

Family Life

P R O J E C T



SUMMER 2011

It's Summer Time! We hope this letter finds your family happy and healthy, and that you've had a wonderful school year. As you look forward to summer, we thought we'd send some ideas and information to make the break a great one. We are so glad to have each and every one of our study families, and are so grateful for your participation: THANK YOU!

Study Update

Dear Families,

I would like to once again thank you for your participation in the Family Life Project. We continue to be amazed to see how your children have grown over these past eight years!

As your children's lives have grown and changed, so has our project. We have seen most of the children in their classrooms, and are so pleased to have the support of their teachers, principals, and county superintendents! As you know, we are interested in how families from different walks of life adjust to transitions in a child's life, such as going to school. We also want to learn more about children's development and their experiences while in school. For more about the school visits please see the next page.

We have started to visit families whose children are in 1st grade, and will see many of you this summer. This fall, we will be continuing to visit classrooms for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders. We have also requested funds that will allow us to continue our study through 6th grade.

We hear again and again from our home and school visitors how much they enjoy their visits with the children and their families. We very much appreciate your willingness to share your lives with us, and thank you for letting us in to your homes and schools. We learn so much from our visits that helps us understand how families raise their children, and how children grow and learn. We look forward to seeing you again soon!

Best Regards,
Lynne Vernon-Feagans, PhD

Frequently Asked Questions

You answer A LOT of questions for us—now it's our turn! Here are the answers to some of the questions that we often hear our families ask:

Why do you collect saliva?

We collect saliva because it gives us a peek in to how the body works. We are interested in stress hormones that may be found in your body and in the body of your child. These hormones are found in both blood and saliva.

What are the games that the Home Visitors play?

We hope the games that the Home Visitors play with your child are enjoyable—we are so glad to be interacting with your children! These games are used to find out how children learn language, reading, and math as they grow.

We've been part of this study for nearly eight years. What has come out of it?

The Family Life Project is unique because you have allowed us to study your children throughout their development—from birth and in to childhood. We are so grateful that each of you has allowed us into your home—the knowledge that we gain from you will be used to help other families in the future. As we are still collecting data, our project is not yet done. On the next page, you'll see a few things we've learned at this point.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us toll free at

1-800-514-3982.

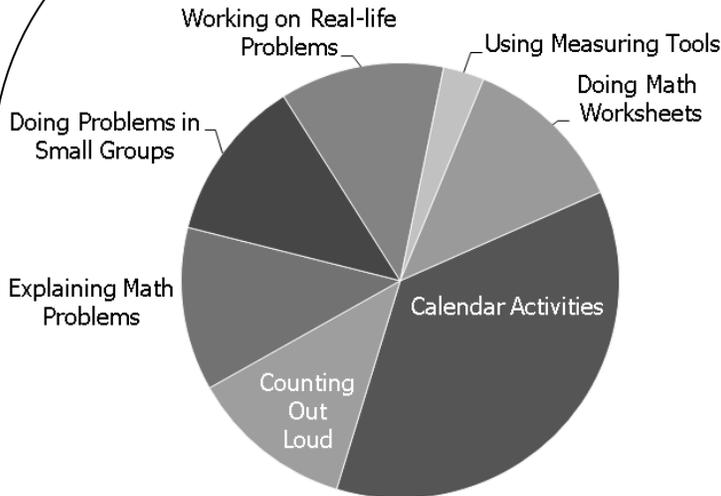
Also, if you change your address or phone number, **PLEASE LET US KNOW!**

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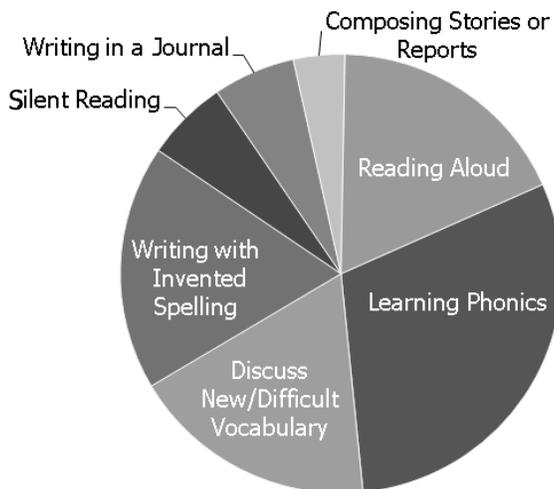
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Some Learning Activities found in Kindergarten Classrooms Over a One-Month Period



