

Teaching Jeremiah



**A Complete Curriculum for Teaching Special
Needs Children in Preschool and Early
Elementary**



By Tara Bertic, his mommy

Acknowledgements

First, I need to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for gifting me with the organizational skills required to put my scrambled thoughts on paper. I also need to thank Him for finding me the time and equipping me with the patience to write this book at all while home schooling four incredibly busy children. Most importantly, I thank God for thinking me even remotely capable to parent and teach His special child, Jeremiah. I am so unworthy and only pray that I can humbly step up to the task to which He called me and, through His spirit guiding me, make a difference in the life of one unique little boy.

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Prologue

Hi. My name is Tara Bertic. My husband and I live in Tampa, Florida where we are raising our four children, Jonathan, Michaela, Benjamin, and Jeremiah. Let me tell you a little bit about Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a surprise to our family, not to God though. Living paycheck to paycheck as a single-income family, we trusted the promise of Jeremiah 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." Our faith in Jesus Christ to fulfill this promise to our family is how we decided to name Jeremiah.

Though Jeremiah seemed to be no different than our previous three children, his speech and intellectual development slowed significantly by the time he was only eighteen-months-old. Jeremiah did not speak one word until he was three. He simply toddled around blowing raspberries. The front of his shirts were always drenched in spit and you could hear him coming from a mile away!! Our pediatrician explained that Jeremiah was simply the by-product of a multiple sibling family who spoke for him or knew what he wanted without him having to verbalize it. We tried to remedy this by not giving in to Jeremiah's non-verbal cues, but still his speech remained significantly delayed.

At Jeremiah's four-year check-up, we relayed to our pediatrician other concerns we had for our son. Jeremiah angered easily, did not play well with other children, preferred solitary play, and seemed to be visually stimulated by fast-moving objects, at which time he would jump up and down and flap his hands and arms. He was also still not talking in sentences. He took clichés, like "It's raining cats and dogs" literally and would even run to the window for proof. Jeremiah's oddities were becoming more and more distinct with his age and we were not the only ones taking notice. His Sunday school teachers were concerned for him as well. I can vividly remember a conversation with my girlfriend Kim at an Olive Garden where she gently, but deliberately aired her concerns. Kim has a degree in special education and so I value her word and wisdom on such subjects gravely.

As a result of that conversation, as well as what we'd been witnessing to firsthand with Jeremiah, I made another appointment with our pediatrician. She referred us to a psychiatrist, and after an hour in his office observing Jeremiah and asking me a barrage of questions about his physical and emotional development, Jeremiah was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, an autism spectrum disorder. We were shocked to say the least, but as with any challenge we face, were eager to rise to the occasion and do whatever we needed to do to provide Jeremiah with the best possible opportunities for improvement. After a hearing test that proved his speech impediment was not a physical issue, and an EEG to rule out any brain development abnormalities, we sought assessment from our county's school system.

Jeremiah saw a speech pathologist, social worker, and child psychologist for evaluations. His diagnosis was confirmed and we were then told that Jeremiah likely had additional learning disabilities that could not be adequately tested for until he was seven-years-old.

An individual education plan was drawn up for Jeremiah with specific goals outlined. We were then told that he would be evaluated again at age seven to see if those goals had been met and to draw up a new set of goals for him.

Up to this point, I had home schooled my other three children. I would describe them as average students who learned new concepts fairly easily and, for the most part, our home school experience had been a positive one. And now here was Jeremiah.

Jeremiah's attention span is relatively short, even for a five-year-old. He needs much repetition to grasp even the simplest of concepts, like up, down, color differentiating, etc... He gets easily frustrated if he seems to be having difficulty understanding something we are trying to teach him. Jeremiah is also a visual learner.

To weigh each of my options carefully, and to be fair to Jeremiah, Kim and I visited a local elementary school's exceptional education learning program (EELP class). We remained open-minded, though neither of us saw anything this classroom was doing that we could not replicate within my own home. And I won't lie. The thought of sending Jeremiah away from home each and every day, and without even his own siblings to accompany him broke my heart and brought tears to my eyes. Still, the thought of home schooling Jeremiah with all of his developmental issues sent chills of fear down my spine.

Kim encouraged me however. She also promised to tell me if she felt that, after a year or so, Jeremiah would be better off in a public or private education setting. She agreed to monitor his progress with me carefully and keep me accountable in my role as his educator. First, we reviewed Jeremiah's IEP and then we visited a local educational supplies store where we acquired something to meet each of his preset goals. Having one of those creative teacher brains, Kim was a wealth of information, knowledge, and resource ideas for me. I literally devoured all she had to offer, knowing full well that God placing her in my life when He did was now for "such a time as this".

I entered home schooling a special education needs child naively and, I will admit, quite blind. I quickly discovered how few resources were readily available to me as an educator of a special needs child. I had Kim, yes, but I felt I needed others who were in my same shoes if you will to encourage me and offer up their experiences, both positive and negative. I also wanted some specific detailed how-to's that were both practical and affordable. I found a web group specifically designed for home schooling families of children with Asperger's, but even that proved frustrating. You see, Asperger's Syndrome is a social development disability. Most Asperger's children are unusually intellectual, often in one specific area of interest. They also have a very mature vocabulary. Jeremiah showed delays in both of these areas.

Here's an example of my frustration. I was struggling with Jeremiah grasping the basic visual identification of the letter "Aa". One experienced "aspie" home school mom suggested I have Jeremiah alphabetize his cars (something he loves) by make and/or model to teach him the alphabet. HELLO!! Jeremiah could not even recognize the letter "Aa" after a week of looking at one, cutting out pictures of things that started with one, and

making collages of the letter itself. Alphabetizing? Right! Jeremiah's learning disabilities only compounded his Asperger's diagnosis.

Frustrated and more determined than ever, I went on the prowl for specific ways to teach Jeremiah that would effectively build his confidence through goals met taking baby steps, one at a time. Jeremiah wanted to be in the "driver's seat" as far as what he did on a daily basis that was considered "school". He did not like being told he HAD to do anything and certainly did not take well to my checklist of assignments to be completed each day. As a dear friend of mine pointed out, "Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and Asperger's Syndrome don't go together very well". AMEN!

In my search, I found great books on Asperger's Syndrome and elementary aged children, Asperger's Syndrome in the classroom, etc... They all spoke of the challenges of teaching Asperger students and even offered great approaches to behavioral issues, diet issues, etc... That's not what I was looking for however. And maybe my search standards were set a little high, I'll admit. Every year, I attend our state's home school convention and browse the approximately 1,000 vendors there to choose the curriculum that best meets the needs of each of my children. This last year, there was ONE booth out of all of those that was specifically geared towards meeting the needs of mentally/developmentally challenged children. ONE BOOTH!!! And though I applauded their being there and their efforts (and did find some great resources), I still did not find what I was looking for...a basic, step-by-step how-to meet the needs of Jeremiah curriculum! All right, I know those standards are ridiculous, but you know what I mean. A how-to book for any developmentally challenged child would have sufficed.

And so here I am. The Lord has placed it on my heart to journal every goal-oriented activity I find to do with Jeremiah for others in my predicament. I tried to argue that the likelihood of another child having the same learning disabilities Jeremiah struggles with, whether or not they're coupled with Asperger's Syndrome, are slim to none. As with any argument with God, however, He won and I've learned enough times in the past (Unfortunately, I rarely get it the first time.) that continuing to argue in lieu of complete submission is a total waste of time, His and mine. Besides, I truly believe that the ideas in this book can be used for any preschooler or early kindergartner, with or without developmental delays or even Asperger's.

Because this book is about teaching Jeremiah, I have broken down each chapter into the specific goal areas that were designed for him to meet. The goals are common enough, however, that the activities contained within each one can be tailored to help other struggling students achieve their own goals as well. In each chapter, I have outlined Jeremiah's individual goals so that you can compare them to those of your own child and determine their cohesiveness.

Most of the activities in this book are activities that do not require you purchasing some sort of game or other pre-packaged educational materials. There are some wonderful games out there. Cranium has Hullabaloo for following directions and then there's Hi Ho! Cherry-O for counting. Lego's, K'Nex, and Lincoln Logs are great for fine motor development.

Leapfrog and V-Smile rock too! There are excellent Internet sites for kids to hone their reading readiness and pre-math skills. Just Google educational on-line games for kids and the number of sites you'll find are mind-boggling. Though I use some of these resources with Jeremiah and validate their potential to help him reach his goals, you can just as easily go to your local toy, educational, or department store and find them for yourself.

As you will soon discover, there are some store-bought games or tools I felt worthy of mentioning in the different chapters of this book and I will let you know why when you come across them, but for the most part, the activities are homegrown and easily adaptable to your resources and child. Appendix A lists all of the materials suggested and in some cases needed to complete all of the activities in this book. They are even categorized by where you can find them in your home to help you obtain them with ease.

This list of activities is by no means exhaustive, just my own God-directed compilation of researching books, the web, and even Kim's brain! To the best of my knowledge, there is no other resource like this available to parents. Therefore, it is my prayer for each of you as parents of special needs children, that what is contained on the pages within is an answer to your prayers as well. God bless you on your quest to see your children become all that God has desired them to be, intellectually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

NOTE: Since writing this curriculum, Jeremiah was re-diagnosed with Autism when he was eight-years-old. His change in diagnosis wouldn't change the way I homeschooled him in the past and therefore, I believe this curriculum still a useful tool in teaching kids of varying special needs, be they autism, Asperger's Syndrome, PDD, PDD-NOS, or other learning challenges.

Chapter 1

Development of Hand/Arm Muscles - Fine Motor Skills

Jeremiah's Goals:

- To develop fine motor skills in hands and arms through manipulating various objects.

Rolling Pin Art

Materials Needed:

Rolling Pin
Paper
Poster Paint
Paintbrush

I folded a piece of paper in half and then re-opened it. I gave Jeremiah a paintbrush and some poster paint. I showed him how to dip the brush into the paint and let it drip onto one half of the paper. He made lots of dots, all different colors. Then I folded the paper in half on the same line as before. I gave Jeremiah a rolling pin and let him roll it over the folded paper for as long as he wanted to. Then we opened the paper back up and saw the design the rolling pin over the paint drips made on both sides of the paper. We left it to dry like that. You could cut it into a shape if you wanted it to resemble something tangible. Or, if it already does, you could add detail to it with markers (i.e. whiskers on a cat, antennae on a butterfly, a stem on a flower, etc...).

Fingerprint Fun

Materials Needed:

Ink Pads
Paper
Markers

I gave Jeremiah a piece of paper and some different colored inkpads. I showed him how to put ink on his finger and press it onto the paper to make fingerprints. Then I asked him what he wanted me to make out of each fingerprint. For a dog, I added a head, facial details, a tail, and four legs to Jeremiah's fingerprint. Jerry's not very skilled at holding writing instruments steady, especially to add such fine details. I didn't want to stress him with the details and so I added them for him. For some of the fingerprint creatures, I did let him add the eyes and nose and mouth.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Try using scented inkpads to build your child's sense of smell as well. Ask things like, "Does this one smell good? Do you like the smell? Why or why not? Does it smell like flowers or food?" (Chapter 9)

Food Stencils

Materials Needed:

Raw Vegetables and/or Fruits
Paper
Poster Paint
Sharp Knife (for mom and dad only)
Paper Plate

I used a sharp knife to slice some raw vegetables and fruits for Jerry. I sliced mushrooms, broccoli, potatoes, and apples. I put poster paints on paper plates (a different color on each plate). I gave Jeremiah the raw vegetable and fruit slices and showed him how to dip them in the paint and then press them onto a piece of paper to make different designs.

Model Magic and Toothpick Creatures

Materials Needed:

Model Magic
Toothpicks
Popsicle Sticks
Markers

I gave Jeremiah a lump of Model Magic and told him to make a ball. Then I broke two Popsicle sticks in half and put them in the bottom of his ball to serve as four legs and to help his ball stand up while he decorated it. Then I gave Jeremiah a handful of colored toothpicks and told him to stick them anywhere he wanted to on his creature. He made him very spikey! Then I gave him a marker to draw eyes, a nose, and a mouth on his new friend. The cool thing about using the colored toothpicks for this project was that then we were able to count how many of each colored toothpick he used and talk about the different colors. This was like meeting two goals in one for Jeremiah.

Sewing Pictures

Materials Needed:

Cardboard
Hole Punch
Scissors
Yarn
Q-Tip

Jeremiah loves cars. So I cut several car and truck shapes from heavy cardboard and then decorated them. I put a racecar number on the side of one, drew in windows, black tires, etc... Then I used a hole punch to punch holes around the outer edges of the cardboard vehicles. I tied a piece of yarn to one end of a Q-Tip then and gave it to Jeremiah. I showed him how to weave the Q-Tip in and out of the holes to "sew" his car. He loved this!

I had to change the Q-Tip out for each vehicle, however, because the cotton swab on the end got loose and hairy and frustrated Jeremiah a little with trying to get it through the hole in one piece.

You could also cut pictures out of old magazines to glue onto the cardboard and cut around if you don't feel confident enough with your artist skills.

Texture Rubbings

Materials Needed:

Textured Items (Corrugated Cardboard, Coins, Tree Bark, Leaves, etc...)

Paper

Peeled Crayons

Tape

I took different textured items and taped them lightly to my dining room table so that they wouldn't move. Then I put a piece of paper on top of the items and lightly taped the corners of the paper down as well. I gave Jeremiah some different colored peeled crayons and showed him how to rub over the items to transfer the items' shape and texture onto his paper. I didn't let Jeremiah see the textured items I taped to the table and so he loved the surprise picture each one made and we used this activity to practice some vocabulary words too (i.e. leaves, penny, dime, etc...).

