

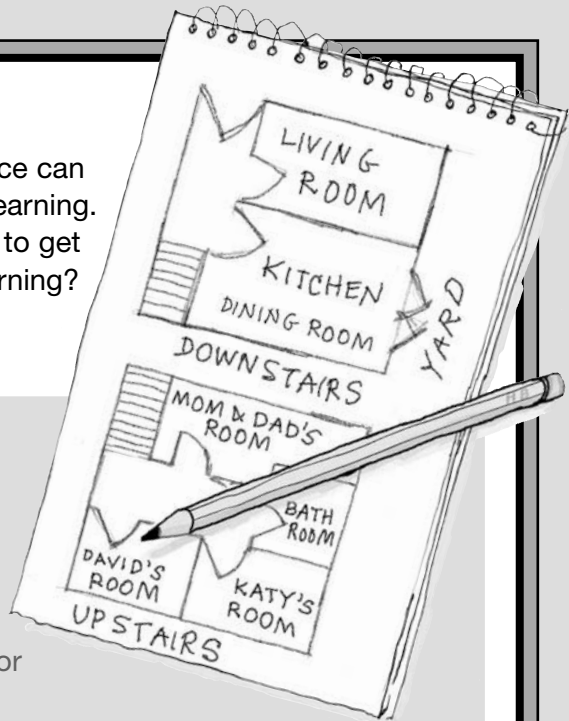
Using Your Living Space

How you organize and use your living space can make a huge contribution to your child's learning. So why not look around you and see how to get the best out of the space you have for learning?



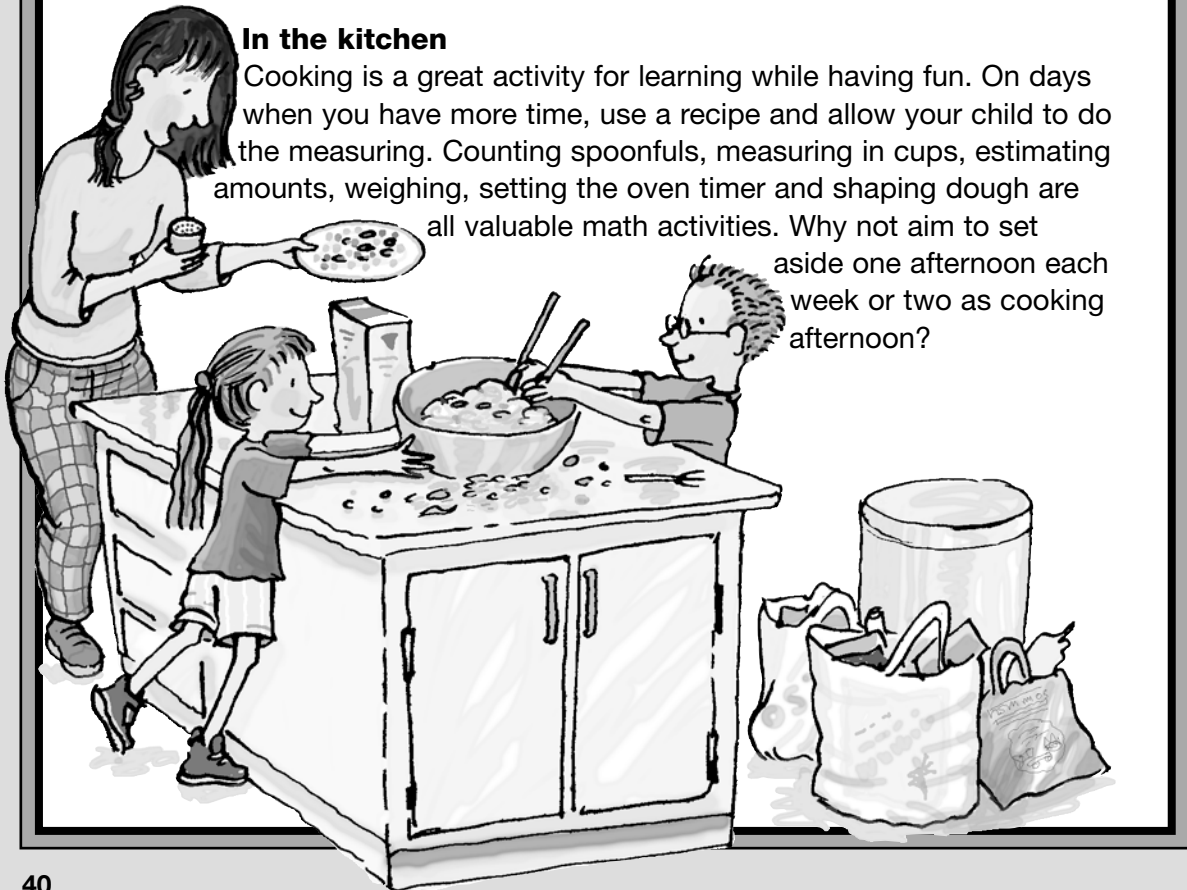
ACTIVITY: What happens where?

