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Nichole Smith is a self-proclaimed slacker mom. While she doesn't know all the answers, she refuses to let her kids find that out. [Read more](#)

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Amy Lupold Bair is a suburban, work-from-home mom of two who traded in city living for the kids, the cul-de-sac and the minivan. Since mid-... [Read more](#)

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At Home Activities for Your Preschooler

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The kids have been in school a full month now and the newness of it has worn off for Peanut and I. Basically what that means is that it's like December 26th in my house; boredom is setting in.

This being the last year of Peanut being home before he wanders off to Kindergarten and leaves me to my own devices, I didn't want another school year to go by full of nothing but cartoons and Hot Wheels overrunning my living room.

Three years ago, it was easy to keep him entertained with activities; line up boxes of toys and let him empty it. Those were the days, right? Now that he's on the verge of being a school age kid, I need to up my game if I'm to keep my sanity and keep his little brain from melting.

One of the Peanut's favorite activities is to set up a shallow tote (the under the bed storage totes with removable lids are the best) and fill it with sand, rice, or snow. Since I'm not a fan of rice or sand under my feet when spills happen, we opt for snow. Peanut will spend hours with kitchen spoons, cups, and assorted items like cookie cutters, filling, emptying and manipulating the snow into shapes. It's a great way for him to play with snow when it's too cold to go outside and he's learning at the same time.



Playing school is a popular activity and one that Peanut has taken an interest in now that he understands he will start school soon too. The key to playing school is to keep it fun. If it seems boring with just you and your preschooler, invite some of his best stuffed friends to be classmates. Don't be afraid to shake things up and be the student yourself. By letting Peanut be the teacher, I am discovering what **he thinks** school will be like when he gets there. This is my chance to put to rest any myths he has about school as well as his fears. Fun activities for playing school can include:

- * Singing nursery rhymes
- * Story time
- * An art activity (can be as basic as a coloring page)
- * Play *Simon Says*

Of course you can always find printable games and puzzles to use for when you need quiet. I like to use printable worksheets for when I have conference calls.

We're diligently working on our alphabet too. I feel like Peanut's behind so we're starting with learning the letters in his name. I write his name on a piece of paper and then my own name (or another word) and ask him to pick out the letters that "match" and then tell me the name of the matching letters. For each letter match we draw a line underneath the letters, circle them, or draw a square around them; this

way we work on shapes and writing skills at the same time (learning to draw a straight line is a writing skill).

The important thing that I try to remember is not to let these activities take the place of simply talking and engaging with Peanut. I think it's easy for us as parents to focus on what our kids will learn or accomplish if they are successful with the activity. What we forget is that they are successful no matter what. Each activity is an opportunity for our kids to learn something new and have fun with us.