



PARENT TRUST
FOR WASHINGTON CHILDREN



Strong Families Begin At Home

Child & Teen Services Newsletter

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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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60 MINUTE GOAL

The American heart association's position on children and physical activity is:

"Physical inactivity is a major risk factor for developing coronary artery disease. It also increases the risk of stroke and such other major cardiovascular risk factors as obesity, high blood pressure, low HDL ("good") cholesterol and diabetes."

Yikes. Pretty serious. Let's keep in mind the goal: The American Heart Association recommends that children and adolescents participate in at activity every day: *Continued on next page →*

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. ~JFK

PLAY



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

JACKS

Jacks is a game that has been played for centuries, albeit in different cultures it takes different forms and names. In Korea children play gonggi. In Britain, kids play 5 stones. In Brazil they play Cinco Marias. In Israel, Hamesh Avanim. And those of us who grew up in the 80's might remember the very popular "chinese jacks" with the plastic rings.

In the US, jacks is played with a small rubber ball and 10 metal objects with 5 points each. But in most other countries no ball is used. *cont. on next page →*

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PLAY

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more about a
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~Plato.*

JACKS, CON'T.

Whether you use five stones, scour websites for those 1980's plastic rings, or buy Korean *gonggitdol*, here are some basic instructions to get your game started. (and although it's still fun without knowing this part---this game is GREAT for developing fine motor skills.)

Toss the five stones on the ground.

Select one stone for tossing.

Toss the stone in the air, pick up one stone with your other hand and catch the tossed stone on the back of your hand. Continue until you have picked up all stones.

Repeat steps 1 - 3 only this time pick up two stones at a time.

Repeat this picking up 3 and then 4 stones at one time.

More detailed instructions and variations, Google "five stones game".

60 MINUTES GOAL, CON'T.

•All children age 2 and older should participate in at least 60 minutes of enjoyable, moderate-intensity physical activities every day that are developmentally appropriate and varied.

•If your child or children don't have a full 60-minute activity break each day, try to provide at least two 30-minute periods or four 15-minute periods in which they can engage in vigorous activities appropriate to their age, gender and stage of physical and emotional development."

Here are two suggestions for fun active time:

Tourist: Pretend that you and your family are tourists/visitors to your own city. Map out a walking tour that will take you around town. Try to make it so that each destination has limited "stop" time, and the walks in between stops are approximately 10-15 minutes. If you make 4 stops and walk briskly, you've hit your 60 minute goal for the day! (adapted from kidnetic.com)

Musical...chairs? Instead of musical chairs in which you rush to sit when the music stops, use green construction paper to make lily pads. Use the lily pads instead of the chairs, and hop like frogs as the music plays! When the music stops, rush to a "lily pad". Or, to change it up, use just cardboard cutouts, and switch each time the music is on---hop like frogs to lily pads, fly like butterflies to flowers, slither like snakes to holes...etc. (adapted from familyfitness at about.com)

MOVE

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not only one of the
most important
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CREATE

*Art washes from
the soul the dust
of every day life.
~ Pablo Picasso*

WATER COLOR PAINTS

When was the last time you took out the water color paints? Many times we adults avoid painting activities at home or at group because they are so messy that clean up spoils the activity fun. But watercolor paints aren't nearly as messy as tempera paints. And if your older kids are bored with the idea, there are variations you can try besides the old paint-and-paper activity.

Coffee Filter:

Water paints seem brighter and blend beautifully when painted on white coffee filters. Open the filter and tape it open on your (newspaper or tarp covered) work surface. Watch how the water and paints are absorbed and blend on the filter surface.

Salt:

To add a speckled effect, paint your picture using lots of really wet bright paints. Sprinkle a bit of kitchen salt on the paint, and let dry.

When it's dry, brush the salt away and you'll have a nice speckled effect. (courtesy of kidsart.com)

Make-your-own:

Use powdered drink mix like kool-aid. Mix with a bit of water for yummy smelling water paint. According to www.mommynature.com, once dry the paint can be a scratch-and-sniff masterpiece!

With Crayons:

Draw pictures on paper with crayons, pressing hard to leave a lot of waxy residue. Then you can paint over the crayon drawing to leave an interesting collage. Pictures of fish or other water creatures in crayon look especially well when covered by a watery water-paint landscape.

Bubble painting:

Okay, this one's a bit messier. Take a cardboard box and lightly tape a piece of white paper at the bottom (this will protect your surface). Stand it on its end. Add liquid water color paints or food coloring (wear clothing you don't care about because food coloring will stain) to soap bubbles. Dip the blow wand into the colored bubble liquid and blow bubbles onto the white paper. If you make a couple different colors you can blow different color paint bubbles. As the bubbles pop they will leave an interesting design on the paper.

