



PARENT TRUST
FOR WASHINGTON CHILDREN



Strong Families Begin At Home

Child & Teen Services Newsletter **Fall 2009**

Table of Contents

- Kids and Worry...pg 1
- Connecting Through Shared Activity...pg 1
- Informed Consumers Eat Fast Food Too...pg 2
- Word Games...pg 2
- Playing 4-Square...pg 3
- Group Activity: Paper Quilts...pg 3



FAMILY HELP LINE

1.800.932.HOPE

Parent Trust's statewide, toll-free phone number provides callers with a greater understanding and awareness of child development, guidance, and resources.

If you have any comments, or suggestions for future articles, please contact:

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Kids and Worry

Some children struggle with worry. Chronic worrying can lead to sleep, behavioral, cognitive and physical challenges.

There is help. There are techniques that you can learn to challenge those anxieties.

1. Determine if the worry is fleeting. Occasional worrying is appropriate when faced with a new or stressful situation. These worries go away when the situation is resolved. When a child's worries are getting in the way of normal functioning, then it's time to intervene.
2. The most important step in stopping worrying is--be aware that you are having worrying thoughts.
3. Recognize that these thoughts are simply thoughts. Just because you think something doesn't mean it's true.

LEARN



"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow."

-Albert Einstein

CONTINUED PG 4

Connecting Through Shared Activity

CONNECT



"We need 4 hugs a day for survival. We need 8 hugs a day for maintenance. We need 12 hugs a day for growth."

-Virginia Satir

Playing and conversing with your child are both very important ways of deepening your connection.

Some parents love to play games with their children. But what if you are the type of grownup that doesn't enjoy playing children's games? This is not uncommon. But you don't need to give up, nor do you need to force yourself to do something that you find unpleasant. There are other types of activities you can do together that will create an opportunity to bond and get to know each other. Here's one of my favorites:

When I was a child there was one activity that was pure "mom-time". My mom, my sister and I would sit at the kitchen table together and roll coins. That's right--no Coinstar back then, and we didn't use sorting machines either. Just empty piggy banks and change jars, paper coin holders from the bank, and piles of change.

We would sit together for probably a couple hours, music on the radio, chatting away as we sorted, counted and rolled coins. My sister and I would get super

CONTINUED PG 2

Informed Consumers Eat Fast Food Too!

EAT



"Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are."

-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

You may have noticed a change this year in your local fast food restaurant. Seattle, WA is one of the first places in the country to mandate that calories, sodium, saturated fat and carbohydrates be listed on printed materials inside fast food restaurants. Other places aren't far behind, with Philadelphia, Oregon, Massachusetts, Nashville, and California all having legislation ready to go into affect within the next two years. There is also a national bill before congress.

The idea behind this is pretty simple: consumers have the right to make informed choices. By providing people with this basic information, decisions made can be based on health considerations, as well as personal preference and budget.

We are constantly bombarded by news of childhood obesity. Now parents can take more informed responsibility for promoting healthy eating choices in their families.

Response to the legislation has been very supportive. However, response to the actual nutritional values in fast food has been that of surprise and sometimes shock!

Interested in quizzing your knowledge? Try http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/restaurant_quiz.html for a short quiz about nutritional content at popular restaurants (note: I got most of them wrong.)

Game Review

What do you Stand For? by Barbara A. Lewis

"What Do You Stand For?" is a card game that is played with adult supervision (a parent, counselor, teacher, or children's group worker). It is an "educational" game, which is usually a turn off for me. I rarely find "educational" games to be fun.

However, I recently played this game with an 8-year old, and we had a blast.

The game has ten categories of cards: Caring, Citizenship, Cooperation, Fairness, Forgiveness, Honesty, Relationships, Respect, Responsibility, and Safety. Written on each card is a "what if" scenario or question about this character trait. Players are asked to respond to the scenario or question with what they would do/ what they stand for as a person. It's up to the other players to determine if the response fits the question/scenario. And unlike many educational games, there is a way to "win", but by the time you get into the game you'll be so interested that winning will probably cease to matter (or maybe won't matter quite so much). This game is appropriate for children ages 5-8.

PLAY



"You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation."

-Plato

...Shared Activity

CONTINUED PG 1

excited if we found a Canadian coin, or even better yet—an old penny with the wheat on the back. It might not be the most efficient way to take care of your change, but you will have good bonding time together, doing a family task, and also working on sorting and counting skills.

