

EI WATERING CAN

Little Sprinkles to Help
Your Child Grow

Summer 2014



MOCKING BIRDS

Summer activities to make your little mocking birds sing!

Summer is the best time of year to be outside playing with items that are messy, wet and fun. Kids can put on their bathing suits, go out into the grass or drive way and then when finished can just be hosed off before setting foot back inside the house. Here are some fun messy, colorful and wet activities that you can do with your toddler all while working on language skills. All of these activities can encourage new vocabulary and listening skills while having fun in the sun.

Blueberry Painting

Celebrate National Blueberry Month during July! Give your children blueberries to look at, touch, smell and taste. Talk about the shape of the blueberry, count the blueberries, talk about how they taste. After the children have observed the blueberries, add a little water to them and cook them in the microwave for one minute. Have the children help you mush them up. Use the blueberry juice to paint a beautiful blue blueberry picture.

Kool-Aid Painting

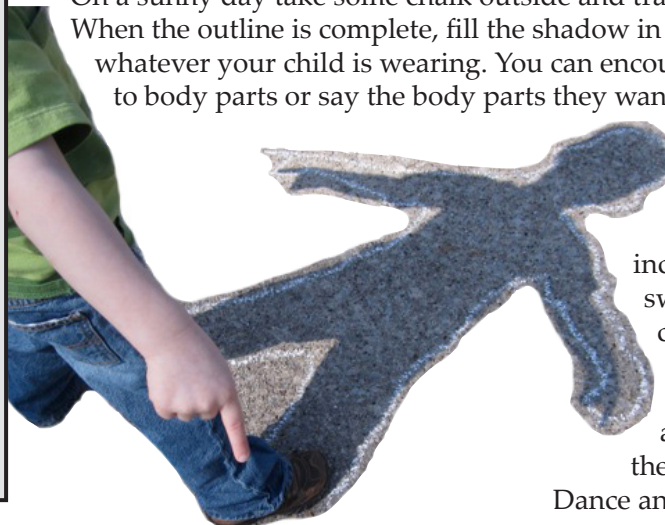
Allow your child to choose one or two different colors of unsweetened Kool-Aid. Encourage them to say "pink" or "blue". Sprinkle unsweetened Kool-Aid on a piece a paper. Let the children move a piece of ice over the Kool-Aid. Talk about how the ice feels "slippery" or "cold". Ask them what they have drawn in their picture or if they would like you to draw them something. Watch as the Kool-Aid turns to liquid and makes a yummy smelling picture.

Shadow Tracing

On a sunny day take some chalk outside and trace your child's shadow. When the outline is complete, fill the shadow in with facial features and whatever your child is wearing. You can encourage your toddler to point to body parts or say the body parts they want on their shadow person.

You can talk about accessories you would like to add to the shadow person. Some ideas include a hat, tiara, pirate sword or princess dress. You can also encourage direction following using the shadow. "Raise your arm", and your toddler will see the shadow's arm go up, too!

Dance and see the shadow dance.



SOCIAL BUTTERFLIES

Ten fun summer play date activities for promoting imitation, turn taking and parallel play!

1. Blow bubbles – take turns blowing and popping bubbles
2. Go on a scavenger hunt – put pictures of outside objects on index cards and see if the kids can go out and find them!
3. Draw with sidewalk chalk – Make pictures of everyone in the group and talk about how they look the same and how they are different.
4. Have a picnic – a fun time to practice manners and making requests .
5. Take a walk outside – naming and describing what you see helps build vocabulary and describing skills
6. Plant a flower – this is a sensory activity and helps with following directions
7. Make some cookies – take turns putting ingredients in the bowl, stirring and dumping.
8. Finger paint – helps with learning colors and basic concepts
9. Play at a park –Encourage your child to watch and imitate the kids around him!
10. Attend story time at your local library – builds speech and social skills



PARENT TIPS & TOOLS

Ideas for helping toddlers manage behavior

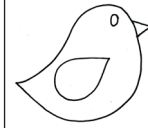
SUPPORTING & TEACHING YOUR CHILD ABOUT FEELINGS

Young children experience many of the same emotions as adults do. Older babies and children can feel angry, jealous, excited, sad, silly, frustrated, happy and worried. The difference is that children birth through four years of age lack the self-control and language skills to express their strong feelings in ways that adults can understand or find acceptable. Instead they communicate them through sounds and actions: crying, screaming, stomping, hitting, yanking, kicking...losing what little control they do have!