Some craft supply stores and discount stores also have available coloring books that appear to have blank pages inside. Once rubbed over with a pencil, however, a picture appears! And don't forget paint with water books and Color Wonder, Crayola's new and ingenious coloring fun for little ones. With Color Wonder, the markers only write on the specially treated paper and it is impossible for kids to color outside the lines. This builds confidence in kids whose hand dexterity is not yet as developed as their peers. Color Wonder is also available as a finger painting activity.

Scratch Boards

Materials Needed:

Crayons

Cardstock

Toothpick (or Nail)

I used bright colored crayons to completely cover a piece of cardstock. I had to press down hard to make the color rich and thick. Then I used a black crayon to completely cover the entire drawing. I know I did most of the work on this one, but it was Jeremiah's fine motor skills I wanted him to work on and so he got to do the most fun part of this activity. I gave him a toothpick and told him to start scratching a design through the black crayon so that the brighter colors underneath would show through. He liked the surprise of finding a new

color underneath the black crayon and this gave us the opportunity to work on some of his color recognition as well.

Eye Dropper Pinching

Materials Needed:

Eye Dropper
Empty Styrofoam Egg Carton
Water
Food Coloring

I colored some water different colors (yellow, green, blue, and red). I put the colored water in the back row of an empty Styrofoam egg carton. Then I gave Jeremiah an eyedropper and showed him how to move the colored water from the back row to the empty Styrofoam egg carton spots in the front row.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- I also showed Jeremiah how he could take two different colored waters and mix them in an empty Styrofoam egg carton spot to make a whole new color (i.e. red and blue makes purple, blue and yellow makes green, etc...), He thought that was pretty cool and it also helped him with his color recognition. (Chapter 5)

"Goop" Art

Materials Needed:

Water
Cornstarch

I added water to cornstarch until it was the consistency of toothpaste. I poured this onto a cookie sheet (with 1" high sides) and let Jeremiah drag his finger through it to make different designs. He thought it was neat to see the "goop" close in around his designs until they completely disappeared. Jeremiah doesn't like getting his hands dirty so, for a while, he used a spoon to drag through the goop. This worked the muscles in his fingers, hands, and forearms.

If your child is apprehensive about getting his hands sticky or is unsure of whether or not he wants to touch the "goop", put some of it in a Ziploc bag and then using clear packaging tape folded over the top of the bag to ensure no leaks. Now let the child hold the bag, "feel" the "goop", and roll it around between his fingers without the scare of getting any of it on him. When he's ready to feel the "goop" for real then, continue with this activity.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- This activity is great for their sensory development and issues as well. Talk with them about how the goop feels on their hands and as they drag their finger through it. Encourage them to rub it in between even two of their fingers to feel its texture. (Chapter 9)

Salt Dig

Materials Needed:

Salt

Small Items (i.e. coins, pegs, beads, army men, paper clips, etc...)

Tupperware Bowl with Lid

I used one of those disposable Gladware bowls for this. I put a whole container of salt in the bowl. Then I buried in the salt some small items that could be hidden easily. I used a nickel, dime, penny, some beads, small pebbles, an army man, a small racecar, etc... I encouraged Jeremiah to dig through the salt to find all of the items he could. He loved the surprises he found. After a while of doing this activity, I changed out the hidden items for new ones so that he wouldn't be bored with what he was finding. This works well with flour too, but Jeremiah didn't like how that stuck to his hands and made them white.

Another idea for the salt is to keep it in one of those disposable aluminum pans with a lid. Before putting the salt in the pan, place a picture of something, like a coloring sheet picture of an animal or other object, on the bottom of the pan. Then sprinkle the salt on top. Encourage the child to use his finger to trace the picture underneath in the salt on top of it. Occasionally, change the picture on the bottom of the pan and have it be a surprise to the child so they will be excited to use their finger tracing to figure out what the new picture is.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Again, use this activity for developing your child's sense of touch and/or helping them with any issues they have associated with this sense. Show them how to hold the salt in their hands and let it slowly sift through their fingers. Have them make a cup with their one hand and use the other to scoop the salt into the hole in their hand. Talk to them about the grains and give them just one in the palm of their hand to roll around with their index finger on their other hand. (Chapter 9)

Stuffed Paper Sculpture

Materials Needed:

Newspapers
Butcher Paper
Stapler & Staples
Tempera or Acrylic Paint
Scissors

Again, I did a lot of this work for Jeremiah, but the newspaper crumpling was good for his fine motor skills development. I cut out two identical pictures from butcher paper. I cut out a car shape since that's what Jeremiah likes. Then I stapled the shapes together around the edges until there was only one end of the car not yet stapled. Jeremiah crumpled up newspaper and stuffed it into the car sculpture. Then I gave him some paint and let him paint his car. I made sure I drew not just the outline of the car, but also the tires, windows, doors etc... so that he would have a better idea of where and what to paint to make it look like the car he wanted it to look like.

Aluminum Foil Sculpture

Materials Needed:

Aluminum Foil

I didn't expect an artist's rendering here. Aluminum foil is simply easy to work with and fun to shape into a ball, snake, bowl, or whatever. So I gave Jeremiah a small sheet of the foil and just encouraged him to play with it. I also showed him how it could be smoothed back out into its original shape before starting a new masterpiece.

Salt Paint

Materials Needed:

Paper
Salt
Warm Water
Food Coloring
Paper Dixie Cups
Paintbrush

I mixed warm water and salt together in several small paper Dixie cups. I used as much salt as would dissolve in the water. Then I used food coloring to color each saltwater solution. Jeremiah used the "paints" to paint a picture on his paper. I encouraged him to use a lot of the paint. After a few hours, when the picture had completely dried, the water had evaporated and only the colored salt was left behind. They looked like sparkly colorful crystals.

Homemade Band

Materials Needed:

Empty Recyclable Containers (Water Bottles, Coffee Cans, etc...)

Paper

Markers

Scissors

Glue

Dry Beans, Unpopped Popcorn, Uncooked Rice

Clear Packaging Tape

While Jeremiah used his "pinching" fingers to pick up dry beans and put them down the neck of an empty water bottle (16.9 oz.), he also made a pretty neat noisemaker for himself...not that we needed anymore of those around the house, but he liked it just the same. I also gave him an empty vitamin bottle with a slightly larger neck and a measuring spoon to spoon the beans into it. Then I covered the bottles with paper that fit over their previous labels and gave Jeremiah markers to decorate his instruments. After putting the lids back on and once the beans were all inside, I used clear packaging tape to wrap around the lid several times in order to prevent any "accidental" spills. That was the great thing about the old vitamin bottle...its lid was child-resistant and so tape was not necessary.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- This activity is a great sensory tool as well. Put different things in each instrument. In one, put pennies. In another, put rice. Still another, beans or sand. Have your child shake one at a time. Ask questions like, "Is this one loud or soft? Does it make a big noise or just a little noise?" Show them the different things you put in each container and then ask them, as they shake each one at a time, to match the sound they hear to what they believe is inside the container. (Chapter 9)

Bean Sorting

Materials Needed:

15-Bean Soup Mix

Tupperware Bowl with Lid

Empty Styrofoam Egg Carton (16-Egg Size)

Tweezers (Optional)

I bought a bag of 15-bean soup mix in the dry bean section of the grocery store. I put the mix in a Tupperware bowl with a lid so that Jeremiah could play with it over and over again. I gave him an empty Styrofoam egg carton and showed him how to separate all the different kinds of beans into the separate Styrofoam egg holders. I used a Styrofoam egg carton that holds sixteen eggs because there were fifteen varieties of beans and Jeremiah would have had a meltdown over there not being enough holders for all of the different kinds of beans. The neat thing about this was that it not only exercised his fine motor

skills, but each bean was a different color as well and so it enhanced his recognition of those colors too.

I have not tried this yet, but when Jeremiah's hand and finger muscles become more developed, I will give him a pair of tweezers to try and pick the beans up with. To start with, I will probably give him a set of those giant plastic pinchers that come with kids' bug-catching kits.

Another variation of this activity is to actually cook the beans and let the child use those sword designed toothpicks to try and stab and pick the beans up with. This would be great for developing their fine motor skills, fun (especially if they're a boy and like pretending to be pirates with swords), and yummy if they like beans because they could eat each one as they get it on their sword. Might even be a fun way to introduce and get them to try some new foods.

Tongs Pick-Up

Materials Needed:

Small Toys or Objects that Won't Roll
Kitchen Tongs
2 Cookie Sheets

I got some army men, ziti noodles, small plastic drinking cups, markers, etc... and put them on one cookie sheet. Then I put the other one next to Jeremiah. I showed him how to use the pair of kitchen tongs to pick things up. He picked the objects up from one cookie sheet and moved them to the other. It took him both hands to use the tongs at first, but he eventually got the hang of it. An earlier option to using the tongs would be to use one of those plastic chip clips that are wide enough along the handle to allow them to hold it easily in their hand.

Rice Scooping

Materials Needed:

Uncooked Rice
Different Sized Spoons
Measuring Spoons/Cups
Different Sized Bowls
Tupperware Bowl with Lid

There was no real rhyme or reason to this activity, but Jeremiah loved it. I laid a sheet out on the floor and gave him a bowl of uncooked rice. I gave him some measuring spoons and cups, as well as some different sized spoons and bowls. Then I just let him have fun putting the rice in each of the different containers using whatever method he desired. When he was finished playing with the rice, I poured it all back into a Tupperware bowl with a lid to save for future play.

Another idea for the rice (as with the salt) is to keep it in one of those disposable aluminum pans with a lid. Before putting the rice in the pan, place a picture of something, like a coloring sheet picture of an animal or other object, on the bottom of the pan. Then sprinkle the rice on top. Encourage the child to use his finger to trace the picture underneath in the rice on top of it. Occasionally, change the picture on the bottom of the pan and have it be a surprise to the child so they will be excited to use their finger tracing to figure out what the new picture is.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Once again, build/develop your child's sense of touch by allowing him to sift through the rice, feel it in his hands. Ask him, "If the rice soft or hard? Does it feel round when you roll it between your fingers? Is the end of a piece of rice sharp? What does it feel like when you hold some and make a fist?" (Chapter 9)

Paper Plate Mosaic

Materials Needed:

Rimmed Paper Plate
Glue
Dried Beans, Cereal, Rice, Seeds, etc...
Clear Acrylic Finish
Markers
Yarn
Hole Punch

I put glue on the paper plate and spread it around with my finger so that it covered the whole inner circle of the plate. Then I gave Jeremiah dry beans, cereal, rice, and seeds and let him cover the plate with those in any pattern he wished. Then I used clear acrylic finish once the glue dried so that the dry cereal wouldn't attract critters. It also made his mosaic shiny. I gave Jerry markers then and let him decorate the rim of his plate. Then I punched a hole in the top of the plate, threaded a ribbon through it and hung it up.

Flower Arranging

Materials Needed:

Artificial Flowers/Leaves
Model Magic
Styrofoam Cup
Ribbon
Stickers

I put a ball of Model Magic in the bottom of the Styrofoam cup. I gave Jeremiah artificial flowers and leaves and showed him how to stick their stems down into the Model Magic.

When he was done, I gave him stickers to decorate the outside of his cup with and then I tied a ribbon in a bow around the rim of the cup. Jeremiah was so proud of his "gardening" skills; we used his centerpiece on our dining room table for a long time. Styrofoam could be used inside the cup instead of Model Magic, but you have to press harder to get the stems to go into the Styrofoam than you do the Model Magic. This irritated Jeremiah and frustrated him. It was enough for him to exercise his pinching fingers to grab and place the flowers and leaves into the Model Magic. Peeling and placing the sticker decorations also tuned his fine motor skills.

This was such a fun project, that we did it several times and for different holidays/seasons. I chose flowers and greens, as well as stickers and ribbon, appropriate to the season or holiday. For the 4th of July, I even let Jeremiah stick a little American Flag on a stick into the Model Magic. Since these are artificial, they can be stored with other seasonal/holiday decorations and brought out again the next year.

Finger Painting

Materials Needed:

Finger Paint
Tupperware Bowl of Warm Soapy Water
Old Newspapers
Masking Tape
Rimmed Paper Plates
Freezer Paper

This is pretty self-explanatory. Jeremiah has a sensory issue wherein he hates getting his hands dirty or sticky. I wanted to show Jeremiah that he could have fun with sticky fingers and then wash up and be good as new and that it was no big deal. I put down some old newspapers on the table. On top I taped a piece of freezer paper (slick side up) at the four corners down on top of the newspaper. I gave Jeremiah several rimmed paper plates, each with a different colored finger paint on them and showed him how to "let loose" a little.

As with the "Goop" Art activity, and if your child is at all like Jeremiah and does not enjoy getting his hands sticky, or is unsure of whether or not he wants to touch something that "gooey" looking, you may need to do a little prep work with him for this activity. Try putting some of the paint in a Ziploc bag and then using clear packaging tape folded over the top of the bag to ensure no leaks. Now let the child hold the bag, "feel" the paint, and roll it around between his fingers without the scare of getting any of it on him. When he's ready to feel the paint for real then, continue with this activity.

