

Things to Do while You're Waiting:

Learning Activity Kits



It's happening again! You're running errands with your children and suddenly you're stuck—in traffic, at the clinic, in the checkout line. Homemade learning activity kits can engage a child who hates to wait.

 **All of these kits** slip easily into a purse, glove compartment, backpack, or diaper bag. The kits are for ages 3 and up. Cost depends on what parents include. Every kit needs:

- a zipper pouch or resealable plastic bag big enough to hold everything
- smaller bags to organize the parts of the kit
- pencils or pens
- a memo tablet for notes, counting, games, lists, drawings (**NOTE:** To make your own tablets: Cut pieces of blank scrap paper the same size. Staple them together across the top. Add a piece of stiff cardboard to the kit to support the tablet while in use.)

 **A math kit** lets your child play with numbers and problem solving. You might include:

- a lightweight tape measure
- an assortment of items to count and sort—coins, beans, buttons, coupons, checkers, game pieces, playing cards, dice, dreidels, etc.
- a list of favorite fingerplays and action rhymes that involve numbers
- puzzles made from cut-up postcards or magazine photos glued to thin cardboard

 **An art and literacy kit** encourages creative expression. A child can practice making letters, write and illustrate a book, cut out paper dolls, or play games like Tic-Tac-Toe. You might include:


- gel pens, washable fine-point markers, or crayons
- transparent tape
- stickers, stencils, or stamps
- colorful paper (such as bright magazine pages) for folding or cutting
- scissors—safe but not frustrating to use

 **A science kit** encourages children to look at the wider world. You might include:

- a small, inexpensive magnifier
- magnets
- pipe cleaners
- sandwich bags for collecting specimens
- an assortment of items to study—keys, pebbles, seeds, etc. (**NOTE:** You can change the assortment from time to time.)

 **A music and sound kit** helps you and your child investigate sound. You might include:

- small plastic containers with seeds or buttons inside for shaking
- a variety of rubber bands
- small scarves or 24-inch ribbons to wave
- a paper towel roll (for a mini-drum or a “voice changer”)
- a list of favorite songs and poems

 For related Web resources, see “Things to Do while You're Waiting: Learning Activity Kits” at <http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tips.htm>.



29 Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Dr. • Champaign, IL 61820-7469
Telephone: 217-333-1386 • Fax: 217-244-7732
Toll-free: 877-275-3227 (Voice/TTY)
Email: iel@uiuc.edu
Internet: <http://illinoisearlylearning.org>

Illinois State Board of Education



For more tip sheets on other topics, please go to <http://illinoisearlylearning.org>