



PARENT TRUST
FOR WASHINGTON CHILDREN



Strong Families Begin At Home

Child & Teen Services Newsletter

Winter 2011

Table of Contents

- Crossing the River...1
- Measuring...1
- Flannel Boards...3
- Test Anxiety...3
- Snacking...4
- Parent Trust Reads...4



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

CROSSING THE RIVER

Often when we think of movement and physical activity we think of strength or cardiovascular health. Balance is also an integral part of our health, and there are many exercises and activities we can do with children to develop balance. When we work on body-balance, our mind gets exercise in focusing.

This activity can be done indoors or out, with one child or many. First, identify the area of the room that is the "river." You may use masking tape on the ground (careful, it can stick to carpet if left on too

CONTINUED 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.

MEASURING

Although playing with measuring cups can be a great way to teach literacy and math skills, this article is focused simply on having fun. And who knows, maybe everyone will learn something too!

What you'll need:

- Variety of measuring cups, dry and/or wet.
- Variety of measuring spoons.
- Large bin or tub—washing basin size or bigger (this could be an in-a-bathtub activity if you are at home using water).
- Fluid or solids to measure with: e.g. water, beans, sand, flour, etc.

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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**MEASURING, CON'T.**

Most children love any activity that involves pouring things in and out other things. There doesn't even need to be a goal for this activity. It can be a purely sensory experience. However, because you are providing different sizes of cups and spoons, children will gain experience with the concept of volume and capacity. If you want to provide some structure to the activity, after children have played for a while, ask them to guess/estimate how many [blanks] it would take to fill [blank].

For example, how many of these tablespoons do you think you would need to fill that $\frac{1}{4}$ cup measure? How about the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup measure? Is it different with a dry measure and a wet measure (do you know?!?) After taking down guesses, try it—and count together. Write down the answer, then see who got the closest!

A word about mess: this will most likely be a messy activity that involves a bit of clean up, so keep that in mind when you set it up. Make sure your child(ren) are dressed (or undressed) so they can get wet if you are using water. Set ground rules about splashing and/or tossing dried materials. If you have a child under 4 years old, do not use materials that can be a choking hazard. Stick to corn meal or water.

CROSSING THE RIVER, CON'T.**MOVE**

long), string, lined up toys to make a "river bank", or any other creative solution. Now, make the river rocks. The activity will be to cross the river (or walk along the river) walking on the river rocks; don't fall in the river or you'll get "wet"! Rocks can also be made creatively, but because the children will be standing on them, only use flat surfaces. Stagger the "rocks" about one foot apart. For example, fabric swatches would work well.



Children can be instructed to first go slowly and step on each rock. After practicing, instruct them to go even slower, and step on the "rocks" without looking down while moving to next rock. If you want to make it a game, when a child steps off a rock into the river, they are out of that round of the game. This should slow them down!

After the game, you can invite the children to share strategies they used to stay on the rocks and not "fall" into the river.

**adapted from Yoga Calm®'s "Block Creek"*

CREATE

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

FLANNEL STORY BOARDS

Flannel story boards are often used in childcare and preschools. They are very easy to make, and can be a fun addition to your Circle of Parents program, or home. If you have young toddlers you can make the board and pieces yourself, but if you have older children, kids as young as three or four can help, and older children can probably make most of it themselves.

What you will need:

- A large board: plywood or hard cardboard. A cardboard box will work fine, and can even be kept as a box once you remove flaps.
- Felt or flannel: One large piece to cover the board, and smaller pieces of different colors for shapes.
- Scissors
- Optional: construction paper, glue, markers or crayons

Attach the large piece of flannel to the board. You may use fabric glue, a hot glue gun (older children and adults only please!) or larger binder clips. You can even use duct tape. This will be your background. Now comes the fun: creating the flannel pieces. You can make pieces that tell a story, or for very young children, just different colored shapes will be fine. You can also color pictures from a coloring book, cut them out and back them with flannel so they stick to a flannel board. There are also websites that offer templates for you. Try:

- http://www.coloring.ws/simple_shapes.htm
- <http://www.coloring.ws/coloring.html>

TEST ANXIETY

New research, published in the January 14th 2011 issue of *Science*, found that when anxious students spent 10 minutes writing about their test anxiety and fears just before a test, their scores went up. The biggest improvement was in students who were most stressed before the exam.