<http://artsmart4kids.blogspot.com/2008/10/create-your-own-soap-bubble-art.html>

Or, you can pour bubble mixture into large bowl, blow through a straw to make a bowl full of bubbles, and then gently place a piece of paper on top of the bubble "tower" to make a print.

EAT

*Tell me what you
eat and I will tell
you what you are.
~ Anthelme
Brillat-Savarin*

CLEAN OUT YOUR FRIDGE DAY!

Apparently I missed it, but November 15th was National "Clean out your fridge" day.

Okay, so the origins of this day of clean-a-bration are murky. Some say it was part of an ad for Whirlpool Appliances...but really, who cares who started it. And who cares if I missed it...or if you missed it...

...you can take this opportunity to have your own "clean out your fridge" day as part of a family nutrition activity.

The Clean out part:

Get rid of the soda!

Get rid of processed lunch meats!

Get rid of those foods that smell or look bad (especially those you can't recognize!)

Get rid of that old box of baking soda if it's been there longer than a month (pour it down your drains, followed by some boiling water for a good drain cleaner).

A note about "expired" items: remember that "best used by" isn't the same thing as "unsafe after". Here is a good fact sheet put out by the USDA about food dating and safety after the date expires.

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/food_product_dating/

The Restocking part: this could be a good opportunity to remind (or introduce) your family of the food plate.

Fruit, grain, vegetables, protein, dairy.

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

Not only does this website have the healthy portion sizes guidelines, if you click on the plate icon, you can find lists of healthy food items within each category. Your family can create a new food shopping list from this resource!

PARENT TRUST READS

Hoot, by Carl Hiaasen/ Ages 10 and up

For middle school student Roy Eberhardt, being the new kid at school is not a new experience (having been to 6 schools so far due to his dad's government job). And every new school means a new bully to deal with--like the thick headed Dana Matherson who likes nothing more than to beat up Roy on the school bus.

But if Dana hadn't been smashing Roy's face against the school bus window that day, Roy never would have seen the barefoot boy running faster than Roy could believe. But running where? Something about this kid--who seems middle school age too--intrigues Roy. Barefoot, running (where?) like the wind, and clearly not enrolled in any school...who is this kid?

Roy's attempts to find out more about this boy form the beginning of the story. When he does find out...well, then the adventure begins. Roy is drawn into an experience that involves endangered owls, vandalism and mischief at a vacant lot, a homeless boy...and, as Roy asks towards the middle of the story, "what does this all have to do with pancakes?" Keep reading and find out...this is a book you (oh yeah, and your middle schooler) won't be able to put down....

SPATIAL LEARNING

A new study from University of Chicago demonstrates that "learning to use a wide range of words related to shape and size may improve children's later spatial skills, which are important in mathematics, science and technology."

The study found that 1-4 year olds who heard and then spoke "spatial words" --words like big/tall - words that describe sizes and shapes - saw an increase in their scores on an assessment (non-verbal) of spatial thinking. The study was conducted by taping 52 children and 52 caregivers (mostly mothers) during normal, everyday activities.

Why is this important?

Spatial skills are important in math, science and technology. Parents and caregivers can use this information to actively improve spatial reasoning in children. The same professors who did this study conducted an earlier study showing that talking about mathematics with children at an early age greatly improves their math performance.

Here is a link to the publicity release for the spatial language study: <http://news.uchicago.edu/article/2011/11/09/learning-spatial-terms-improves-childrens-spatial-skills> The actual article is published in the November 2011 issue of Developmental Science.

LEARN



*Learn from
yesterday, live for
today, hope for
tomorrow.
~ Albert Einstein*

CONNECT



*We need 4 hugs a
day for survival.
We need 8 hugs a
day for mainte-
nance. We need
12 hugs a day for
growth.
~ Virginia Satir*

MEMORY BOOK

Recently, a coworker told me that her mom put together a book of memories of holiday times their family had together.

You don't have to wait until the kids are grown with kids of their own to do this as a family. Children love stories about themselves and people they know. You can pick any event (Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years, birthday, etc.) and ask family members for their memories of events past. This can become a nice activity during a family gathering, with the children interviewing the older family members. You can compile a written history or record an oral history. Remember to ask young children too- you'll be surprised what they remember. Ask, "what do you remember about.." and see what they say! This will become a treasured memory for future gatherings..."remember when sis said...!"

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Remember to check out our website for additional parenting tips and fun family activities!

Parenting tips on early learning, child development, teenagers, infants, health and safety, and more!

www.parenttrust.org/parenting-tips

Family Fun Activities:

www.parenttrust.org/family-fun-ideas

Previous Child & Teen Services Newsletters:

www.parenttrust.org/child-teen-program

Community Resources:

www.parenttrust.org/community-resources



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