



CAMP IN A BOX

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OF GREATER METROWEST NJ

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In partnership with Greater MetroWest Early Childhood Centers

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*Federation cares for people in need, builds Jewish life, and saves the world,
one person at a time, every day.*

TEACH A CHILD ACCORDING TO THEIR WAY. (PROVERBS 22:6)

We are so excited to share with you our **Camp in a Box** to help make this summer engaging and meaningful for your child! The box contains a variety of open-ended materials, along with suggested activities and experiences. Feel free to experiment! There are countless possibilities and opportunities to explore with each unique item!

We invite you to consider some of these open-ended experiences with your children as they explore Camp in a Box. Remember – there are countless ways to engage and appreciate these materials! We invite you to utilize the materials individually, in conjunction with each other, or with other materials in your home. Please share your experiences with us on social media with the hashtag **#GMWcampathome**, and keep your eye on your email inbox for continued inspiration!

WHAT'S INSIDE THE BOX?

Cloth	Pegs	Felt squares	Tempera paint sticks	Model Magic
Pipe cleaners	Ribbon strips	Mosaic paper pieces	Wooden Tray	Tacky glue

LET'S GET STARTED!

WHEN WE PLAY, WE LEARN AND GROW!

Children learn through their play and their experiences. Each activity we suggest connects to one or more areas of development – social/emotional, cognitive, language, and physical. We have color-coded the activities to help you identify the type of learning and skills your child is working on, all while having FUN!

Social Emotional Development focuses on our relationships with ourselves and others. This type of learning helps children regulate their behaviors and emotions, fostering a strong sense of self. It's critical for children to have opportunities to practice taking turns, sharing, conversing with others, and including peers in their play.

Cognitive Development includes “thinking and knowing” skills – the way we learn and process information. It includes problem solving, connection-making, attention span, memory, classification, and representation skills. Through open-ended exploration and discovery, children develop a wide range of thinking and processing abilities.

Language Development is about communication, both expressing ourselves and receiving information. Children use language to communicate their thoughts and needs, and to engage in conversation with peers and adults. We promote emerging language and literacy skills by reading, talking, and singing together.

Physical Development encompasses both fine and gross motor skills. Fine motor skills require hand-eye coordination, such as writing, buttoning, and grasping small items. Gross motor skills include walking, running, and throwing. Developing these skills allows children to control their bodies, promoting confidence and self-esteem.

What you can do with the cloth:

- o You can use the cloth to **capture and reflect your family journey** this summer. Consider **drawing, painting, or collaging** on the cloth to remember the fun things you do together. **Return to it over and over**, adding special moments.
 - Children may want to use different colors to **represent their moods or feelings**.
 - Children can add **representational and free-form artwork** to reflect their experiences at home.
- o How can the cloth “set the table,” both literally and figuratively, for your family?

What you can do with Pipe Cleaners:

- o **How many ways can you change the pipe cleaner shape using your hands?** Think about bending, twisting, shaping, connecting... what else?
- o **What fits on the wire?** Get creative! Beads, hair ties, O-shaped cereal, paper clips, small hollow blocks, bread tags. What else?
- o **What does the wire fit into?** Try Model Magic/clay, plastic berry containers, and colanders. What else?

What you can do with Pegs:

- o **What are these items? What could they be?** How can we transform them? Where would you find them? Where could they be used?
- o Find the connections...
 - **How do we connect with the pegs?**
 - **How do the pegs connect with each other?**
 - How do the pegs connect with other materials in the box?
 - **How do the pegs connect with books and literature? Can we use them to help tell a story?**

What you can do with Wooden Trays:

- o **What can you add to the tray to make it your own**, or to make it **unique and beautiful?** **Consider items from inside and outside the box.**
- o What other trays do you have in your home? **What do you use them for? What might you use this tray for?**

What you can do with Tempera Paint Sticks:

- o What are these? **How are they similar or different to other materials you have used before?**
- o **What do you think might happen if you try these on a different surface? A few suggestions... paper, cardboard, fabric, windows, mirrors, aluminum foil, grocery bags, and leaves.** What else could you try? **What did you enjoy about using these paint sticks?**

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

- How might these materials inspire connection between the members of your household? Among your school community? With the world around you?
- Once you have explored the materials individually, how might the experiences you've had connect with one another? What items in your home can connect with the materials?
- How can you use the actual BOX (or other cardboard you have at home) to expand upon your experiences?

When given interesting materials, children know what to do – they are extremely capable! You can provide support while at the same time giving your child space to do their own work. Remember, if you start working on your own creation, your child will want to copy you and won't focus on their own emerging ideas. It's important for children to understand that there is no "right" way to work with these materials!

- o Children might tell stories through the materials.
- o They might explore the physics of building with the materials.
- o Sometimes, they just want to touch them, or sort them over and over again.
- o They might work together or alone - or a combination of these two.

Try to pay close attention to your child's choices, without chiming in. You can learn so much just by observing. In fact, paying close attention shows them that their work matters.

Stay tuned for continued Camp in the Box suggestions and inspirations via email and social media.

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CONTACT FOR MORE EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCES

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