1. Create a floor plan of your house.
2. Have a family discussion about the different things you do, or could do, in different rooms.
3. Write the activities on sticky notes and stick them in the appropriate rooms. For example:
 - learning to cook in the kitchen;
 - playing the piano and using a computer in the living room;
 - learning about plants in the yard.



In the kitchen

Cooking is a great activity for learning while having fun. On days when you have more time, use a recipe and allow your child to do the measuring. Counting spoonfuls, measuring in cups, estimating amounts, weighing, setting the oven timer and shaping dough are all valuable math activities. Why not aim to set aside one afternoon each week or two as cooking afternoon?

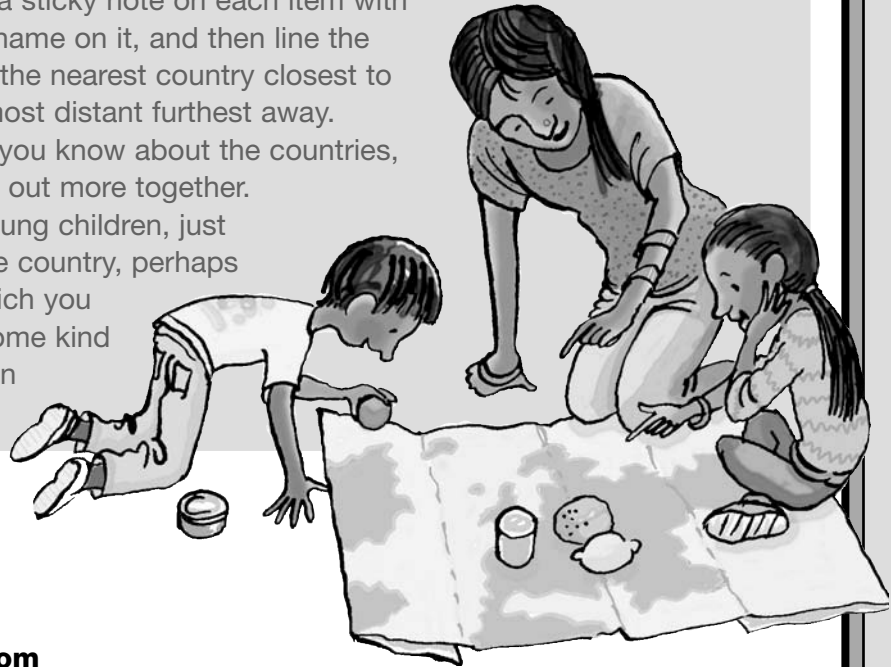




ACTIVITY: Go on a cupboard journey with your child

The kitchen is a great place to think about geography.

1. Choose some of the cans, fruit, pasta and other food on your shelves.
2. Study the labels and see if you can find out where they come from.
3. Get a map of the world and place the items on it, on their country of origin. Or put a sticky note on each item with the country's name on it, and then line the items up with the nearest country closest to you and the most distant furthest away.
4. Discuss what you know about the countries, or go and find out more together.
 - With very young children, just focus on one country, perhaps one with which you can make some kind of connection for them.



In the dining room

Eating together is an excellent time to learn together. For many families, just getting together to eat is a challenge. Try starting with just one family meal each week, and if you usually have the TV on, make sure it is switched off on this occasion.



tips for making eating together fun

- Let your child help to choose and cook the meal and get involved in the process.
- Play games while you eat (see page 93).
- Have a pile of scrap paper and pens handy. Family restaurants have long ago realized that this helps children to be part of adult eating.