The writing exercise was to *write specifically* about the test anxiety--not general writing or journaling. For some, this may seem counterintuitive; drawing attention to the thoughts and feelings of worry. However, the lead author of the study said the writing exercise works because once you have the worries out on paper, you don't need to worry or ruminate about them during the test.

"Worries can compromise important thinking and reasoning skills that we could otherwise use to think at our best. This writing exercise gives students more cognitive horsepower," she explained.

LEARN

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

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EAT

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

~ Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

SNACKING

When is the last time you made air-popped popcorn? These days most popcorn made at home is microwaved, but it just can't compare in taste and fun with air popped. Popcorn can be a healthy snack, and making it can be lots of fun. (If you don't have an air popper, you can still use microwave.) Air poppers can be found for under \$25.00 and make a great gift. Regarding nutrition, popcorn is high in fiber, low in fat and sugar free.

However, once you start adding toppings all bets are off. Toppings *can* be nutritious, though; try spraying the popcorn with olive oil spray (or canola.)

Then sprinkle it with garlic flakes or cinnamon.

PARENT TRUST READS

Gyo Fujikawa has been one of my favorite illustrators every since I was in preschool and my dad introduced me to her edition of *A Child's Garden of Verse*.

Fujikawa had a very prolific career, and illustrated, as well as wrote, many children's books. I recently purchased *Puppies, Pussycats and Other Friends* [board book] for my 20 month old niece.

Last night we read the book together, and I was thrilled to find my niece as mesmerized by the pictures as I was. And the story is perfect for a young toddler. Starting with the line, "*Wouldn't you love to have a furry, fuzzy, feathery, or slithery smooth friend?*" the book is a sweet rendering of children and baby animals. What's not to love?!

You can also try "hippie popcorn": coat the popped corn with a bit of soy sauce (or better yet, put soy sauce in spray bottle and spray on corn) and then sprinkle with nutritional yeast.

Nutritional yeast is a form of deactivated yeast, and a good source of protein and vitamins!

When I taught preschool and in my Circle of Parents children's group, we would gather the children in a circle around the popcorn machine. We'd catch the popping corn in a big brown paper bag, and as it popped, we'd sing or chant one of the following:

(To the Tune of I'm a Little Tea Pot)

I'm a little kernel in a pot
Heat me up and watch me pop
When I'm all fluffy then I'm done
Popping corn is lots of fun!

(Chanted as kids jump up and down)

Pop goes the popcorn,
Can't you see.
Pop goes the popcorn,
Jumping just like me.

*Keep in mind that American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no popcorn until a child is 4 years old, because of the risk of choking.

IN THE NEWS

What's new at
Parent Trust for
Washington
Children?

Upcoming professional training:

"An Introduction to the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE"

Join us for a full day of training on March 18, 2011

The ASQ is an accurate, valid, and parent friendly developmental screening tool. Quick and easy to use, low cost and effective, the ASQ has been used by professionals for 15 years. For more information, and to register: www.parenttrust.org/asqtraining

New Great Starts Class Offered:

"Diapering Choices 101"

These are not your Grandma's diapers! This class is for expectant and new parents who want to learn about healthier, eco-conscious and cost-saving ways to diaper your baby. Taught 4-5 times per year at Parent Trust. More information and registration: www.parenttrust.org/class-diapering

S.M.A.R.T. Teen/Parent classes free for King County residents:

This winter Parent Trust will be presenting SMART Teen as a parent/teen workshop.

Teens are encouraged to attend with a parent and/or caring adult. Teens can also attend on their own if desired. This class is highly interactive, and you are encouraged to attend with an open mind, a curious attitude, and a willingness to be gentle with yourself as you try new things. All classes take place at Parent Trust's Center for Strong Families.

Registration and more information: www.parenttrust.org/classsmartteen  Session 1:

February 15: 6-8PM Parent/Adult--Teen combo.  Session 2: March 5th: 10AM-12PM Parent/Adult--Teen Combo

Join Parent Trust on Facebook!

Yes, we have a Facebook page! Keep track of upcoming events, news, links and friends. Find us at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Parent-Trust-for-Washington-Children/68962080664> 



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