If he's still apprehensive about touching the paint, give him some make-up application sponges to use instead of his fingers.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- This is a great way to work on color recognition as well as teach your child what colors are made by mixing other colors together (Chapter 5)

Clothes Hanger Banner

Materials Needed:

Plastic Clothes Hanger

Butcher Paper

Stickers

Markers

Stencils

Fabric Scraps

Yarn

Watercolor Paints

Paintbrush

Glue

I cut a six-foot piece of butcher paper and cut it to be 1" less in width than the bottom of the clothes hanger. I hung the paper over the bottom of the hanger so that three feet hung on each side of the hanger. This also doubled the paper, which made it a more durable surface to paint and glue on. I used little dots of glue on the insides of the butcher paper to make them stick together so that they could not slip off the hanger. Then I gave Jeremiah some stickers, fabric squares I'd cut out for him, yarn, watercolor paints and a paintbrush, markers, and stencils. I let him have free reign really of how he wanted to decorate his banner. Jeremiah loves his Matchbox cars and so I gave him a few with different tire tread patterns and let him run the cars over his banner where he had water colored to see the effects it would have in the paint and on the paper itself. We hung Jeremiah's banner on the back of the front door then so everyone coming or going could see his masterpiece.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Have your child make a sensory clothes hanger banner. Use one material for the actual banner, but then give him scraps of other types of fabric to put on the banner. Use burlap, corduroy, satin, and felt. Then give him items like snaps, Velcro, buttons, raffia, and corrugated cardboard to glue onto his banner. Turn it into a game. After he knows what each item on his banner is, ask him to close his eyes, or blindfold him if he'll let you. Then take his hand and run it over an item on the banner and ask him to guess what it is. (Chapter 9)
- This is also an excellent vocabulary builder, as I am certain they probably do not know what burlap is! (Chapter 3)

Art Portfolio

Materials Needed:

Poster Board (any color)

Construction Paper

Glue

Markers

Stickers

Hole-Punch

Ribbon

Stapler & Staples

I used a blue piece of poster board. I folded the board in half and then stapled the sides closed, leaving only the top open. Now Jeremiah had a portfolio to keep his artwork in. I cut different shapes from different colored construction paper. I gave them to Jeremiah with some glue, markers, and stickers and let him decorate his portfolio. Then I used a hole-punch to punch two holes at the top of the poster board, several inches apart. I threaded ribbon through the holes and tied them to make handles for his portfolio. My other kids were so impressed with Jerry's art folder that they begged me to buy more poster board for them to each make one too. As Jeremiah's portfolio gets full, I can either take his artwork out and bundle and date it for storage, or simply let him make a new portfolio and use his old one as a keepsake to keep his former artwork safe in.

Stencil Fun

Materials Needed:

Stencils

Colored Pencils with Erasers

Paper

Tape

I gave Jeremiah some stencils and paper with colored pencils and showed him how to trace around the stencils to make a shape, character, or other design. I used colored pencils because they can be erased and Jeremiah gets very upset when he makes a mistake that he feels requires him to start over. I also used a very tiny piece of tape or two rolled under and stuck to the backside of the stencil to hold it in place on the paper. It kept Jeremiah from becoming frustrated over having to hold the stencil in place and trace around it at the same time.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Use letter and number stencils for the child to trace and feel the shape of each letter/number. This will help them build their recognition of these letters and numbers. Focus on the letters in their name or their own age at first. (Chapter 5)

Paper Punching Pinching

Materials Needed:

Various Hole Punches

Various Embossers

Paper

I have each letter of the alphabet as a hole punch. We also have a Hello Kitty paper embosser and other cute paper punches that either leave designer holes or imprints on the paper. I gave these to Jeremiah with a stack of paper and just let him have fun. If he wanted to, I let him glue the punched out paper pieces to a sheet of construction paper when he was done punching them out as well.

Silly Stickers

Materials Needed:

Paper

Assorted Stickers

I simply gave Jeremiah some paper and assorted stickers and let him peel and stick away. Dollar stores sell tablets of hundreds of stickers. Many of them are very small and so require patience and tiny pinching fingers to remove them from their sheets. This was great for honing Jerry's fine motor skills.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- A great way to teach matching is with stickers as well. You can put a set of stickers in a column down one side of paper and then another column down the other side. Make sure each sticker has a match to it on the piece of paper, but don't make them directly across from one another. Point to the first sticker in the first column and ask your child if he can see another one just like it. You could also put bigger stickers in the center of index cards. Then cut the cards with the stickers on them in half and mix up the halves. Ask the child to match up each half with its corresponding other half. (Chapter 4)
- Stickers can be used for sensory too. Try using scented stickers. Your child will love rubbing his finger over each sticker to activate a different scent. Ask them questions like, "Do you like that smell? Does it smell too much or is it ok? Does it smell sweet like candy? Does it smell like flowers? Does it smell like the real food (if the child has eaten what the sticker is supposed to smell like)?" (Chapter 9)

Do-A-Dot Art

Materials Needed:

Do-A-Dot Markers
Do-A-Dot Art Books
White Cardstock

This is one of those store-bought resources I talked about in the Prologue of this book that I felt worthy of including. If it weren't for my happenstance browsing at a local hole-in-the-wall hobby shop to pass time before a movie, I would never have known Do-A-Dot art existed. That's one of the reasons I am including it here. Do-A-Dot markers come in all different colors and look just like B-I-N-G-O blotters. Do-A-Dot coloring books are made of thicker paper pages so that the ink from the blotters does not seep through. You can also use white cardstock for free blotting or even print a picture from the computer onto the cardstock to be blotted. Jeremiah just loves to blot the markers all over his pictures. Unlike coloring or painting the pictures, Jerry's dots the ink on them and the results are pretty cool.

See Appendix C References for Dot Art's website information.

Moon Sand

Materials Needed:

Moon Sand

Moon Sand can be purchased at your local Wal Mart or online. Sand in general is a fun medium for kids to play with. Regular beach or playground sand is not easy to contain or build with however, unless you use just the right amount of water. Too little water and projects will fall apart. Too much water and you have sand slush. That's why I like Moon Sand. I saw it one day while flipping through the channels and it was on one of those high-end stations that specialized in those "seen only on T.V." commercials.

I have no idea what Moon Sand is made of, only that it is non-toxic and sticks together without crumbling into whatever mold Jeremiah shapes it into. You can purchase separate molds for the sand or just let the kids use cups and bowls for their creations. The best part about Moon Sand is that it does not separate into individual grains easily. It clumps and therefore makes cleaning up a snap. I have picked up pieces of Moon Sand from the carpet without ever having to vacuum! Try doing that with sand from the beach!

See Appendix C References for where to find more information on purchasing Moon Sand.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Because Moon Sand feels different from regular sand children have played with at playgrounds before, it is a great sensory tool. Encourage them to squish it together

in their hands, roll it into a ball, and try to feel an individual grain. Ask them questions about what they are physically feeling as they with the Moon Sand. "Is it soft? Does it feel wet or dry? Do you like the way it feels on your hand and between your fingers? Why or why not?" (Chapter 9)

Bubble Pinching

Materials Needed:

Bubbles

Bubbles are great...and addictive! I think I love blowing them as much as Jeremiah loves popping them. There's just something therapeutic about it. I tell Jeremiah he can pop them, but only with his pincher fingers (thumb and index). This is great for fine motor development, and lot of fun too. Bubble blowing can even take place in the bathroom during bath time. I do recommend getting a better brand of bubbles, however, as it can be frustrating when they pop before they've left the little wand because the solution is too watered down.

See Appendix B Recipes for an excellent homemade bubble recipe.

Bead/Noodle Stringing

Materials Needed:

Shoelaces

Beads/Noodles

Jeremiah has some wooden beads with holes in either end, but we have used wagon wheel pasta noodles, and craft beads with large holes as well. Jeremiah uses shoelaces to string these and he just has fun putting them on the laces and pulling them off again. We use shoelaces because they don't fray at the ends after use and beads or noodles that have larger holes for easier stringing. An easier first tool for stringing beads and noodles is to use pipe cleaners too.

Baby Doll Dress-Up

Materials Needed:

Baby dolls

Baby doll Clothes

My daughter has lots of baby dolls and clothes and Jeremiah loves changing their clothes. I don't know why and yes, I know he's a boy and that it's culturally inappropriate (so say a few) to let boys play with dolls. However, the workout Jeremiah's little fingers get from buttoning and unbuttoning those blouses and working those bloomers up those rubbery bent legs that have very little give to them is priceless.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Baby dolls are great for social skills training too. As your child dresses and undresses the baby doll, talk about gentle touch and how we are to touch others with kind hands and not be rough. Talk about babies in general and how they need special care. Encourage your child to gently rock the baby doll or pat it on the back. (Chapter 7)

Bathtub Fun

Materials Needed:

Old Fashioned Hand Mixers
Washcloth
Small Empty Plastic Container

Jeremiah loves playing in the bathtub, but he can learn there too! I got him one of those old-fashioned hand mixers. You remember, the kind with the two beaters on the end. You have to hold the mixer with one hand while you turn the crank with the other to make the beaters rotate. It's quite tricky, but can be fun too. I put lots of bubble bath in the tub and the faster Jeremiah turns that crank, the more bubbles there are. They get real high. He loves it! Just be sure to dry the mixer off well after bath time to keep it from rusting.

Another good fine motor activity is to teach the child to wring the water out of a washcloth. This can be fun too. Give them a small empty plastic container and set it on the backside of the tub so that any water that misses the container will run back into the bath. Have them soak the washcloth and then wring it out over the container until the container is full. Have them count how many times it takes to fill the container too.

Model Magic Cutting

Materials Needed:

Model Magic
Safety Scissors

Give your child some Model Magic and a pair of safety scissors and encourage him to cut it into pieces. The resistance of the Model Magic because of its consistency will build and strengthen their fine motor muscles in their hands.

Additional Cross Reference Activities

- Model Magic Numbers (Chapter 5)
- Poker Chip Counting (Chapter 5)
- Colored Links/Paper Clips (Chapter 5)
- Sponge Painting (Chapter 5)

This ends the chapter on fine motor skills, but I wanted to mention a few gross motor skill activities. I do not have a chapter on developing gross motor skills because it was not one of Jeremiah's objectives. However, here are a few ideas.

Easel Work

Materials Needed:

Easel

Chalk, Dry Erase Markers, Crayons, Paint (Washable and Non)

Paintbrush

Paint Roller

Easel work builds upper arm muscles while the child reaches to work on the vertical surface. If you do not have an easel, you could let the child use chalk or washable paint on a garage wall or on the side of your house. It will wash off easily with a hose when they are done, but give them a huge surface with which to be creative on. With the paint, let them experiment with different types of brushes, sponges, and rollers. Each one has its own advantage, creates its own design, and works their muscles in a diverse way.

Additional Cross Reference Activities

- "Action Words" (Chapter 5)
- Hop-A-Lot (Chapter 5)

Chapter 2

Information Processing - Auditory Processing

Jeremiah's Goals:

- To process incoming auditory messages that result in the desired output (thought process order, completing tasks given, answering questions).

Mommy/Daddy Says

Materials Needed:

None

This is my version of Simon says. Jeremiah cannot follow commands or carry out instructions that contain more than one directive. For a while, I stuck to one command only. For example, "Hey Jeremiah, jump up and down." "Wiggle your fingers, Jerry." After doing this for a while, we graduated to, "Jeremiah, stick out your tongue and turn around in a circle." As Jerry gets better at following these two pronged commands, we will eventually move on to, "Hey Jeremiah, touch your nose, stick out your tongue, and then turn around in a circle." Of course, it's my desire for Jeremiah to someday be able to take his shoes off, put them by the door, and bring me his pajamas. Our nonsensical commands are just a fun way to ready him for the productive ones.

We also practice meeting this goal by having Jeremiah repeat things in sequence to us. "Jerry, say cat, dog, turtle, snake."

Additional Cross Reference Activities

- Listen Up! (Chapter 4)
- Under, Over, On, Next To, Etc... (Chapter 3)
- Syllable Stomp (Chapter 8)

Chapter 3

Language Skills - Communication

Jeremiah's Goals:

- Jeremiah will expand his single word vocabulary skills (inclusive of categorization and analogies) while using age-appropriate word endings (possessives).
- Jeremiah will identify categories of objects in pictures.
- Jeremiah will use four to five-word sentences while answering a variety of "Wh" questions (object function, answer questions logically and about hypothetical events, "Where").
- Jeremiah will demonstrate understanding of expanded sentences, time concepts (day, night), and spatial concepts (under, in back of, next to, in front of).

Great Big Book of Everything

Materials Needed:

3-Ring Binder
3-Ring Pencil Case
Glue Stick
Scissors
Old Magazines
ABC Dividers for 3-Ring Binder

Yes, for those of you with preschoolers, this is the same Great Big Book of Everything from Playhouse Disney's Stanley series. My girlfriend Kim made this book for Jeremiah for his 5th birthday. For those of you who don't know what the Great Big Book of Everything is, it's basically a child's homemade encyclopedia. Kim put a three-hole pencil case inside a 3-ring binder, along with ABC dividers and notebook paper behind each letter. In the pencil case, she put a glue stick and scissors for Jeremiah. Using old magazines, Jerry cuts out pictures he likes for his encyclopedia. On the show, Stanley's encyclopedia is just for his animal friends. Jerry's is for whatever pictures he sees he likes. He cuts out the picture and then we sound out the word and sing the alphabet song until we get to the letter the word starts with. Then Jerry glues the picture to a piece of notebook paper behind its letter. I also write the name of the picture on top of the notebook paper.

Under, Over, On, Next To, Etc...

