



FOR WASHINGTON CHILDREN



Spring 2015

Strong Families Begin At Home

Child & Teen Services Newsletter

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Learn: Spatial Reasoning

In a recent study, children who play with blocks and puzzles have been shown to have better spatial reasoning ability. Spatial reasoning is the ability to reason and manipulate objects in space.

Spatial reasoning ability is used everyday. Some activities where spatial ability is used include packing a suitcase, using a map, crossing the street and loading a dishwasher.

A fun way to have your children play with puzzles is through cereal box puzzles. All you need in order to make this puzzle is a cereal box with a fun picture on it and scissors. The first step is to cut the side of the cereal box with the picture on it off of the rest of the box. The next step is to draw straight lines on the side that does not have the picture. You can draw however many lines you want, it just depends on how hard

you want to make the puzzle. Once you have drawn the lines you can go ahead and cut along them to make the pieces of your puzzle. When you are done cutting out the pieces you can have your child start to put the puzzle together. This is a fun and easy way to introduce your child to puzzles which can help increase their spatial reasoning skills at the same time.



Building Blocks for Developing Spatial Skills: Evidence From a Large, Representative U.S. Sample. Jamie J. Jirout and Nora S. Newcombe

*Psychological Science 0956797614563338, first published on January 27, 2015
doi:10.1177/0956797614563338*

CREATE: Flower Dyeing

A fun science experiment to learn about how water is absorbed by flowers is through flower dyeing.

Materials needed:

- Carnations (or any white flower)
- Plastic cups
- Food coloring
- Water

Note: when using food coloring, prepare your surface and child (!) for mess. Food color stains, so use smocks and table protection.

To begin, fill the cups with water and add the different colors of food coloring to the water. You can add about 20-30 drops of food coloring to the water.

Next add the flowers to the cups of dyed water. Be sure to cut a little bit off of the bottom of the stems so that the flowers can absorb the water better.

Once the flowers are in the colored water you can just wait to see what happens! It

usually takes a few hours to see the colors start to dye the petals. Once the flowers are starting to change color they can stay in the water until they are the color that you want. The longer the flowers stay in the water the darker the color will be. Eventually the flowers will all start to turn colors and your children will be amazed!



Link to experiment:

<http://theimaginationtree.com/2013/03/dye-d-flowers-science-experiment.html>



PLAY: Bubbles

Springtime is an excellent time to spend time outside. A fun way to do this is to have kids play outside with bubbles!



You can make your own bubble solution with items that you might already have at home, and you can even make your own bubble wands for even more bubble fun!

Here are some bubble solution recipes that

you and your kids can try at home:

1 cup water
1 tablespoon dishwashing liquid
Mix together the ingredients and you're ready to start blowing bubbles!

OR

1 quart (4 cups) warm water
½ cup sugar
½ cup dishwashing liquid

Mix the sugar into the warm water until it dissolves and then add in the dishwashing

Hobbies, continued

liquid.

To make your own bubble wands you will need some pipe cleaners and beads for decoration.

You can start by making shapes at the top of the pipe cleaner (hearts, circles, etc.), then you can start stringing beads onto the pipe cleaner. When you are done twist the end of the pipe cleaner so that the beads do not fall off.

Once you are done making your homemade bubble wand you can go ahead and test it out! Playing with bubbles is a great activity to do outside because kids are able to move around and test out how big they can blow bubbles and how the wind changes where

their bubbles go.



RELAX: Listening To Music

Finding ways to relax as a family is can help everyone calm down during busy times together. Listening to music can help us relax and wind down after a long day or just after any stressful time.



Listening to calming music as a family before bedtime can help everyone to relax, and studies have shown that music can even help us fall asleep better.

Setting aside a time where your family listens and relaxes to calming music can help ease the transition to bedtime. Turning off all other electronics and just listening to the music can help children calm down and prepare for bedtime. Even having some music playing softly in your child's room

when they are in bed can help some people fall asleep better.

Some types of music that can be relaxing include classical, nature sounds, music used for meditation and instrumental music. Pandora, Spotify and Youtube are good ways to find relaxing music that your family can listen to or finding a CD at the library is another great option.

Elliott, D., Polman, R., and McGregor, R. (2011). Relaxing music for anxiety control. *Journal of Music Therapy*, 48.3 : 264-288. Print.

Collingwood, J. (2007). The Power of Music To Reduce Stress. Psych Central. Retrieved on March 9, 2015, from <http://psychcentral.com/lib/the-power-of-music-to-reduce-stress/000930>

MOVE: Nature Walk

A fun and active way to stay healthy with your family during the spring is through a nature walk.



The walk can be anywhere from a half an hour to an hour depending on how much your child wants to explore.

On the walk you and your child can keep different things in mind to help focus. The nature walk can be around your neighborhood or you can go to a park or trail.

Some ideas to keep in mind during the walk are to have your child observe the weather, look for animals and to look at the different plants and rocks that you see on your walk.

You can even have your child fill in a nature walk worksheet to keep a record of what they see on the walk. The worksheet has places where they can check off what they see including birds, flowers, insects and clouds. For children who can't read, you can use pictures. Children can also create a list for you to use and check off!

After you and your child are done with your nature walk you can have your child write or draw pictures about what they saw while on the nature walk. You can also talk with your child about what they learned and their favorite part of the nature walk.

Here is a link to a worksheet:

<http://www.pre-kpages.com/docs/nature-walk-checklist.pdf>

Parent Trust Reads: Book Review

The Very Hungry Caterpillar
By Eric Carle
Ages: 1-4 years old

This book tells the story of a little caterpillar who has just hatched from an egg and is very hungry. Through colorful pictures we get to see all of the food that the caterpillar eats.



In this book children are able to learn about nature and the life cycle of a caterpillar. This book also helps children learn about counting and the days of the week since we are able to count how much food the

caterpillar eats and on what days he eats the food. At the end of the book we get to see the caterpillar turn into a beautiful butterfly and kids will love the colors of the butterfly's wings.

This is a great book to read during the spring since you and your child might start seeing some caterpillars and butterflies when you are outside. This classic book will become a favorite in your home. The Very Hungry Caterpillar can be found in your local library and is also available as an e-book.

For more book recommendation:

<http://www.parenttrust.org/parent-trust-reads>

If you have any comments, or suggestions for future articles, please contact:
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FAMILY HELP LINE
1-800-932-HOPE (4673)

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



Special thanks go to grad student Lindsay Phillips, who is our Child & Teen Services practicum student from the UW school of social work. Lindsay wrote this entire newsletter!

