



PARENT TRUST
FOR WASHINGTON CHILDREN



Strong Families Begin At Home

Child & Teen Services Newsletter

Summer 2011

Table of Contents

- We Can!...1
- Shoebox Racing...1
- Found Object Art...3
- MyPlate...4
- Parent Trust Reads...4
- Quality Home Learning Environments..5



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:


Marni Port
Child & Teen Services Manager.
mport@parenttrust.org
206.233.0156 ext. 225


WESTERN WA OFFICE
2200 RAINIER AVE SO
SEATTLE, WA 98144
206.233.0156

WE CAN!

We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition) is a national movement designed to give parents, caregivers, and entire communities a way to help children 8 to 13 years old stay at a healthy weight. The movement stresses three components: Eat right; Get active; Reduce Screen Time.

For children, the "Get active" recommendation is a total of 60 minutes most, if not all, days of the week. This amount of physical activity
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.

SHOEBOX RACING

The other day I was walking through my neighborhood park and I saw a children's birthday party in progress. The children looked to be ages 3-5 years old, and the parents had organized a bunch of outdoor games. In addition to hitting a piñata and a three-legged race, they had the kids playing what I can only think to call: "shoe box race". The children had a blast playing and the parents had a blast watching and cheering.

Materials: 2 shoeboxes (or shoebox lids) per child.... *cont. on next page →*

EASTERN WA OFFICE
15 N. Naches Ste. 15
YAKIMA, WA 98901
509.454.4000

1.800.932.HOPE (4673)
INFORMATION@PARENTTRUST.ORG
WWW.PARENTTRUST.ORG

PLAY

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SHOEBOX RACING, CON'T.

Here's how it was played:

Line children up. Each child steps into two shoeboxes, one per foot. The object is to reach the finish line first, and to do that they have to slide their feet in the boxes instead of run. You could even call this "grass skating" and have the children decorate the boxes for an art project too.

An alternative is to tape lids to shoeboxes and cut slits in the top (about 1 inch wide and 4 inches long). Have kids slip them on for a race.

WE CAN!, CON'T.

can be done in smaller chunks throughout the day. So, our "Move" tip: **Walk** whenever possible.

Can't find the extra time? Try to limit/reduce screen time!

Research by the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation has shown that setting rules about media use is a challenge for many parents/caregivers. In 8- to 18-year-olds:
28 percent said their parents set TV-watching rules
30 percent said their parents set rules about video game use
36 percent said their parents set rules about computer use

However, the same study also demonstrated that when parents set ANY media rules, children's media use is almost three hours lower per day. **Think of all that extra time to be active!**

(Source: Henry J. Kaiser Foundation, "Generation M2: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year Olds," January 2010)

For more We Can! information, tips, and news:

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/index.htm>

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*

FOUND OBJECT/ UPCYCLED ART

From Wikipedia: The term **found art**—more commonly *found object*...or **readymade**—describes [art](#) created from undisguised, but often modified, objects that are not normally considered art, often because they already have a non-art function.

Found object art is similar to what has recently been called “upcycling”. The goal of upcycling is to take old products and give them more value (either better quality or higher environmental value). This can be a great lesson in environmental consciousness as well as a fun project!

For toddlers, a found object art collage can be a simple way to introduce this idea. Take a walk together, and collect [clean or cleanable] trash or nature that has fallen to the ground. Glue objects onto an old Styrofoam veggie tray or shoe box lid. You could also collect items from around your house and reuse and upcycle rather than re-cycle!

For older children, you may want to have a few sorting bins so they can collect over a period of time and then create their own projects. They can collect both found objects and old things around the home that they want to upcycle. Sorting bins could be along the lines of: nature, buttons, old clothes, paperclips, grocery store twist ties, and even outgrown toys. Look at the picture below to see how outgrown toys can become art with just a bit of creativity.



Another possibility is to use empty cereal boxes (and any other food boxes with colorful pictures). Cut them up and then create an artful collage. Hayes Trotter is an artist who paints on old cereal boxes to make art that is hung in galleries around the country! To the left is a toy sculpture by Robert Bradford. To see works by Hayes Potter,

<http://www.jordanartpartners.com/10hayes.htm>

Here is a website with fun examples of cereal box collages:

<http://inspirationgreen.com/cereal-box-art.html>

Adults may remember doing found object/upcycling art...remember making gum wrapper chains? Here is a website with instructions for using old wrapping paper for chain making.