School visits happen in two parts. With your permission, in the fall, we ask teachers and principals questions about their classrooms and schools, such as the type of school and their approaches to teaching. We also observe the classrooms to see what happens on a typical day. In the spring, we play games with the children, much as we do in your home. These games tell us more about how children learn at each age.



At our fall visits with teachers, we ask different questions based on the grade level they teach. For **Kindergarten** teachers, we include a question about how often some learning activities are done. On the left, there are two graphs—the top one displays math-learning activities, and the bottom displays language-learning activities. In each graph, you can see which activities are done most often throughout the month. Of course, there are many different learning activities that Kindergarten teachers do with their children—these are just the ones we ask about.

If you are interested in more information about what these activities are, please see below for a brief description.

- **Journals and story composition** Children write stories and in journals in their classrooms. *Writing with invented spelling* allows a child to focus on the overall story that they are creating without worrying about the often-tricky process of spelling. Stories can be real or imagined.
- **Real-life problem-solving** In kindergarten classrooms, children work on and discuss math problems that reflect problems from real life, such as how to calculate charges on a bill.
- **Using measuring tools** Measuring tools include rulers, scales, and measuring spoons and cups. Using these gives children the opportunity to explore concepts like size, density, and volume. Please see the next page to find two activities that use measuring tools in a fun way.

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Here are some cool things to make on a hot day!

Homemade Bubble Solution

Ingredients:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dishwashing liquid
- 2 cups water
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup corn syrup

1. Stir all ingredients together in an unbreakable container
2. Use whatever you have on hand to make a frame to blow bubbles: straws, pipe cleaners, or cookie cutters! Simply dip in the solution, and wave or blow!

Goop

Ingredients:

- 2 cups cornstarch
- 1 cup water
- Food coloring

1. Mix cornstarch and water together in an unbreakable container. Add food coloring, if desired.
2. This goop will be thick and hard if you hit it, or wet and drippy if you lift it slowly.

Enjoy!

Popsicles

Ingredients:

- Several pieces of whole fruit or applesauce
- Juice or water

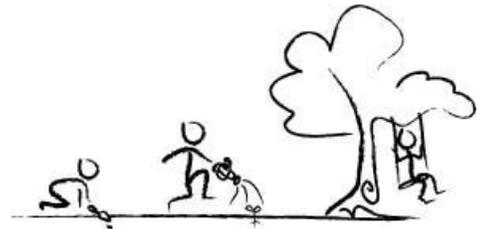
1. Add a little bit of juice or water to fruit (or applesauce), and mash until smooth
2. Popsicles can be frozen in ice cube trays, popsicle molds, or paper cups. Also, if you don't have popsicle sticks on hand, drinking straws or toothpicks can be used to hold your frozen treat!
3. Place fruit in container, add your stick, and put in the freezer overnight.



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Your local library is a great resource for entertainment this summer. There are free activities, books, movies, and computers available—not just for kids, but for grownups, too! Here is a list of books your child might enjoy:

- **Diary of a Fly**
 - By Doreen Cronin
- **The Listening Walk**
 - By Paul Showers
- **The True Story of the Three Little Pigs**
 - By Jon Scieszka
- **Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears**
 - By Verna Aardema

A library in your area can be found at:

1001 E Ash St 249 Nash Street West 300 West Roseboro St
Goldsboro, NC 27530 Wilson, NC 27893 Roseboro, NC 28382

**Has your contact information
changed?**

**Please remember to call us at
[1-800-514-3982](tel:1-800-514-3982)**

**with any changes to your address or
phone number**

before your next visit.

**We look forward to seeing you
again!**