Materials Needed:

Paper
Self-Adhesive Foam Shapes
Computer & Printer

I used either Microsoft Word or Publisher to make large shapes on paper and print them out. I printed out stars, squares, triangles, circles, hearts, etc... Then I gave Jeremiah some self-adhesive foam shapes. They sell these at Wal Mart in the craft department. I bought a bucket of ones shaped like transportation vehicles because that's what Jeremiah likes. I told Jeremiah to put two boats on top of the square or three fire trucks under the

triangle. Sometimes, I would create a sheet that looked like a road or a bridge or even train tracks and ask Jeremiah to put cars or trains on the road or tracks. Jeremiah does not understand spatial reasoning and so this helped him. To throw in some counting every now and then, I would ask Jeremiah to put two boats under the bridge or three airplanes in the clouds.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- You can use this activity a little differently to hone a child's auditory processing skills too. Have your child give you the directions to a simple task. For example, let him tell you how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Pretend you've never made one before! Don't do anything without being told. He has to tell you to take the lids off of the jars and to open the bread and take the slices out. Take him literally sometimes as well. When he says to put the peanut butter on the bread slice, place the whole jar on top of the bread slice and ask him if this is what he means. He will begin to comprehend how listening carefully to directions is important. (Chapter 2)
- By using this activity as I described above, with your child giving you directions to do something, he is practicing his social skills as well and learning how to patiently respond to someone as he explains himself. (Chapter 7)

"Where's Jeremiah?"

Materials Needed:

None

This game helped Jeremiah better grasp the concepts of over, under, on top of, next to, etc... We basically played hide and seek, but while I was looking for Jeremiah, I would say things like, "Is Jeremiah hiding under the table? Is he on top of the refrigerator? Maybe he's in the closet." I would say these things until I found Jeremiah and then exclaim where I found him once I actually did.

A variation to this is to let your child hide something from you. He can hide his favorite toy or a book. Your car keys are probably not a good option! Then ask him questions about where the object is that will require him to give you clues while building his language skills. "Is it in the kitchen? Is it under something? Is it on top of something? Can I see it if I just look around or will I have to move stuff to find it?"

Picture This

Materials Needed:

Picture Books

Camera & Film

3" x 5" Index Card File Box with Dividers

Permanent Marker (Optional)

To help Jeremiah expand his single word vocabulary, we looked through lots of picture books and named everything we saw. We also did this while outside, walking through a parking lot, in the store, at the park, etc... I bought Jeremiah a photo library also. Basically, it's a box of pictures sorted by categories.

This would be easy to make however. Simply take pictures of things. Take pictures of kitchen items, lawn items, clothes, toys, furniture, school things, food, animals, etc... Make sure the pictures are close up, in focus, and do not include other items in the frame. Get your film developed into your basic 3" x 5" prints. Then get a 3" x 5" index card file box with dividers and file your pictures by category. You can even print the names of each item in the photo on the back of the pictures for word recognition too. Just make sure you use permanent ink markers and the words are completely dry before you lay the photos one on top of another.

Jeremiah loves pulling out his picture card box and just going through each of the pictures. I try to sit with him and say the names of each picture as he flips through them. He usually repeats me.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Take pictures of different emotions on faces too. Kids love seeing themselves in pictures. Tell your child to make a happy face or smile. Take their picture while they are making an angry, sad, excited, and scared face. Now you have a set of emotions cards that can be used to help develop their emotional communication skills. (Chapter 7)

Picture B-I-N-G-O

Materials Needed:

Computer & Printer
Paper
Clip Art Software
Cardstock
Gallon Ziploc Bag

This was great for increasing Jeremiah's single word vocabulary, as well as helping him with his matching skills. In Microsoft Word, I simply inserted a bunch of clip art pictures and sized them all to be the same size. Then I printed six sets of the pictures out on cardstock. I had them laminated before I cut them out. One set was for Jeremiah to use as playing pieces. Another I put into a gallon Ziploc bag for the B-I-N-G-O caller to use. The other sets were for whoever wanted to play along with Jerry.

Next, using the same clip art pictures, I created B-I-N-G-O cards and printed them out on cardstock and had them laminated as well. Basically, I put the pictures in random order in rows on a piece of paper. I did not include a "free" space, as Jeremiah would not have understood what this meant anyway. We also played until a person's card was full because

the concept behind rows across, down, or diagonal was lost to Jeremiah. Besides, the more pictures he had to cover the better, as it would only mean that many more words he was learning.

You could create these sets by category I suppose (i.e. kitchen items, toys, clothing, etc...), but I did not. I just used random pictures of various types. Though I did think about doing a game of all types of cars and trucks since this is what most interests Jeremiah. Another of Jeremiah's weaknesses is recognizing family members and remembering their names. I created picture cards of different family members to play B-I-N-G-O with as well. Jeremiah thought this was fun to see the people he loved on his cards too.

Picture Sequencing Cards

Materials Needed:

Camera
Empty Unused Pizza Box
Felt

I used my digital camera for this and then just sent the print to a nearby drugstore for developing. I took pictures during different stages of different activities. Once I had the pictures developed, I mixed them up and gave them to Jeremiah. We then talked about the activity and what came first, second, third, etc... I encouraged him to put the pictures in order and then I pointed to each picture and asked Jeremiah to tell me what was happening in each one. For example, for riding our scooters, I took several pictures. I took a picture of the closet where the scooters are kept, the helmet and knee/elbow pads being put on, the sneakers being put on and tied in a double knot, the sidewalk where we're safe riding, and then Jeremiah actually riding his scooter.

You can keep these by activity in different letter-sized envelopes or in an index card file box for safekeeping.

Another great way to use these cards is on a flannel board. Simply cover a piece of sturdy cardboard with felt and then glue a small square of felt to the back of each picture so it sticks to the board. Use a pizza box. Ask your local pizza delivery store for an empty box and fold it as if you were going to put a pizza in it.

You can cover the writing on the outside of the box or personalize it with your child's name if you wish. On the inside of the lid, put your felt, covering the entire inside lid area. For a bigger board, cover both the lid and the inside bottom of the box (where the pizza would go). The box will still close for easy storage and now you have a great place to keep the pictures your child will use on his felt board - inside the box!

You can make any size board you wish as well since there are small, medium, and large pizza boxes. Maybe you would like a large one for at home, but a small one would be nice for in the car.

You can also cover the back of a dry erase board with felt so that you have two surfaces on which your child can be creative.

Additional Cross Reference Activities

- Texture Cards (Chapter 9)
- Clothes Hanger Banner (Chapter 1)
- Listen Up! (Chapter 4)
- "Action Words" (Chapter 5)

Chapter 4

Matching Patterns - Visual Discrimination

Jeremiah's Goals:

- To be able to match alike objects and patterns.

Gigantic Dominoes

Materials Needed:

Foam Food Trays (Fruit and Vegetable Only)

Scissors

Pen

Ruler

Sticker Dots

I washed and dried the foam trays and then cut them into rectangles by cutting off the rounded corners. Then I measured and drew a line across the middle of each tray, from one long side to the other. I added sticker dots to the trays then to make them look like giant dominoes. I kept the dots the same color so that Jeremiah could just concentrate on matching the number of dots and not having to worry about the different colors as well. Besides, I didn't want to make fifty of these, just enough for Jeremiah to be able to match the like patterns. He enjoyed putting the dominoes all together to build a makeshift road for his cars to travel on afterwards too.

Life-Size Self-Portrait

Materials Needed:

Butcher Paper

Masking Tape

Markers or Crayons

Glue

Yarn & Fabric Scraps

I taped a piece of butcher paper taller than Jeremiah to the kitchen floor. Jeremiah laid down on it and then I used a marker to trace his body. I even went around his hands and fingers next to his side. If you can't find butcher paper wide enough, use freezer paper or tape two pieces of butcher paper together. I gave Jeremiah crayons and markers then and told him to draw his eyes, nose, and mouth. Then I helped him cut out fabric pieces that he glued on his body for clothes and yarn that he glued on his head for hair. He colored shoes on his feet and everything. He really loved his "big me" and we hung it on the wall for a long time. You could roll it up then to save as a keepsake or slip it in a mailing tube and ship it off to the grandparents to enjoy for a while.

Matching Objects

Materials Needed:

Ten or More sets of Identical Objects (2 in each set)

Textured Items (Corrugated Cardboard, Coins, Tree Bark, Leaves, etc...)

Cookie Sheet

Paper Bag

Ok, when I say identical, I don't mean in color, just in size and shape. I used two super balls, two Tupperware lids (small ones), two Q-tips, two quarters, 2 markers, two spoons, etc... I put one of each item on a cookie sheet in front of Jeremiah. Their twins were placed in the paper bag next to the cookie sheet. I gave Jeremiah the spoon on the cookie sheet to hold and feel. Then I told him to reach in the bag and feel around for the other spoon. I wasn't sure how this would work for Jeremiah since he'd only matched things by sight before, but he did real well and was so excited when he pulled the right object out of the bag.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Using textured items in the paper bag would help develop your child's sensory skills. Try coins, silk, tree bark, cotton balls, burlap, etc... (Chapter 9)

Listen Up!

Materials Needed:

Blank Cassette Tape

Tape Recorder with Microphone

Clip Art Software

Cardstock

Computer & Printer

Sandwich Size Ziploc Bag

Jeremiah could no more match auditory sounds than he could match visual images and I wanted to work on this. I started simply, with animal sounds. I actually found a CD with animals' sounds on it and B-I-N-G-O style cards and playing pieces to match the correct animals to their sounds. This could have been easily made however.

Using a tape recorder with a microphone and blank cassette tape, begin by recording these instructions to your child on the tape.

"Today we are going to learn our animals sounds. You have little pictures of animals in a baggie. You also have a card with the same animals pictures on it. When you hear the sound of the animal, take the picture that goes with the sound out of your baggie and put it on the matching picture on your card. For example, if you hear, 'mmmoooooo', take the picture of a cow out of your baggie and put it on the matching picture of a cow on your card in front of

you. When the whole card is full, the game will be over and you should have no pictures left in your baggie. Now let's begin."

Then, using your best imitations, make animals sounds, leaving about ten to fifteen seconds in between each sound.

Use clip art software, such as in Microsoft Word or Publisher, to create pictures of animals on a card. Print out two of these onto cardstock and have them laminated. Cut up one set and put them into a sandwich size Ziploc bag to be used as the game pieces. The other card leave whole as the playing board.

I plan to make more of these tapes to record such sounds as a racecar, a hammer, a saw, tires screeching, etc... Household items also make good sounds to record. Flushing toilets, running faucets, vacuum cleaners, clocks ticking, doors slamming or creaking, and bathroom fans all make great sounds that can be recorded.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- This activity is a great vocabulary builder, as you can ask your child what makes each sound he hears. "Who says meow? What is that sound? It sounds like some machine mommy uses to clean the floor every week. Do you know what it is?" (Chapter 3)
- Obviously, this activity can also help your child meet their information/auditory processing goals as they hear incoming messages and then answer questions about what they hear. (Chapter 2)
- Have your child repeat the sounds they hear on the tape if they can. They can make up the sounds or duplicate a dog barking or bird chirping as best they can. In this way, they will be working different mouth muscles and practicing their imitations to specific speech sounds. (Chapter 8)

Tangrams

Materials Needed:

Tangram 1.0

Computer

Tangrams are awesome. They help kids match different shapes of various sizes and color onto patterns that resemble real objects (animals, vehicles, buildings, etc...) You can buy a set of tangrams or you can use Tangrams 1.0, a free downloadable software found on the web. I used this with Jeremiah because its purpose was two-fold. It helped Jeremiah with his matching, but it also helped him with his fine motor skills as he learned to manipulate the computer mouse to complete each puzzle. The software includes levels from easy to difficult to keep the puzzles challenging while offering some level of success and building self-confidence for beginners.

For website information on downloading Tangram 1.0, see Appendix C References.

Lunch Bag Sorting

Materials Needed:

White Lunch Bags
Construction Paper
Scissors
Tape
Old Magazines

For this activity I opened some white lunch bags and then used scissors to cut a 1" x 3" wide rectangle in one side of each bag. Standing the bags upright, I then folded over their tops and gently taped them shut. Now they looked like mailboxes with their openings cut into them. Next I used construction paper to cut out different colored shapes. I made seven extra of each colored shape as well. I taped one of the shapes to the lunch bag, just under the cut out rectangle. I used five of these bags at once so Jeremiah had five different colored shapes to sort. I gave him the seven extra of each shape and mixed them up in the bottom of another lunch bag. He would then reach into the bag, pull out a shape, decide which lunch bag "mailbox" it belonged in, and then put his shape into the cut slot on the front of the correct bag. I taped the bags shut and the shapes to the front of them so that they could then be un-taped and different shapes used another time.

For a variation, put a picture of a car on one bag, a hot dog on another, and a cat on another. Then give your child more pictures you cut from magazines that fall into those categories (vehicles, food, animals). Let them sort the pictures into the bag that represents the category the pictures belong in.

Match-A-Lid

Materials Needed:

Different Sized Jars/Bottles and Their Matching Lids

I gave Jeremiah a water bottle, a baby food jar, a spaghetti jar, a 2-liter soda bottle, a liquid detergent bottle, a gravy jar, etc... Each of these was empty of course and had their corresponding lids. I took the lids off of each bottle/jar and placed them in a pile. Then I told Jeremiah to find each bottle's/jar's matching lid and put it on. This was a great matching exercise, as well as good for his fine motor development, as he screwed each lid on its correct bottle/jar. I recommend doing this while sitting on the floor so that the jars don't have the opportunity to roll off of a table and break on the floor.

This is a great activity for helping your child understand size concepts as well. Let them line the jars and/or the lids up from smallest to biggest or vice versa. They can sort the jars/lids by small, big, and biggest too.

Perler Beads

Materials Needed:

Perler Beads and Stencils

This is another of those resources that is store bought, but worthy of mentioning. Perler beads are excellent, for younger and older kids. They keep kids busy for hours, while developing matching and fine motor skills. They are rewarding because the finished project can be kept or made into a treasured gift to share with others.

