.

Ask your child's teacher for a list of activities and concepts he/she is using with the calendar (as well as concepts from earlier grades, if needed) and use them along with the following activities at home to extend and reinforce learning. Not only are the activities fun, but they present opportunities for parents and children to spend quality time together.

The following activities are adaptable to different ages and concepts across the curriculum. Parents can also find many other calendar-related activities online.

- Teach rhymes and songs to learn the days of the week and months of the year. Remind your child that Sunday is the first day of the week!

For example,

Days of the Week Song

Tune: The Addams Family

There's Sunday and there's Monday,
There's Tuesday and there's Wednesday,
There's Thursday and there's Friday,
And then there's Saturday!

Days of the week (SNAP, SNAP)

Days of the week (SNAP, SNAP)

Days of the week!

Days of the week!

Days of the week!



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Days of the Week Song

Tune: The Bear Went Over the Mountain
There are 7 days in a week,
7 days in a week,
7 days in a week, and I can say them all!
Sunday, Monday and
Tuesday, Wednesday,
Thursday and Friday
Saturday is the last day
And I can say them all!



Days of the Week Song

Tune: Found a Peanut
Sunday, Monday,
Tuesday, Wednesday,
Thursday, Friday,
Saturday...
There are seven days,
There are seven days,
There are seven days in a week.



- **Teach a poem about remembering the number of days in a month**

Thirty days hath September; April, June and November.

February has twenty-eight alone; all the rest have thirty-one

Except in Leap Year, that's the time; when February's days are twenty-nine!

- **Begin using a daily tear away calendar.** Talk about the day (Monday), date (12th), and month (March). "Today is Monday, the 12th of March, the year is 2012." Save the tear off sheets for sequencing days and their dates.



- **Write days of the week and months of the year on sentence strips or note cards.** Have the child sequence the days/months in order.



- **Use the terms before/after, earlier/later, etc. to sequence events that occur throughout the day.** Discuss the time of day we do certain things or when certain things occur: morning, afternoon, evening or night.

- **Talk about the concepts of today, yesterday, tomorrow, next week, last month, and next month using the calendar.** "Yesterday, we.... Today, you.... Tomorrow, you will... Last month, we... etc. Next month, you will.... Two months from today, you will..., etc."



- **Note family appointments on the calendar.** Ask the child, "How many more days/weeks/months until you... see the doctor? ...have your football game? ... have your recital? ...visit the dentist?" Have the child point to and count the days.

- **Mark the first days of each season on the calendar.** Talk about how many more days/weeks/months until a certain season begins/ends. Talk about the types of clothing we wear during certain seasons. Talk about events and observances that occur during the season.

- **Note the day's weather.** Draw a sun, dark cloud, and raindrops, snow, etc. on the day's date. "What clothes will we need to wear (or not wear) today?"

- **Record the day's temperature early in the morning and afternoon.** Use blue to write morning temperature and red



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for afternoon. Predict what the temperatures will be the next day. Extension for older elementary children: Subtract the early morning temperature from late afternoon. This morning it was 50 degrees and 80 degrees this afternoon. $80 - 50 = 30$. Help older students create a line graph using red and blue lines to show the temperature differences each day. This creates a visual of the rise/fall of temperatures over the month.



- **Track phases of the moon (upper elementary).** Observe the phase of the moon each night and draw it on the day's date. Use the dates of the different phases to predict when a particular phase will occur the next month.
- **Add and subtract dates.** "The strawberries will be ready to pick six weeks from today. What day can we begin picking strawberries?" Help the child count the weeks by pointing to today and counting forward six weeks. "Dad bought our van three weeks ago yesterday." Help the child count the weeks by pointing to yesterday and counting back three weeks.
- **Note birthdays and dates of special events and observances on the calendar.** Extend learning by asking, "In which



season does your birthday fall?" Note national holidays and research why we observe these important dates.



- **Mark the beginning and ending dates for Daylight Saving Time (DST).** Talk about the difference in the amount of daylight in the morning and evening during this period. Talk about why people may like/dislike DST.
- **Mark birthdays of important people** (Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Martin Luther King Jr., etc.) and dates in history (Pearl Harbor Day, Flag Day, Arbor Day, etc.) and research why our nation observes these dates.
- This list could go on forever!

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