

FAMILY TIPS

Five fun ways to teach kids about science and more

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Like the clever parents who sneak beets and cauliflower into pizza dough to get their children to eat more vegetables, you, too, can inspire kids to develop an interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, collectively called STEM education, by disguising it as play.

These five tips will help get your children involved in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education – and loving it, too.

1. STEM education doesn't have to happen indoors. Take a walk in a park, around a lake, in the woods, or wherever you can study trees, plants, insects and animals. Before you go, check out nature books from your library that will help your kids identify what they see. Then log your observations when you get home.



2. Instead of banning TV time in your home, watch science-oriented programs with your children. Together, you can have conversations about space exploration, animal kingdoms, robots and more. These exchanges could even spark an educational interest that leads to a career.

3. Not all STEM education looks high-tech. Some of the best hands-on STEM learning happens in simple play experiences. You can encourage exploration of engineering and the scientific process by building things together. Use science terminology such as: experiment, test, analyze, formulate and predict. Blocks are great for this!

4. Before casting off an item as trash, ask your children to hypothesize about what it could be turned into instead. For some inspiration, head over to Pretend City Children's Museum in Irvine and visit its Ultimate Recycling Machine, on display this summer through August. This hands-on experience for school-aged children challenges them to experiment, design, and build a machine that will transport a plastic bottle into a recycling bin.

5. During your child's next health checkup, use the opportunity to talk about how STEM education improves human health. You could use relatable examples, such as how scientists find cures for diseases to excite them.