Perler beads are little different colored hollowed out beads that, when heated with an iron, melt together to form a pattern or picture. Perler beads come with dozens of stencils (flowers, kid shapes, circles, animals, etc...). There are even big square stencils for making picture frames or words on. The stencils have little pegs on them that the kids put the beads on top of. There are patterns in a book to follow for different pictures, or the kids can put the beads in whatever color order they desire. When they are done with their creation, I get out the iron and melt the beads together. Then we peel them off the stencils and add magnets to the back, or string to hang them by.

Perler Beads has their own website that has printable patterns and where kids can submit pictures of their creations and have them published online with their name and age. For submitting their design picture, they also get a free gift mailed to them. Jeremiah thought it was so cool to see what he made and his name on the website.

See Appendix C References for more information on Perler beads.

Additional Cross Reference Activities

- Silly Stickers (Chapter 1)
- Sandpaper or Glue Letters and Numbers (Chapter 5)
- Poker Chip Counting (Chapter 5)

Chapter 5

*Readiness Skills - Curriculum/Learning
Environment & Communication*

Jeremiah's Goals:

- Jeremiah will give/take up to "five" objects on request.
- Jeremiah will identify eight colors and three shapes (e.g., circle, square, triangle).
- Jeremiah will identify his first name in print.
- Jeremiah will identify the letters in his first name.
- Jeremiah will rote count to 10.
- Jeremiah will state his full name, age, and gender when asked.
- Jeremiah will use scissors to cut along straight and curved lines.

Model Magic Words

Materials Needed:

Model Magic
Cardstock
Poster Paint
Wooden Picture Frame
Self-Adhesive Foam Shapes

Using Model Magic, I helped Jeremiah form the letters in his name. We then let the letters dry, flipping them over once so that they dried completely through. Then I let Jeremiah paint the letters. Using a hot glue gun, I attached the letters to an 8" a 10" piece of cardstock. I bought a wooden frame to fit the cardstock from the dollar store and then let Jeremiah decorate that as well. He used self-adhesive foam shapes to decorate the frame. I took the glass out of the frame before putting Jerry's name in it.

This was a great exercise because it let Jeremiah feel the shapes of the letters in his name and not just see them. We used Model Magic because it does not crack when it dries like play dough and is not tacky feeling like clay. Jeremiah hates sticky hands!

"Action Words"

Materials Needed:

Sidewalk Chalk

Using colored sidewalk chalk, I wrote giant words on the sidewalk for Jeremiah and then we acted out the word I wrote while tracing the letters with our steps. For example, I wrote the word *hop* and then we hopped around the H, O, and P. We barked while we walked around the word *dog* and I let him put on his roller blades to skate around the word *skate*. Sure my neighbors probably thought I was nuts hopping and barking in front of our apartments, but we had fun and Jeremiah learned the shapes of letters and that real words with real meanings are made from putting them together.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- This is also a great activity for developing a child's gross motor skills. (Chapter 1)
- Obviously, this activity will build a child's vocabulary as well. (Chapter 3)

Jeremiah's Things Labeled

Materials Needed:

Computer & Printer

Paper

Contact Paper

Scissors

I printed Jeremiah's name out in a big bold font that made the letters the shape I wanted Jeremiah to learn them in. Then I went around the house and labeled everything that belonged to Jeremiah. I put his name on the arm of his dining room chair, at the table where he sits, on his toy box, next to his picture on the wall, on his bookshelf, etc... I also cut clear contact paper to fit the labels and put it over them to keep them safe from spills, fingerprints, rips, etc... At random, we ask Jeremiah, "Where is Jeremiah's chair? Where is that picture of Jerry on the wall? Where are Jeremiah's cars, books, movies, etc...?" He always points to wherever we put his name in the closest proximity to whatever it is we asked him to find for us. It's been a great tool for helping Jeremiah recognize the letters in his first name. And yes, sometimes I do wish for his sake that I had named him Bob or Bill!

Same and Different

Materials Needed:

Index Cards

Marker

I put letters on index cards. Some cards have just one letter on them. Others have two, but no more than two. I made two of each of these cards. Then I gave one card to Jeremiah and asked him to find me the card that is the same as the one he has. In a row on the table in front of him, I put three more cards. One of them is obviously the same as the one I gave to him. He tells me which one that is. To switch it up a little, I might ask him to find me the card that is different and then just put two cards on the table in front of him, one different and one the same. He has a harder time with different than he does with same and that's why I only give him two cards to distinguish between when I'm asking for different.

Examples of Cards: The top one is Jeremiah's and the bottom two are the ones he has to choose from.

JK
BF
JK

Tactile ABC Book

Materials Needed:

Paper

Various Objects (depending on letter you're working on)

Computer & Printer

I printed out giant outline letters and then let Jeremiah glue objects that began with each letter inside their outline. For example, for the letter "C", I gave him cotton balls to glue inside. He glued macaroni in the letter "M" and stuck apple stickers inside the letter "A". We put these letters in a 3-ring binder to make his own tactile ABC book. There is just something about being able to feel the shape of the letters that makes them easier to learn them and their sound.

See Appendix C for the website to download and print the outline letters.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- The best way for a child to learn how to read is to learn the sounds each letter makes, not just the names of the letters. To practice the letter sounds, keep repeating "ccccc" or "mmmm" or "rrrrr" while the child is decorating their outline letters. This is great for their speech development too. (Chapter 8)

Magnetic Cookie Sheet Fun

Materials Needed:

Steel Cookie Sheet

Magnetic Alphabet Letters/Numbers

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom/Chicka Chicka 1-2-3 (by Bill Martin Jr.)

Colored Picture of a Coconut Tree/Apple Tree

I printed out a large coconut tree pattern and colored it. Then I taped it to a steel cookie sheet. As I read Chicka Chicka Boom Boom to Jeremiah, he found each of the magnetic letters and made them "climb" the coconut tree. Then he took each of them off as we got

to the part in the book where all of the letters came tumbling down. We did the same thing with Chicka Chicka 1-2-3, a colored picture of an apple tree, and magnetic numbers.

See Appendix C for the website to download and print the coconut tree pattern, as well as the apple tree pattern.

Hop-A-Lot

Materials Needed:

None

Jeremiah and I did this anytime really. He would tell me he had to go to the bathroom and I would say, "Ok, tell let's count how many hops it takes you to get there." Or if he wanted a piece of candy, I would ask him to hop five times first and then we would count out loud while he hopped. Sometimes I would have him hop on one foot and hold his hand to balance him. He thought this was especially fun, trying not to fall over.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Hop-A-Lot is great for developing gross motor skills. (Chapter 1)

Number Collage

Materials Needed:

Old Magazines

Scissors

Glue

Paper

Marker

I wrote a big number in the middle of a sheet of paper. Then I gave Jeremiah some old magazines and asked him to cut out that same number of pictures. They could be any pictures, as that was not the point. He just needed to make sure he cut out the same number of pictures. I counted with him of course. He would cut out one picture and I would say, "Ok, let's count how many you have there. One. We need four. That means we need one, two, three more." I would use my fingers to illustrate all of this for him and then repeat the process after he'd cut out the second picture. It sounds repetitive, but that's what Jeremiah needed. This activity also helped him exercise his fine motor skills with the use of scissors.

Fancy Numbers

Materials Needed:

Paper

Stickers

Markers & Crayons

Dry Beans, Rice, Noodles

Tissue Paper Balls

Yarn

Glitter

I printed out giant outline numbers on paper and let Jeremiah glue whatever he wanted to inside them. I gave him tissue paper to tear into pieces and then roll into balls. He used macaroni noodles, stickers, yarn, glitter, dry beans and rice, etc... The point was not to use the same number of things on his picture as the number on the page, but just to have fun decorating the number while learning its shape.

See Appendix C for the website to download and print the outline numbers.

Model Magic Numbers

Materials Needed:

Model Magic

Like the ABC's, we simply rolled Model Magic into long snakes and then Jeremiah would copy me as I would twist mine into the shapes of various numbers.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- If you give your child some beads and have him push the beads into the Model Magic numbers, it will make them more fun to make and also help develop his fine motor skills. (Chapter 1)

Number Set Noodles

Materials Needed:

Noodle Varieties (i.e. ziti, macaroni, wagon wheel, shells, etc...)

Glue

Construction Paper

Marker

I picked a number. Let's say it was the number four. Then I drew four circles on the construction paper with a marker. I gave Jeremiah a variety of noodles and then told him to glue four into each circle. He could pick any pattern of noodles he wanted to use and glue them inside the circle in any design he wanted to. He simply could only use four noodles

inside each of the four circles. When he was done, I used the marker to write the number four beside his noodles and inside each circle as we counted each set of noodles out loud.

Egg Carton Counting

Materials Needed:

Empty Styrofoam Egg Carton (12-Egg Size)
Permanent Marker
Dry Beans

I wrote the numbers one through six in the bottom of the individual Styrofoam egg carton cups with a permanent marker. Therefore, there were two 1's, two 2's, two 3's, etc... Then I gave Jeremiah some dried beans. I made sure they were the same kind of bean because I didn't want Jerry to get distracted by the different kinds of beans. This exercise was only about counting. I asked him what a specific number was by pointing to it. If he didn't know, I told him and then he counted out that number of beans to put in the egg cup. Once Jeremiah can count out six objects, I will use another Styrofoam egg carton to help him practice his numbers seven through twelve.

Critter Counters

Materials Needed:

Miniature Animals, Reptiles, Fish, etc...
Coloring Sheet Pictures of Different Environments
Crayons

I bought some little buckets, bags, and containers of critters from the dollar store. I bought a bucket of farm animals, one of sea creatures, and one of lizards and other reptiles. Then I downloaded some coloring sheets of these critters' different environments, colored them, and had them laminated. I give Jeremiah an environment picture in front of him and some basic directions. "Put five cows next to the barn. Put three pigs in the mud. Put 2 lizards on the fence. Put four fish in the water." As Jeremiah's counting skills develop I will have him begin to add the animals. For example, I will have him put two cows on the sheet and three pigs. Then I will ask him how many animals there are altogether.

For website information on where to find the coloring sheet pictures of different environments, see Appendix C References.

Poker Chip Counting

Materials Needed:

Poker Chips
Containers with Plastic Lids (Recycled Pringles or Slim Jim Cans work great.)
Sharp Knife (for mom and dad only)

You can pick up a pack of 100 poker chips from your local dollar store and occupy your little guys for hours! Jeremiah loves counting them and sorting them by color (red, blue, and white). He also likes to arrange them in different patterns on the table or floor.

You can also use the cans for counting each color poker chip as your child puts them in their correct can. Take away from and add to the chips each time the child does this so he won't always know the exact number of chips.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Using three (one for each color poker chip) recycled cans, you can cut slits in their lids for sorting. You can put a red chip in front of one can, a blue in front of one, and a white in front of the third can and then tell your child to put the same color chips in each of those cans. (Chapter 4)
- Having to use their pincher fingers to grip and slide the poker chips into the slits on the can lids will develop fine motor skills as well. (Chapter 1)

Colored Links/Paper Clips

Materials Needed:

Colored Links/Paper Clips

These are awesome! The colored links look just like plastic colored ovals that have a seam where they come apart and allow another link to be attached to them. Colored paper clips work just as well, but can be a little more difficult for little hands to link together and then take back apart. The cool thing is that they can be used for sorting by color and counting. Jeremiah and I make chains, necklaces, and paper clip snakes and then take them back apart again. I ask him for specific colors or help him pattern colors. For example, I may link two green, then two blue, and then two green links together. Then I'll ask Jeremiah, "Which color should come next?" Jeremiah will also put the links together by color and then see which chain is longest. There are truly a lot of different ways these links can be used. For smaller hands, I recommend the giant colored paper clips. There are even plastic paper clips used for bookmarks available and these work great too. Most office supplies stores carry these, as do Wal Mart and K Mart.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Linking these paper clips or links together is great for little fingers to build their fine motor skills too. (Chapter 1)

Shapes or Color Lotto

Materials Needed:

Poster Board
Unlined Index Cards
Scissors
Markers
Ruler

I cut a piece of poster board in half to make two game boards. Using a ruler, I divided each game board into six squares. In each square I drew a different shape (i.e. circle, triangle, oval, square, rectangle, diamond). Both game boards were different in that the same shapes were not in the same blocks on the cards. Then I drew two of each of the shapes on unlined index cards. I drew these shapes with black marker, as well as the shapes on the game boards. I wanted Jeremiah to focus only on the shapes and not any of his colors. We laid the index cards face down between us and took turns picking one up. If Jeremiah picked up a circle, he laid it on top of the circle on his game board, and so on. If we picked up a card we already had the shape for, we mixed it back into the pile of cards between us. The first one to have their entire board covered won. I made sure to say each shape that Jeremiah picked up to reinforce his recognition of that shape.

This same game can be done with colors as well. Just make each square of the game board a different color and color two index cards for each color as well. For the index cards, you could simply cut out a piece of colored construction paper the same size as the index card and glue it on top.

Shape Collage

Materials Needed:

Colored Construction Paper
Scissors
Pencil
Glue
Paper

I picked a shape to focus on. I drew circles on different colors of construction paper. I drew them all different sizes. Jeremiah helped me cut out a few, but then his hands got tired and so I cut out the rest. I gave him a piece of paper then and he made a collage by gluing the different sized and colored circles all over the paper, even overlapping them if he wanted to. As he glued each one down, I would say something like, "Oohh, that's a blue circle. Good Jerry. What color are you going to pick next?" Since all of the shapes were circles, I didn't think it was too much to make the circles all different colors to work on Jerry's color recognition as well. I simply made sure I said the color and the shape to him each time he glued one onto the paper.