<http://weefolkart.com/?q=node/308>

Want to know more about found or recycled art? Here's an article from the NYTimes about a preschool that uses found objects for art projects:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/01/nyregion/01trash.html>

Want to purchase found/recycled objects and upcycle into crafts? Lynnwood's Creation Station has been doing this for over 15 years! <http://www.creationstationinc.com/>

EAT

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

THE FOOD PLATE

Well, the food pyramid is out, and the food plate is in. The hope is that this simplified image will help Americans make healthier, more informed food choices. The new design is called MyPlate, and is part of Mrs. Obama's campaign against obesity.

The plate is divided into four sections-fruit, vegetables, protein, and grains; and, an additional circle sits beside the plate to represent dairy. The goal should be for our real plates to mirror the symbol in terms of content and quantity.

PARENT TRUST READS

The Gingerbread Rabbit

By Randall Jarrell

Illustrated by Garth Williams

Ages 5-9 years old

The Gingerbread Rabbit is a retelling of the classic Gingerbread Man story. In the original, (first appearing in print in the May 1875 issue of [St. Nicholas Magazine](#)...Wikipedia.com) a childless old woman bakes a gingerbread man for herself and her husband. The gingerbread man comes to life, leaping out the oven, and leading the man and woman on a chase throughout the countryside. After eluding many, the gingerbread man meets his end by a fox who catches and eats him.

The Gingerbread Rabbit is a rabbit of dough that is made by a mother as a surprise for her daughter. But when she leaves him sitting in the sun while she buys food from a street vendor, the Gingerbread Rabbit has a conversation with a paring knife, a rolling pin and a mixing bowl. They convince him that the woman wants to bake and EAT HIM! So he runs away, and gets some surprises on his own adventures. This story has a different ending than the traditional one...so I'll leave you wondering what happens! Jarrell's writing is a joy, with enough humor that I laughed out loud quite a bit while reading.

Although most of the critics find MyPlate to be an improvement from the pyramid (which was introduced in the early 90s and upgraded in 2005), some feel that the 'protein' section is misleading since many people get their proteins from grains and dairy and that this additional protein is unnecessary since most Americans get more protein than needed. However, almost all praise the larger portions of fruit and vegetables on MyPlate. Another positive of this new symbol is that you don't have to be able to read to understand--young children can understand the visual cues and carry the ideas throughout their life.



For more information, visit the Agriculture Dept. website: ChooseMyPlate.com

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YAKIMA, WA 98901
509.454.4000

1.800.932.HOPE (4673)
INFORMATION@PARENTTRUST.ORG
WWW.PARENTTRUST.ORG

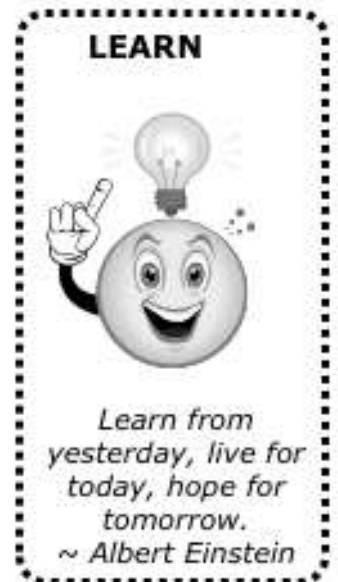
QUALITY HOME LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Researchers spent 5 years studying more than 1,850 children and their learning environments at home. The children and their mothers were from mostly low-income households and information was gathered during home visits when the children were 2,3 and 5 years old.

Researchers gathered information on literacy activities (like shared book reading), quality of the mother/child engagement, and availability of learning materials (like children's books). They also gathered information on the number of words children understood and knowledge of letters at age 5. From this information the researchers created a "learning environment score" at each age of the child.

The study showed that for some children the quality of learning environments changed over time, for some it was uniformly low or high. One of the most important findings was that the differences in learning environments over time predicted children's school readiness skills. Eileen Rodriguez, researcher, says, "Home learning experiences that are consistently supportive in the early years may close the school readiness gap of children from low income backgrounds." Another researcher, Amber Story, says, "As a parent, it is never too early to engage your child in learning. This research suggests that the degree to which parents read and talk to their infant; point and label objects in the environment; and provide engaging books and toys when their child is only 15 months old can have long-lasting effects on the infant's language skills years later." [publicity release, National Science Foundation, 20-June-2011].

For tips on how to engage your child in early learning activities, you can call the Family Help Line: 1-800-932-4673 and look at the Parenting Tips and Books and Reading section of our website: www.parenttrust.org



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