Note: this task does involve dexterity so children need to have developed enough fine motor skills to put the coins in the wrappers. If you have younger children, you can divide the process up:

1. Sorting into different kinds of coins (show your child starter piles)
2. Counting the coins and separating them into "ready to roll" piles
3. Putting the coins into the appropriate wrappers.

You can get the wrappers free from any bank. Just ask for coin wrappers in specific denominations. They have them for pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters. Each type of wrapper is a different color, and each one holds a different amount of coins.

PER ROLL:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Quarters: 10.00 | 3. Nickels: \$2.00 |
| 2. Dimes: \$5.00 | 4. Pennies: 50 cents |

And when you take them to the bank, the bank doesn't charge you anything! They'll either give you the dollar amount for the exact coin amount, or you can just deposit the coins into an account. Just remember—wash your hands because coins can be very dirty.

Playing 4-Square

1	2
3	4

You don't have to be able to run a marathon to play some fun games that provide physical activity AND help develop gross motor skills.

You can play 4-Square on your driveway. All you need is a piece of chalk and a playground sized bouncing ball.

Draw the court: using your chalk, create your boundaries. 4 Square is for advanced players. 2 Square is for younger or new players. This game is for children ages 8 and up.

MOVE



"Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity."

-John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Start with each player in a square. You can adjust any rules based on the ages, sizes and abilities of the players. Here are some guidelines:

1. The ball must stay inside the boundary lines.
2. The ball may be hit with any part of the hand (wrist, palm, fingertips).
3. A player can use one or both hands to hit the ball.
4. The ball has to be kept in motion.
5. The ball cannot hit a player.
6. The ball can be hit only once in a turn.

1	2
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The player in the highest number square begins by serving the ball.

1. The server bounces the ball once in their square and then hits the ball--on the up bounce--into the #1 square. Serves are meant to put the ball in play so they must be easy to hit by Player #1.
2. Player #1 lets the ball touch the ground once in their square, and then sends it to Player #2.
3. Play continues from square to square, in numerical order.

If a player misses their ball, it bounces twice, goes to the wrong player, or bounces out of bounds, that player sits out until the next game. The rest of the players move up to the next number (so you have a new server). A new player may take the empty space to keep the game continuous, or you can keep playing until all but one player is eliminated.

Parent Trust Reads

The Little Mouse, the Red Strawberry, and THE BIG HUNGRY BEAR

by Don and Audrey Wood
Early reader: 3-7 years old

Little Mouse is ready to pick a ripe, red strawberry. But what can he do to keep it from the big, hungry bear? With the help of the narrator, Mouse figures out the best way to enjoy the strawberry.

The story and illustrations are a delight. From the first drawing of Little Mouse you will be sucked right in!

Group Activity: Paper Quilts

Materials:

1. At least one sheet of thick construction paper for each child. A variety of colors can be used too.
2. Crayons, markers, colored pencils.
3. Scotch tape
4. Scissors (optional)

Directions:

Each child draws whatever they want to draw!

For general instructions, you might want to recommend that they try to fill all the white space on the white construction paper with color/design. Or they can use colored paper instead of white paper. Also explain that these pictures will stay at group; they will not go home unless the child decides they do not want their picture in the quilt.

If you want to be more specific, your group might decide on a theme for your quilt. For example: self-portrait, nature, my favorite activity, animals, seasons, etc....

Each child draws at least one picture. Make sure they sign their names to their picture(s).

After all are complete, lay the pictures down next to each other the way you want the finished quilt to look. Now turn them all face down. Using scotch tape, tape all edges of each picture to an abutting picture. When all are secure, CAREFULLY turn the whole quilt over. Now you can hang it on the wall!



Kids and Worry CONTINUED PG 1

4. Learn to challenge these thoughts. Teach your child to say, "Hey, that's just a thought I'm having. That doesn't make it true."
5. Change the thought. One way to change the thought is to turn it into a question. For example, "I'm going to get bird flu!" --> "Why would I get bird flu?" Turning it into a question takes power out of the statement. Another way to change the thought is to turn a negative thought into a positive one. It's still just a thought. But the process of changing to a positive thought can help. For example, "I'm going to get bird flu!" ---> "I eat a healthy diet."

There are other interventions that can help. Parent Trust teaches a stress management class for parents to help you and your children. For information: www.parenttrust.org

You can also learn more at: <http://www.worrywisekids.org/index.html>

If your child is exhibiting significant signs of worry, such as chronic insomnia, headaches, stomachaches, or is not participating in usual activities, talk to your pediatrician.