Sponge Painting

Materials Needed:

Sponge Shapes, Letters, & Numbers
Poster Paint
Rimmed Paper Plates (One for Each Paint Color)
Butcher Paper
Masking Tape
Tupperware Bowl of Water

I taped a piece of butcher paper at each corner down onto the table. Then I put a different color poster paint on different rimmed paper plates. I gave Jeremiah sponges in different shapes. Some were even shaped like numbers and letters. I showed him how to dip the sponge in the paint color and then press it down onto the butcher paper and lift it to transfer the image. I also put a Tupperware bowl of water next to him and showed him how to rinse and squeeze out each sponge before he used it again in a different color of paint.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Let your child use different types of sponges to create different effects. There are all types of coral sponges available. This will also change the way the sponge feels in their hands and enhance their sense of touch. (Chapter 9)
- The way the sponges need to be gripped in order to paint with them develops fine motor skills as well. (Chapter 1)

Painter's Tape Highway

Materials Needed:

Painter's Tape
Matchbox Cars/Trucks

Painter's Tape is colorful and peels easily off any surface without leaving a sticky residue, even after being left in place for a few days. I used the tape to make large letters, numbers, and shapes for Jeremiah on the floor. I did it on my linoleum in the dining room and hallway. He used the giant figures as roads he could drive his cars and trucks over. It was great to see him using his imagination and his hands to trace the shapes of these letters, numbers, and figures. I think it reinforced them in his mind. Jeremiah has lots of car sets that include little trees, road signs, miniature buildings, etc... We had fun building a city around his "highways" for him to play on.

"J" Board

Materials Needed:

Foam Board

Permanent Marker

Clear Contact Paper

On a piece of foam board, I drew a giant "J" for Jeremiah with a fat permanent marker. Then I covered the board with clear contact paper. I gave Jeremiah different mediums to outline the "J" with. He used noodles, his cars, pennies, yarn, beads, etc... This just helped to reinforce the letter in his mind and make it easier to recognize his name.

Shape Sandwiches

Materials Needed:

Bread

Cheese Slices

Peanut Butter

Jelly

Rimmed Paper Plates

Shaped Crackers

I cut triangles, circles, rectangles, and squares from bread and cheese. Then I put the cheese on one paper plate and the bread on another and told Jeremiah to match the shapes of bread and cheese together before eating them. Jerry's not a huge cheese fan so I also used bread shapes with peanut butter on some and jelly on the others so that he could match them to make his own little PB & J's.

Some snack brands also make crackers shaped like triangles, circles, squares, and rectangles. This would save you some time by eliminating the bread cutting. Check your supermarket.

I Spy

Materials Needed:

None

This was a great game to play anywhere and also to help Jeremiah pass time at doctor's offices, restaurants, in shopping stores, etc... Basically, I would say to Jeremiah, "I spy something blue." He would then look around and tell me what he saw that was blue. Because Jeremiah easily frustrated, I let him believe that the first thing he saw and reported to me that was blue was actually what I had been looking at. The point was not to try and fool Jeremiah, but to help him practice his color recognition. As he gets better at multi-tasking, I will try, "I spy two blue things, Jeremiah." This will conquer his color recognition skills, as well as his counting skills. There are I Spy books as well and Jeremiah does enjoy looking

for hidden pictures in them too, but what I like most about I Spy, is that it can be played without any additional resources.

Cookie Cutter Fun

Materials Needed:

Cookie Cutters
Sugar Cookie Dough
Melted Butter or Margarine
Colored Sprinkles
Model Magic

I found a great big tub of cookie cutters that included letters 0-9 and all of the A-B-C's, as well as various shapes. Model Magic was fun to work with, but using rolled out sugar cookie dough was so much more fun. If we were working on a particular letter or number, I would have Jerry use the cutter for that shape and cut out as many cookies for me as he could. Then I would bake them and brush them with a little butter. Jeremiah would then practice his fine motor skills by sprinkling the cookie letters or numbers with sprinkles. I got different colored sprinkles so we could talk about what color he was sprinkling on each one as well. I would prompt Jeremiah to offer daddy some "A" or "3" cookies when he got home from work. I would also encourage him to share them with his friends, grandparents, and speech teacher. The more he offered people the "A" or "3" cookies, the more he reinforced his knowledge of what the letter or number was.

This activity also works with Model Magic, especially if you don't want to make sugar cookies every other week!

Dry-Erase Workbooks/Flash Cards

Materials Needed:

Preschool Skills Dry Erase Workbooks/Flash Cards
Dry Erase Markers
Old Rag or Dry Erase Board Eraser

For a child who gets easily frustrated by his own writing mistakes, especially when he makes them frequently, dry erase books are a Godsend. I found some great Little People preschool dry erase books that covered matching, color and shape recognitions, 1-2-3's, A-B-C's, and more. I even found some dry erase flash cards that reinforced these skills and helped Jeremiah practice his tracing skills as well. They were great because Jeremiah could work in the books by himself. He could do what the pages asked of him or just color the pictures if he wanted to. Then with just the wipe of an eraser or old rag, the pages were ready for him to work on again another day.

A-B-C and 1-2-3 Stampers

Materials Needed:

A-B-C and 1-2-3 Stamps

Inkpads

Paper

These worked wonders for fine motor skills as well since Jeremiah had to use his pincher fingers to hold onto the stems on the backs of the rubber stamps. I basically gave Jerry paper and let him stamp away. Using different colored inkpads kept it fresh and fun as well. I'd look at his masterpiece then and point at the different letters and/or numbers, saying their names as I touched them. Sometimes, if he had the patience for it, I would hand him specific letters in order and have Jeremiah stamp them one next to another. Then I would tell him what word he just stamped. Usually, it was his name or simple three letter words like "cat" or "car".

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Use scented inkpads for enhancing your child's sense of smell. (Chapter 9)

1" x 1" Ceramic Tile Letters & Numbers

Materials Needed:

1" x 1" Ceramic Tiles

Permanent Marker

I actually picked some of these already made letter tiles up at a home school used curriculum sale, but believe you could get some of these as throw-aways from a local flooring store. They were 1' x 1' ceramic tiles, probably for tiling a swimming pool. They had individual letters, letter combinations, or letter sounds on each tile in permanent marker so that they could be put together to make words. With Jeremiah's tendency towards lining things up, he simply loved to dump the tiles out onto the floor and match the letters or arrange them in his own random patterns. When he was finished, it always looked like a giant crossword puzzle on the floor.

He was still learning the shapes of the letters though, whether he knew it or not. I think Jeremiah also likes them because they were heavy enough to stack like blocks (on the floor of course), and they wouldn't move easily and frustrate him while he was lining them up. I have since seen plastic tiles similar to these at Wal Mart and in a tidy little container with a lid, and I even bought them for Jeremiah, but he still prefers the ceramic tiles instead. My older kids even like playing with these like Scrabble tiles and trying to see who can come up with the greatest number of words from a certain number of tiles.

Sandpaper or Glue Letters & Numbers

Materials Needed:

Unlined Index Cards

Sandpaper

Scissors

ABC/123 Stencils

Glue

Using ABC/123 stencils, trace letters onto sandpaper and then cut them out. Glue them to unlined index cards for your child to feel the shape of each letter or number. Another way to enable your child to "feel" the shapes of letters and numbers is to use glue (not glue sticks). Draw the letter or number in the glue on an unlined index card. Once the glue dries, the child will be able to run his fingers over the shape and feel the raised letter or number. Using colored glue would be even better because the child could then both see and feel the letters and numbers. White glue on colored index cards works in the same way.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- This is a great sensory activity as well, giving the child several different mediums to use his sense of touch on. (Chapter 9)
- Make two sets of index cards, one with uppercase alphabet letters on it and the other featuring the lowercase. Mix them up and have your child match the letters upper to lower. (Chapter 4)

Wikki Stix Fun

Materials Needed:

Wikki Stix

Dry Erase Board

Wikki Stix are non-toxic, endlessly reusable, and best of all, they leave no residue. They are made from a wax formula and yarn and can be twisted and bent into any shape, letter, or number. They come in many colors and will stay put temporarily on a dry erase board. They're great for travel fun too.

See Appendix C References for Wikki Stix's website information.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Wikki Stix have a unique waxy and slightly sticky feel to them and are great for sensory building. (Chapter 9)

Additional Cross Reference Activities

- Finger Painting (Chapter 1)
- Eye Dropper Pinching (Chapter 1)
- Stencil Fun (Chapter 1)

Chapter 6

Recognize Facial Expressions - Visual Discrimination

Jeremiah's Goals:

- To determine between the different facial expressions made by others (anger, fear, disgust, sad, happy, surprise).

Thomas the Train Emotions Game

Materials Needed:

Foam Board
Poster Board
Thomas the Train Emotion Pictures
Clear Contact Paper
Glue
Game Pieces

Jeremiah loves Thomas the Train and his friends and so this was a fun game to make. If you've ever noticed before, Thomas and his friends make great faces to show how they feel. I found a website that had all the many faces of Thomas and his friends showing each of the emotions Jeremiah needed to work on. There was happy, sad, disgusted, embarrassed, surprised, scared, angry, and even shy. I printed out about ten sets of these pictures and cut them out. On a piece of foam board, I glued the pictures randomly in rows going around the board (similar to Candy Land). I put a green dot to mark where to start the game and a red dot to mark the end of the game. Then I covered the foam board in clear contact paper to protect it for future play.

The rest of the games' faces I glued to poster board and then had laminated at a local copy store. Jeremiah and I used two different colored poker chips as our game pieces, but you could use two Thomas the Train figurines if you had them. Basically, I would put the pile of game cards face down on the table and we would take turns drawing a card and turning it over. We would name the emotion and then move our game pieces to the matching emotion on the board. Whoever made it to the end of the trail first, won the game. In order to win, however, you had to make sure the last card you drew to win matched the last emotion on the board. If it did not, you waited for your next turn and drew another card. You kept doing this until you picked the matching face.

I never used the words won or lost with Jeremiah as this only upset him (unless of course, he won). We just played for fun really. Even my older kids enjoyed playing this game with us. When someone finished the game, we would simply say, "Ok, Jonathan's finished. Let's keep playing and see who finishes next."

See Appendix C for the website to download and print the many faces of Thomas pictures.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Social skills can be built playing the Thomas game as well. Talk about what you can do when someone feels the way Thomas looks. We hug someone who is sad, walk away from someone who is angry, and laugh with someone who is happy. You can also talk with your child about what they can do when they feel the way Thomas looks. What are okay reactions to being happy, sad, angry, or scared? (Chapter 7)

Online Facial Expressions/Feelings Games

Materials Needed:

Computer

This resource was sent to me by a friend who also has a son on the autism spectrum and is on a restricted budget. This online game has two options for play. There is a facial expressions game where by simply clicking the mouse on specific facial features, you can change eye, eyebrow, and mouth shapes to show how different emotions can be displayed on our faces.

Then there is a feelings game that has four parts to it. After completing each part successfully, the child can move on to the next part of the game. First, the child can choose which person they want to work with. Jeremiah chose a picture of a little girl. In the first part of the game, a series of pictures of the girl's face were shown, each one depicting a different emotion. The game would ask, "Which picture shows happy?" Jeremiah would point to the picture of the little girl that he thought showed her happy. I would help him click on that picture with the mouse and then the game would let him know whether or not he was correct and move on to the next emotion.

After completing part 1 of the feelings game, part 2 showed just one picture of the little girl and gave three feelings to choose from to depict what the girl was feeling in the picture. This was a little harder for Jeremiah. I would ask him whether or not he thought she was sad, happy, or angry and he would tell me what he thought. Part 1 of the feelings game was definitely easier as he had three pictures to choose from and only one feeling.

Part 3 was designed to teach about faces and feelings as well. In this part of the game, it would say something like, "Morgan called Sally a mean name and Sally was sad. How did Sally look?" Then there would be three pictures of Sally and I would ask Jeremiah to show me which picture of Sally looked sad.

Part 4 of the feelings game was designed to teach kids what to do with their feelings. The game said, "Julie decided to share her cupcake with Jenny. How do you think Jenny felt?" Then there would be three pictures of Jenny to choose from to show how she felt about Julie sharing with her. Jeremiah would point to the picture and I would name the feeling under it, such as happy, angry, sad, etc... The next screen would validate the child's choice if it was correct and then give them some ideas for how to handle the emotion they felt or deal with the situation that made them feel that emotion to begin with.

See the Appendix C References section for the location of these online games.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Again, social skills can be built playing these facial expressions and feelings games. Talk about what you can do when someone feels a certain feeling. We hug someone who is sad, walk away from someone who is angry, and laugh with someone who is happy. You can also talk with your child about what they can do when they feel a certain way. What are okay reactions to being happy, sad, angry, or scared? (Chapter 7)

Chapter 7

*Socialization - Social Skills &
Social/Emotional Communication*

Jeremiah's Goals:

- To interact with other children in an age appropriate manner.
- Jeremiah will exchange in social exchanges with peers and adults (e.g., responding to greetings, giving eye contact, initiating greetings).
- Jeremiah will express his feelings in an appropriate way by using words and/or seeking help when needed.
- Jeremiah will remain in assigned areas of the classroom and school grounds.
- Jeremiah will share and take turns with his peers during play and work opportunities.
- Jeremiah will use toys and classroom materials for their intended purposes.

