

Playing with Puzzles

It's puzzle time! With a pile of puzzles or just one at a time, think about including some of these ideas in your play.

- ❖ With an inset puzzle (pieces are separated), try to have the child predict where the puzzle piece will go prior to making physical attempts.
- ❖ With an inset puzzle, have the child ask for a particular piece matching to the board.
- ❖ With an inset puzzle, put all the pieces to the side of the puzzle. Ask the child to close his eyes. Take a piece away and try to figure out which piece is missing.
- ❖ Count the pieces.
- ❖ See if you can put the puzzle together without looking at the picture on the box.
- ❖ With a connected puzzle, start from the outside border and work your way inside. OR work from the center out. (This is certainly more challenging for even the best puzzle doers, but give it a try sometime.)
- ❖ For a connected puzzle, try another challenge. Turn the pieces upside-down and see if you can fit them together this way.
- ❖ Talk about matching colors on the connecting puzzles. This is a clue as to where pieces go!
- ❖ Give choices between two different pieces to put in next. (For younger children, you can set the situation by giving a next logical piece in a connected puzzle.)
- ❖ Put pieces into the wrong places on the puzzle and play a little dumb. "Hmmm. I wonder why this doesn't fit." Have the child correct the mistake.
- ❖ Take turns giving each other pieces to put into the puzzle. Again, sometimes play dumb: "Hmmm, I wonder where this piece goes." (Don't do this every time because your goal would be to take turns!)
- ❖ When the puzzle is complete, use this as an opportunity to:
 - Label items in the picture.
 - Label colors in the picture.
 - Count pictures on the puzzle.
 - Make a story about the picture.
 - Talk about similarities and differences shown in the picture.
 - Play I Spy something.
 - Play a guess what I see game.
 - Take two pieces back out and give one back, but before handing it back have the child guess which one they'll be getting.
 - Discuss the different shapes of the puzzle pieces.
 - Categorize the shapes of the puzzle - similar shapes in piles.

Have fun constructing together!