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Department of Early Childhood Programs

PRE-K PRESS

for VPK Families

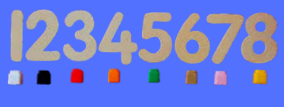
"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood."
— Fred Rogers

Welcome to the first edition of our Department of Early Childhood Programs Pre-K Press, a special collaboration with M-DCPS and WLRN-PBS! We are excited to share simple and meaningful ways families can connect with the learning happening in their child's classroom. This year, VPK Title I and Fee-Supported classrooms are using The Creative Curriculum from Teaching Strategies, which encourages children to learn by exploring topics that are part of their everyday lives. Each study gives children opportunities to ask questions, discover new ideas, build skills, and make connections between what they learn in the classroom and the world around them. This month, children are exploring The Grocery Store, a familiar place that can become a wonderful classroom without walls. We hope the Pre-K Press inspires you to talk, explore, play, and learn together to help get a deeper understanding of the world around them.

Big learning can happen in the most ordinary places.

This month, Pre-K Press is heading to the grocery story, where counting apples, spotting letters, and helping fill the shopping cart can turn an everyday errand into a learning adventure.

Let's take a peek inside one of our M-DCPS VPK classrooms to see how the grocery store has become part of the learning environment.



Click Here to See

School Spotlight: M. A. Milam K-8 Center

In Ms. Castenada's VPK classroom, students are learning through something they have each had their own unique experiences with. How does your family shop for food for your home?

"Welcome to Pre-K Publix! Our little classroom grocery store is officially open. I'm so excited to watch my students explore something they see in their everyday lives. Through play, we'll be learning about shopping, money, healthy foods, counting, making choices, and so much more. The best learning happens when little ones can pretend, explore, and make real-life connections. I can't wait to see where their ideas take us."

"I want to know how to be a cashier."
-Sabrina

Skill Building and the Grocery Store

A trip to the grocery store can be so much more than checking items off your list. It's a chance to talk, explore, and learn together. Try a few of these simple ideas the next time you shop with your child:

Make a list together. Let your child draw, write, or identify items you need. This builds early writing skills, vocabulary, and an understanding that print has meaning.	**Count as you shop.** "We need five apples. Can you help me count them?" Counting real objects helps children develop number sense and one-to-one counting skills.	**Compare and describe.** Which item is bigger or smaller? Heavier or lighter? Softer or harder? These conversations build descriptive language, observation skills, and early math concepts.
Talk about colors and shapes. "Can you find something red?" "What shape is that box?" Simple questions encourage children to observe, categorize, and make connections.	**Give your child a job.** Let them help find a product, carry something lightweight, or put groceries in the cart. Small responsibilities build independence, confidence, and problem-solving skills.	**Ask open-ended questions.** Try "What do you notice?" or "What do you think we should buy?" Then give your child time to think and respond.
Look for letters and words. Point out familiar letters, such as the letters in your child's name, and words they recognize on signs or packages. This helps children connect the letters and words they see with the sounds and meanings they hear.		

Play, Learn, and GROW with PBS Kids

WATCH

Daniel Tiger
"Daniel Calms Down"

Even grocery shopping can get a little exciting! When Daniel becomes overly excited at the Neighborhood Market, he learns how to slow down and calm himself.

Watch together, then ask your child: "What can you do when you feel really excited or need to calm your body?"

PLAY

Sesame Street
Supermarket Challenge

Go grocery store shopping with Elmo, Cookie Monster, and Abby! Children search the supermarket for foods by colors and beginning letter sound.

Afterward, try the same game at the real grocery store: "Can you find something yellow?" or "Can you find a food that starts with B?"

TRY IT TOGETHER

SUPER WHY!
Eat the Alphabet

Turn your grocery list into an alphabet adventure. Help your child identify the first letter or sound in the foods you're buying.

Bananas begin with "B."
Milk begins with "M."
Apples begin with "A."

You can even play "I Spy" as you walk through the store.