Social Stories

Materials Needed:

Computer & Printer

Paper

Social stories are customizable stories that teach social and daily living skills for community, home, and school. There are stories on respecting others personal space, using kind words, manners, when routines change, potty training, and more. The cool thing about these books is that, with just a few clicks of your mouse, you can personalize them. I chose a little boy with short red hair, blue eyes, and freckles and actually named him Jeremiah. When it asked for the names of Jerry's friends, I used those of his real friends from church. It lets you fill in the blanks on issues, consequences, actions, etc... to make the story as personal to the child as possible. I adjust these stories accordingly to where Jeremiah is developmentally, as sometimes the issues we are dealing with are the same, but how Jeremiah is responding or reacting in the midst of them changes. I print these stories and then I put them in three-ring binders to make books of them. Jeremiah likes that the books use his name, as well as the names of his friends and siblings.

For more information on creating and printing customizable social stories, see Appendix C References.

Additional Cross Reference Activities

- Baby Doll Dress-Up (Chapter 1)
- Under, Over, On, Next To, Etc... (Chapter 3)
- Picture This (Chapter 3)
- Thomas the Train Emotions Game (Chapter 6)
- Online Facial Expressions/Feelings Game (Chapter 6)
- Sound Seeing (Chapter 8)

Chapter 8

Speech Therapy - Communication

Jeremiah's Goals:

- Jeremiah will correctly produce the /f/ and /v/ sounds, all positions of words.
- Jeremiah will correctly produce the /k/ and /g/ sounds, all positions of words.
- Jeremiah will correctly produce the /l/ sound, all positions, and the /l/ blends.
- Jeremiah will eliminate the phonological process of consonant blend reduction.
- Jeremiah will eliminate the phonological process of fronting.

Sound Seeing

Materials Needed:

Hand-held Mirror

This sounds pretty basic, but I found it helpful to show Jeremiah how my mouth and tongue move or are shaped while saying certain letters and then see if he can copy me. I gave him a hand-held mirror so he could practice making his mouth and tongue look just like mine while we practiced some of the sounds he had trouble with.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Sound Seeing is a great activity for building social skills too. Use a bigger mirror, like the one in your bathroom. Make sure your child can see his and your face simultaneously in the reflection. Make faces that imitate certain feelings (happy, sad, angry, scared) and ask them to make the same face. Talk about why you might make such faces (birthday party, hurt yourself, favorite toy broke, lightening). Copy your child's faces too as he makes them. He'll think this is great fun. Be silly! (Chapter 7)

Syllable Stomp

Materials Needed:

None

I said a word, pausing in between syllables, and stomped my foot for each syllable in the word. I asked Jeremiah to repeat after me. Sometimes, we clapped instead. We have also used rhythm sticks that we tap on the table or floor while we say each word and its syllables. I try to say words he likes, such as baseball, his name, the ABC's, ice cream, etc... This helps Jeremiah realize that there are parts to the words he is saying. Often, he just blends the sounds together to form his own version of a word and that's what makes it so hard for others to understand him.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Syllable Stomp is great for auditory processing too because it is asking your child to listen to your words and then respond with an action to what you said. (Chapter 2)

Speechercise

Materials Needed:

Speechercise

This is another one of those invaluable resources I would not have known about had I not stumbled across it at a remote special education booth at Florida's annual Home School convention. Speechercise is a music CD with a printable 65-page workbook. It was designed to help children improve their pronunciation and articulation. I like it because, once again we can do this either at home or in the van. Jeremiah has even borrowed his sister's portable CD player to listen to this CD alone. Speechercise is for kids who mispronounce sounds in words, leave off syllables from long words, miss the beginning or ending sounds of words, have difficulty combining sounds into words, or struggle to move their tongue, lips, and jaw consistently.

See the Bibliography portion of this book for more information on Speechercise.

Speech-Language-Therapy.com

Materials Needed:

Computer

Printer

This is a cool website I found while researching speech therapy options for Jeremiah. It has colorful printable worksheets that help reinforce different sounds and sound blends. It has instructions for how to use each of the worksheets that are easy to follow and do right at home.

See Appendix C References for more information on this website.

Bubble Blowing

Materials Needed:

Bubbles

Bubble blowing is a great way to teach kids how to form those rounded lips needed to pronounce specific sounds or words. If your child has trouble blowing the bubbles himself, then you blow them for him. Using the bubble wand catch the bubble you blew and then bring the already-formed bubble to his lips and let him blow it off the wand. Sometimes that's easier than actually blowing the bubble from scratch.

See Appendix B Recipes for an excellent homemade bubble recipe.

Additional Cross Reference Activities

- Listen Up! (Chapter 4)
- Tactile ABC Book (Chapter 5)

Chapter 9

Sensory Input

Even though Jeremiah's IEP did not list objectives for sensory input, it is still an area he struggles with. He does not like loud noises, at least noises louder than he is! He is partial to anything satin or silk and has toted a satin Pooh Bear blanket with him since he could crawl. He does not like getting his hands sticky either. Visually, Jeremiah is stimulated by things that spin, like tires on a bicycle or car, ceiling fans, bowling balls as they travel down the lanes, etc... Thankfully, he does not have any aversions (yet) to tastes, but I know that some kids with special needs do.

Touch

Texture Cards

Materials Needed:

Unlined Index Cards

Textured Items

Using unlined index cards, glue different textured items to each one for your child to practice feeling. Use corrugated cardboard, tree bark, corduroy, satin or silk, burlap, sandpaper, and whatever else you can find that feels different.

Additional Cross Reference Opportunities

- Build your child's vocabulary by asking him questions about each texture card as he feels it. "Is it smooth or rough? Is it soft or hard? Is it bumpy? Is it cold? Does it feel good? Why or why not?" (Chapter 3)

Additional Cross Reference Activities

- "Goop" Art (Chapter 1)
- Salt Dig (Chapter 1)
- Rice Scooping (Chapter 1)
- Finger Painting (Chapter 1)
- Clothes Hanger Banner (Chapter 1)
- Moon Sand (Chapter 1)
- Matching Objects (Chapter 4)
- Sandpaper or Glue Letters and Numbers (Chapter 5)
- Sponge Painting (Chapter 5)
- Wikki Stix Fun (Chapter 5)
- Bean Bags (Chapter 10)

Hearing

Additional Cross Reference Activities

- Homemade Band (Chapter 1)

Smell

Additional Cross Reference Activities

- Fingerprint Fun (Chapter 1)
- Silly Stickers (Chapter 1)
- A-B-C and 1-2-3 Stampers (Chapter 5)

Chapter 10

More Educational Fun

Some things I do with Jeremiah can be used to advance him in more than one area and that's what this section is for. This is just more resources *in addition* to the ones already mentioned in the preceding chapters.

Folder Games

Materials Needed:

Letter Size File Folders

Letter Size Envelopes

Folder Games Book (Optional) - See Bibliography

Crayons

Markers

Scissors

Poster Board

Folder games are a lot of fun, portable, and easy to make. I used a file folder reference book and made copies of its games for my file folders, but you could devise your own by using clip art software, cardstock, a computer & printer. Here's an example of a matching file folder game I made for Jeremiah. It's called Monster Mix-Up. There were ten pairs of monsters to color. Some were wearing glasses; some had mustaches, some necklaces, shoes, bare feet, etc... All of the pairs were different. I colored each pair of monsters identically so that Jeremiah could tell that they were a perfect match to one another.

One set of all of the monsters I glued inside a letter size file folder. I wrote the name of the game on the folder's tab and then had the folder laminated. On the backside of the folder I glued a letter size envelope. In it, I put the other set of monsters for Jeremiah to use as game pieces. First, I glued them to poster board and had them laminated to make them more durable. Whenever he wants to now, he pulls the folder off the shelf, takes the monsters out of the envelope, opens the folder, and proceeds to match his monster game pieces to the ones glued inside the folder.

There are many varieties of folder games teaching many different concepts. Jeremiah has one that matches halves of people's faces to their other halves. He has one that matches different insects to one another, and so on. The possibilities are really limitless. I like these games because Jeremiah can play them without anyone's help.

For readiness skills, Jeremiah has a game that matches colored dog bones to their corresponding colored food bowls. He has one that matches shapes of various kinds and colors as well. For visual discrimination and to help Jeremiah with his inability to read people's expressions, we even made a game that matches different facial expressions to their twins. Then we talk about what the expression means (i.e. happy, sad, angry, shy, embarrassed).

I highly recommend folder games. They are great for occupying time in the car, at doctor's offices, at appointments, etc...

See the Bibliography for more information regarding a great file folder games reference book.

Flash Cards

Materials Needed:

Various Types of Flash Cards
Trading Cards

Jeremiah loves cards of any type and so flash cards are a great resource for us. They are portable and so I can just keep a deck in my purse and pull them out whenever and wherever for him to look at. Nowadays, you can find cards with pictures of dinosaurs on them, transportation pictures, pictures of community helpers, etc... Flash cards aren't just for learning your ABC's and math facts anymore. I just let Jeremiah go through the cards and answer him whenever he asks, "What's that?"

Jeremiah loves trading cards as well; baseball, football, basketball, etc... He can learn the same way with these cards that he can with flash cards. Often, he will sit and put the players in piles according to the color jersey they are wearing or what sport they are playing.

See Appendix C References for a website to download customized, printable flash cards.

Read, Read, Read

Materials Needed:

Books

As I type these very words, I can picture my dear friend Cathy, a pioneering home school mom at our church, who works for our county's library system. She has always stressed to each of us new home schooling moms the importance of reading to our children and how right she is. Jeremiah loves books and he loves to read. The library is like Toys 'R Us to him and he loves going and picking out his own books. He points to things in the books and asks me what they are. Sometimes he won't wait for me to read all of the words on a page before he tried to turn it, but we talk about the pictures, subject, and whatever else interests him on the pages at that moment. Going to the library also helps Jeremiah hone his social skills by practicing obeying library etiquette.

There are two other resources related to books I feel are worthy of mentioning. One is Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. Ms. Parton has graciously taken her own love for books and coupled it with the importance of reading to young children and created the Imagination Library. Basically, children born after a certain date are eligible to participate in the program free of charge and reap the awesome benefits of growing their own personal library. Enrolled children receive books monthly from birth through age five. The books are age and development appropriate for each stage of the child's toddler hood. Jeremiah

would get so excited whenever dad would come in through the door announcing that Jeremiah got a present in the mail. He just knew it was a new book and we had to read each one immediately upon arrival. Not every city has initiated the Imagination Library. Check out Dolly Parton's website in the references section of this book to find out if your city participates and, if not, how you can request they do.

The other resource I want to share with you is Tumble Books. Tumble Books is an online library or hundreds of books that can be read aloud to your child right there while sitting at the computer. They are colorful, animated, and though they could never take the place of reading a real book with your child, Tumble Books are a great resource. There have been times when I am busy with home schooling my other three kids and Jeremiah has wanted to read a book with me and got impatient. I put him in front of a Tumble Book and he was satisfied.

See Appendix C References for links to both Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and Tumble Books.

Books on Tape

Materials Needed:

Tape Recorder
Blank Cassette Tapes
Children's Books

Though nothing can take the place of reading a book with your child, books on tape are a great way to multitask when you have chores, errands, dinner, a spouse, and other children waiting in the wings. Using an old-fashioned tape recorder and some blank cassette tapes, I recorded reading some of Jeremiah's favorite books to him. I changed the inflection of my voice to note different characters speaking, told Jeremiah to look for certain pictures on the pages we were on, and even told him when to turn the page. I have other books on tape by real authors and storytellers and can even get them through our local library, but Jeremiah loves the ones with my voice on them the best.

Plug-n-Play T.V. Games

Materials Needed:

Plug-n-Play T.V. Games

Ok, I know what you're thinking and all you've heard about video games, but these are different. My older children have handheld and full size video gaming systems and Jeremiah absolutely loves to watch them play. Every now and then he will ask to play, but then gives up frustrated and brokenhearted only moments later that he's just not coordinated enough for those double-sided, multi-faceted remote controls. I'll admit it. I can't even manipulate those things. I miss Atari! What happened to the controls with just one joystick and little red button for firing?

Anyway, the Plug-n-Play T.V. game systems are that easy and the array of games available offers a great resource for young learners. Jeremiah helps Bob the Builder build a brick wall and his crew mix cement and carry logs from one place to another. On Thomas the Train, Jeremiah helps park the trains and switch the tracks. He has Sesame Street and even Whack-A-Mole, which comes with a handy little mallet to "whomp" the correct colored circle on the remote to the corresponding circle on the screen that he saw the sure-footed mole pop up through. Jeremiah loves these games. I don't let him sit in front of them for hours at a time, but he does enjoy them and it makes him feel like he can do something his brothers and sister can do, which for him living with Asperger's Syndrome is very important.

The Word & Song Children's Bible

Materials Needed:

The Word & Song Children's Bible

When Jeremiah was first diagnosed, I had never heard of Asperger's Syndrome before or knew of anyone who had it. After his diagnosis, it seemed as though news programs were focusing on it, we were learning of other children and even famous adults who were diagnosed with it, and well wishers alike were calling us saying, "I know this person you should talk to." Well, one mother of a child with developmental delays will forever remain one of the greatest resources to ever come my way. We spoke for an hour about reading, social skills, colors & shapes, and more, but then she gave me the best wisdom of all. She told me that Jeremiah could learn to read, write, and get along with others during any developmental stage of his life, but that his time to learn about who God was and what He did for him was best learned while he was still young. Character development far outweighs ABC's and 123's she told me. Teach him Scripture and what it means to live for his Savior she said.

