



The Project Approach: Parent Resources

A project is an in-depth investigation of a topic that is interesting to children. Projects involve hands-on investigation, finding the answers to questions, reading about the topic (or being read to), visiting sites or places, and talking to other people (adults and children) who know something about the topic. Projects also involve documentation—collecting information and preserving the experience by writing about it, taking photographs, or videotaping. Parents can work with their children to do projects at home.

Online Resources on the Project Approach

- **Doing Projects with Children at Home (Judy Harris Helm)**
This Illinois Early Learning (IEL) Ask an Expert includes resources and answers to questions such as, "How is a project different from the kinds of things I worked on at home as a child?" "What are the benefits of parents doing projects with their children at home?"
<http://illinoisearlylearning.org/askanexpert/helm2006/index.htm>
- **The Project Approach: Tip Sheets (Available in English, Spanish, and Polish)**
IEL Tip Sheets are single-topic, one-page resources with helpful suggestions for each phase of project work.
<http://illinoispip.org/tipsheets.html>
- **Illinois Projects in Practice**
The Illinois Projects in Practice (IllinoisPIP) Web site is maintained by the Illinois Early Learning Project (<http://illinoisearlylearning.org>). IllinoisPIP provides support, resources, and information for parents and teachers doing project work with preschool children.
<http://illinoispip.org>
- **The Project Approach**
This Digest defines projects as in-depth investigations of topics worth learning more about and explains the stages involved in project work.
<http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/eearchive/digests/1994/lk-pro94.html>
- **Project Approach in Early Childhood & Elementary Education**
Theory, structure, and examples of the Project Approach are included on this Web site.
<http://www.projectapproach.org>

Material List for Projects at Home

These materials can be placed in a tub for easy access. Our list of materials can help you figure out what you already have and what you need to get.

*From *Teaching Your Child to Love Learning: A Guide to Doing Projects at Home* by Helm, Berg, & Scranton (Teachers College Press, 2005).

- **What will we write and draw with?**
Markers, Chalk, Crayons, Pens, Pencils
- **What will we write and draw on?**
Paper, Chalkboard, Old envelopes, Notecards

- **What will we paint with?**
Sponges, Brushes
- **What will we use to hold things together?**
Glue, Tape, Tacky glue, Staples, Brads
- **What will we cut with?**
Child scissors, Adult scissors
- **What will we use to sculpt?**
Clay, Wire, Play dough
- **What will use to clean up our mess?**
Paper towels, Sponges, Baby wipes

Examples of Projects

- **The Baby Project**
<http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v9n2/harden.html>
- **Beautiful Butterflies**
<http://www.laporte.isd.esc4.net/Campuses/cpe/butterflies/Default.htm>

Additional Resources

- **Teaching Your Child to Love Learning: A Guide to Doing Projects at Home**
Author(s): Helm, Judy Harris; Berg, Stacy; Scranton, Pam
Publication Date: 2004
Availability: New York: Teachers College Press
- **Teaching Parents to Do Projects at Home: A Tool Kit for Parent Educators**
Author(s): Helm, Judy Harris; Berg, Stacy; Scranton, Pam; Wilson, Rebecca
Publication Date: 2005
Availability: New York: Teachers College Press

Illinois Early Learning Project (<http://illinoisearlylearning.org>)

The Illinois Early Learning (IEL) Project, funded by the Illinois State Board of Education, maintains the Illinois Projects in Practice (IllinoisPIP) Web site. IEL is located in the Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting (CEEP) on the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign campus. The IEL Web site is a source of evidence-based, reliable information on early care and education for parents, caregivers, and teachers of young children in Illinois. The Web site offers printable Tip Sheets for caregivers and parents in English, Spanish, and Polish; answers to Frequently Asked Questions; a customized question-answering service; a statewide calendar of events for parents and caregivers; an easy-to-use database of links to "the best of the Web" on topics related to early care and education; activities related to the Illinois Early Learning Standard Benchmarks; the Illinois Projects in Practice Web site; and periodic "Ask an Expert" events. You can contact the IEL staff by email (iel@uiuc.edu), telephone (toll free) at 877-275-3227 during normal business hours, fax at 217-244-7732, or by postal mail at this street address:

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