With that in mind, the resource I treasure above all others in this book is The Word & Song Children's Bible. It is a beautifully illustrated hardbound Bible storybook with over 100 read-along stories in it. There are 70 sing-along songs to go with some of the stories, and 5 cassette tapes to listen to as people like Max Lucado, Joni Eareckson Tada, Steve Green, and Twila Paris lend voice to the stories that make the Scriptures come alive for Jeremiah. The stories are exciting, full of life and truth, and told in words that even preschoolers can understand. I treasure this resource and plan on saving it for even my grandchildren to learn by someday.

Music

Materials Needed:

Learning Songs

Never underestimate the learning potential found in music. There's just something almost easy about learning through song. Think of how easy it is to memorize Scripture when it's found in the lyrics of your favorite song. Anyway, there are thousands of CD's out there

with songs to learn by on them. One of the best music resources is Music with Mar. Maryann Harman is a music teacher/recording artist with a Master's Degree in Elementary Education. She has produced hundreds of learning songs that teach children about primary colors, sequencing, counting, the names of planets, parts of speech, etc.... I could go on and on. Mar actually has licensed teachers available to hold music classes for preschool and elementary groups alike. Jeremiah attended these classes for a while, as Kim was licensed to teach them. He still loves the songs and I love what they are teaching him.

For more information about Music with Mar and/or a list of possible teachers in your area, see the References section (Appendix C) of this book.

Blocks

Materials Needed:

Blocks

I love blocks. They encourage imagination, work on gross and fine motor skills, and require patience and creativity as well. Jeremiah loves blocks too, any type. We have Lincoln Logs, wooden blocks; have used different size cardboard boxes, shoeboxes, and even Tupperware containers.

There are great blocks designed especially for special needs children. They are called Bumpity Blocks. They are foam and textured. Their unique texture and extra weight provide increased motor control. Bumpity Blocks are cool shapes that encourage creativity in building as well.

For more information on Bumpity Blocks and where you can purchase them, see the References section (Appendix C) of this book.

Bean Bags

Materials Needed:

Bean Bags

Old Socks

Beans

Sewing Needle and Thread

Like blocks, bean bags are great fun too. They not only are safe and virtually harmless if thrown, they offer sensory stimulation as well. You can either buy them already made or make your own by filling an old sock with beans to your desired size and then folding over the top and sewing it shut. You can make different sizes and colors. There are also Snap Bags, bean bags that have snaps on the ends of them so that they can be linked to other bags and built upon.

For more information on Snap Bags and where you can purchase them, see the References section (Appendix C) of this book.

Bibliography

Besides Kim's brain, (which doesn't really need to be referenced), the following are all books and resources I perused when compiling a list of things to help teach Jeremiah. The ideas in this book may not be identical to the ones found in some of these materials because I tailored them to meet Jeremiah's needs, and I certainly could not use all of the ideas, as they were maybe not appropriate to help Jeremiah reach his personal goals. Therefore, here is a list of the resources I used. They are all wonderful books and I highly recommend them for more ideas to meet the individual educational needs of your own child.

Alternatives to Worksheets

Author: Karen Bauer and Rosa Drew

Publisher: Creative Teaching Press, Inc.

File Folder Games

Author: Karen Finch

Publisher: Carson-Dellosa Pub. Co.

Games for Math - Playful Ways to Help Your Child Learn Math

Author: Peggy Kaye

Publisher: Pantheon Books

Games for Reading - Playful Ways to Help Your Child Read

Author: Peggy Kaye

Publisher: Pantheon Books

Kids Create!

Author: Laurie Carlson

Publisher: Williamson Publishing

The Little Hands Art Book

Author: Judy Press

Publisher: Williamson Publishing

Making the Most of the Preschool Years - 100 Activities to Encourage Independent Play!

Author: Valerie Bendt

Publisher: Bendt Family Ministries

Phonemic Awareness - Playing with Sounds to Strengthen Beginning Reading Skills

Author: Jo Fitzpatrick
Publisher: Creative Teaching Press, Inc.

Phonics Games Kids Can't Resist! - 25 Lively Learning Games That Make Teaching Phonics Easy and Fun

Author: Michelle K. Ramsey
Publisher: Scholastic Professional Books

Playhouse Disney's Stanley

Author: Suzanne Lieurance, Kelly Milner Halls, Jamie Gabriel
Publisher: Publications International, Ltd.

School Projects for Pennies

Author: Suzanne Lieurance, Kelly Milner Halls, Jamie Gabriel
Publisher: Publications International, Ltd.

Speechercise

Producer: Twin Sisters Productions 2004 (www.twinsisters.com)
Developer: M. Troy McClowry, CCC-SLP

The Word & Song Children's Bible

Author: Stephen Elkins
Publisher: Broadman & Holman Publishers

Appendix A

Materials Needed

This is a master list of materials needed to complete all of the projects in this book. Of course, you can use substitutions for anything you choose. These are simply my suggestions and what worked best for Jeremiah.

Art Supplies

Model Magic
Poster paint
Paintbrush
Paint Roller
Self-Adhesive Foam Shapes (craft stores, Wal Mart, Target)
Popsicle Sticks
Cardboard
Yarn
Tempera or Acrylic Paint
Yarn & Fabric Scraps
Tissue Paper
Glitter
Clear Acrylic Finish
Sponge Shapes, Letters, & Numbers
Artificial Flowers/Leaves
Finger Paint
Poster Board (any color)
Foam Board
Do-A-Dot Markers
Do-A-Dot Art Books
Buttons
Snaps
Velcro
Safety Scissors
Easel
Washable Paint
Felt
Wikki Stix

Bathroom Supplies

Q-Tips
Hand-held Mirror
Eye Dropper
Tweezers

Washcloth

Household Items

Wooden picture frame

Contact Paper

Newspapers

Old Magazines

Plastic Clothes Hanger

Camera & Film

Tape Recorder with Microphone

Blank Cassette Tape

Shoelaces

Old Socks

Sewing Needle and Thread

Kitchen Supplies

Rolling Pin

Raw Vegetables and/or Fruits

Sharp Knife (for mom and dad only)

Rimmed Paper Plate

Toothpicks

Water

Empty Styrofoam Egg Carton (dozen and 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ dozen sizes)

Food Coloring

Salt

Tupperware Bowl with Lid

Cornstarch

Butcher Paper

Aluminum Foil

Paper Dixie Cups

Empty Recyclable Containers (Water Bottles, Coffee Cans, etc...)

Dry Beans, Unpopped Popcorn, Uncooked Rice, Seeds, etc...

15-Bean Soup Mix

Foam Food Trays (Fruit and Vegetable Only)

Steel Cookie Sheet

Kitchen Tongs

Uncooked Rice

Different Sized Spoons

Measuring Spoons/Cups

Different Sized Bowls

Styrofoam Cup

Freezer Paper

Bread

Cheese Slices

Peanut Butter

Jelly

Gallon Ziploc Bag
Sandwich Size Ziploc Bag
White Lunch Bags
Cookie Cutters
Sugar Cookie Dough
Melted Butter or Margarine
Colored Sprinkles
Wagon Wheel Pasta Noodles
Different Sized Jars/Bottles and Their Matching Lids
Empty Gallon Milk Jug with a Lid, Washed
Dawn Dishwashing Liquid
Small Empty Plastic Container
Old Fashioned Hand Mixer
Containers with Plastic Lids (Recycled Pringles or Slim Jim Cans work great.)

Office/School Supplies

Cardstock
Computer & Printer
Paper
Scissors
Unlined Index Cards
Markers
Ink Pads
Hole-Punch (Regular and Various Designs)
Various Embossers
Crayons
Tape
Stapler & Staples
Clear Packaging Tape
Sticker Dots
Masking Tape
3-Ring Binder
Colored Pencils with Erasers
Stencils
3-Ring Pencil Case
Glue/Glue Stick
ABC Dividers for 3-Ring Binder
Assorted Stickers
3" x 5" Index Card File Box with Dividers
Letter Size Envelopes
Letter Size File Folders
Clip Art Software
Old Rag or Dry Erase Board Eraser
Preschool Skills Dry Erase Workbooks/Flash Cards
Colored Paper Clips (Large)

Toys/Books

Sidewalk Chalk

Magnetic Alphabet Letters/Numbers

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom (by Bill Martin Jr.)

Chicka Chicka 1-2-3 (by Bill Martin Jr.)

Matchbox Cars/Trucks

Picture Books

Mini Animals, Reptiles, Fish, Etc...

Game Pieces

Books

Moon Sand

Bubbles

Poker Chips

Colored Links

Stringing Beads

Perler Beads and Stencils

Trading Cards

Plug-n-Play T.V. Games

The Word & Song Children's Bible

Blocks

Bubble Wands

Bean Bags

Misc. Supplies

Textured Items (Corrugated Cardboard, Coins, Tree Bark, Leaves, etc...)

Small Items (i.e. coins, pegs, beads, army men, paper clips, etc...)

Colored Picture of a Coconut Tree/Apple Tree

Small Toys or Objects that Won't Roll

Ten or More sets of Identical Objects (2 in each set)

Painter's Tape

Thomas the Train Emotion Pictures

1" x 1" Ceramic Tiles

Glycerin

Empty Unused Pizza Box

Sandpaper

Appendix B

Recipes

Here are some recipes to make your own resources to use with some of the ideas found in this book.

Sawdust Clay

Materials:

2/3 parts fine sawdust (not redwood)

1/3 part flour

Water

Large Bowl or Bucket

Wooden Spoon

Instructions:

- Mix the sawdust and flour together in a large bowl or bucket.
- Pour in the water and mix until it becomes stiff, but squishy. Add more flour if it is too crumbly.
- Knead and play with clay until it becomes easy to shape.
- Place completed project in direct sun to dry.
- Sand project if you want to. Then paint with tempera or acrylic paint. Give a glossy finish with acrylic clear finish.

Bread Clay

Materials:

Dry, Stale White Bread

White Glue

Large Bowl

Instructions:

- Remove the bread crusts and break the bread into small pieces.
- Add one tablespoon of white glue per one slice of bread.
- Mix with a spoon and then knead with your fingers until clay is soft and pliable.
- Add a small amount of tempera paint to the clay and knead if you want colored clay. Or you can tint the glue with food coloring before mixing it with the bread.
- Glaze finished project with a mixture of equal parts of water and white glue to prevent cracking or shrinking as the clay dries.
- Air dry.
- Paint with acrylics or tempera paint.

- This clay keeps several days in the refrigerator if well sealed.

Salt Dough

Materials:

4 Cups Flour
1-Cup Salt
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Cups Warm Water
Large Bowl

Instructions:

- Mix flour and salt in a large bowl.
- Add warm water slowly and mix together with your hands.
- Knead on a flour-covered surface for ten minutes.
- Wrap the dough tightly or place in a covered container. Take out only what you will be using.
- Do not make project several inches thick, as it will not cook evenly.
- Bake thin objects for thirty minutes at 350 degrees. Larger objects bake for an hour or more at 300 or 325 degrees.
- Cover any areas which brown before the project is completely baked with pieces of aluminum foil to prevent darkening.

Finger Paint

Materials:

$\frac{1}{4}$ Cup of Cold Water
 $\frac{1}{4}$ Cup of Cornstarch
2 Cups of Boiling Water
Empty Styrofoam Egg Carton (12-Egg Size)
Food Coloring

Instructions:

- Mix the cold water and cornstarch and stir until smooth.
- Add the boiling water and then stir until smooth again.
- Divide this mixture into the empty Styrofoam egg carton cups.
- Add drops of food coloring to each compartment and stir to color the paint.
- Mix primary colors together to make secondary colors as well.

Homemade Bubbles

Materials:

1 Gallon Water
 $\frac{1}{2}$ Cup Dishwashing Liquid (Dawn works best.)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ Cup Glycerin (Available in Most Drugstores)
Bucket

Empty Gallon Milk Jug with a Lid, Washed
Bubble Wands

Instructions:

- Mix the water, dishwashing liquid, and glycerin in the bucket.
- Store the bubble solution in the empty gallon milk jug and just pour some into a cup when ready to use.
- Keep the bubble wands in a Ziploc bag next to the bubble solution.

Appendix C

References

Bumpity Blocks/Snap Bags

<http://www.pencilgrip.com/>

Creating & Printing Customizable Social Stories

<https://www.sandbox-learning.com>

Critter Counters

Coloring Sheet Pictures of Different Environments

<http://coloringbookfun.com/>

Customized, Printable Flash Cards

<http://www.flashcardexchange.com>

Do-A-Dot Art

<http://www.dotart.com>

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

<http://www.imaginationlibrary.com>

Heads Up! - Expert Information and Products for Special Needs Children

<http://www.headsupnow.com/index.php>

Magnetic Cookie Sheet Fun

Coconut Tree Pattern

<http://parenting.lee-hansen.com/downloads/coloring/tropical/palm-tree.htm>

Apple Tree Pattern

<http://www.coloring.ws/t.asp?b=m&t=http://www.coloring.ws/trees/tree2.gif>

Moon Sand

<http://www.moonsand.com/>

Music with Mar

<http://www.musicwithmar.com>

Online Facial Expressions/Feelings Games

<http://www.do2learn.com>

Perler Beads

<http://www.perlerbeads.com>

Scripture Songs CD Website

<http://www.coachcompanions.org/>

Speech Therapy Website

<http://www.speech-language-therapy.com/txresources.html>

Tactile ABC Book & Fancy Numbers

Outline Block Letters & Numbers

<http://chubbiecubbie.com/abc123printables.htm>

Tangrams

<http://tangrams.ca/inner/down.htm>

(Tangram 1.0)

Thomas the Train Emotions Game

Many Faces of Thomas Pictures

http://www.myfavoritetoys.com/autism_thomas.php

Tumble Books

<http://www.tumblebooks.com>

Wikki Stix

<http://wikkistix.com/>