We adults have an important part to play in the development of healthy social-emotional development! As we meet our children's needs, love, nurture and comfort them, we provide a safe place for them to discover more about themselves, their emotions and ways they can communicate and find solutions. It is very important to:

- **Think about your child's temperament, how he approaches and reacts to the world.** A child's physiological makeup affects the intensity of the feelings. Some children are naturally easy going; others are more shy and withdrawn. And of course there are those we lovingly refer to as feisty or more challenging in their emotional reactions and demands. Consider your own temperament!
- **Talk about feelings.** Whether a baby or child understands the meaning of the emotion label or not, it is not too soon to begin using the mad, sad, happy, scared, frustrated, embarrassed, overwhelmed vocabulary. It is the understanding conveyed in your voice as you talk about feelings that is what babies and children understand.
- **Encourage children to express their feelings.** Teach acceptable ways to vent frustration and anger. Label feelings/emotions. Feelings are not bad in themselves - only bad in the hurtful ways we express them.
- **Respect and recognize your child's feelings.** Accepting his feeling, without minimizing them or making fun, increases the chances he will share more with you in the future.
- **Play games that explore feelings.** Playing with puppets...drawing pictures...pretending with dolls or stuffed animals...making feeling photo books...finding books in the library about different emotions.
- **Make a cozy, calming place in your home that will help your child calm when upset.** Share that place with your child and add quiet, calming songs, slow counting and reassuring touch to help your little one regulate their body and feelings back to a happier state.
- **Plan for upsets and temper tantrums!** They are inevitable! Stay calm yourself. State what your child is trying to communicate. Help her calm when she is ready. Be there waiting and redirect to something else much more fun than being mad, sad or frustrated.

Learn to say, "Oh Well!" Sometimes we just have to "Let it go!" and start all over again the next day. Pick your battles, forgive and don't forget to have fun together! And always reconnect with a hug!



THE EARLY BIRD

Summer activities perfect for you and your young child

Wed-Fri: \$5 admission at Lakemont Park

7/19-7/20: 20th Native American Pow-Wow
Delgrosso Park

7/30: Splash Day at Noon
Altoona Curve

8/3-8/9: Huntingdon County Fair

8/31-9/6: Cambria County Fair

9/1: Labor Day - Free admission at Lakemont Park

\$5.99 all day tickets at Delgrosso Park

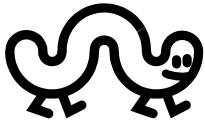
9/6-9/7: Arts and Crafts Festival
Lakemont Park
\$5 admission

9/7: Grandparents ride free
Delgrosso Park

Altoona Curve with Post Game fireworks: 7/18, 7/20, 8/1, 8/3, 8/12, 8/22, 8/24 and 8/28

"Tell me and I forget,
teach me and I may remember,
involve me and I learn."

-Benjamin Franklin



WIGGLE WORMS

Enjoying activities with children who have special needs

Summer is the perfect time to get out of the house and enjoy the warm weather. While activities such as going for a walk, visiting a park, going out to eat or on vacation sound like fun, they are sometimes challenging for parents with children with special needs.

If your child has difficulty sitting up in the stroller for a walk, in a highchair at a restaurant, in the shopping cart in the grocery store or is unable to participate on the rides at an amusement park, there are portable seats that may help you:

- The Snuggin Go is a soft insert for pre-term and term babies. It is a soft positioning insert that can be placed in car seats, highchairs, strollers and swings/bouncy seats. It also cradles the head to reduce pressure if your child has torticollis or plagiocephaly.
- The Soft Touch Liner is an insert that attaches to most strollers, highchairs, dining room, restaurant and classroom chairs to give your child some additional support if they need it.
- The Seat to Go is a portable seat that can sit on the floor or attach to chairs. This seat can also work in shopping carts.
- The Go to Seat is a portable seat that also can support your child in a variety of settings such as on a chair, shopping cart and swing.
- The Soft Touch Sitter also attaches to most chairs in the home and community. Several parents have taken this seat to the amusement park and their child has been able to ride independently even though the child does not have full head/trunk control. There are other options for bases and strollers for this seat as well.



These are just a few examples of the portable seats/options that may help your child with special needs so that everyone can participate in those summer moments that make family time special. Ask your child's physical therapist for recommendations if there are activities you want your child to participate in and they can discuss options and possibly loan you a seat/adaptation device to try.



MIRACLE GROW

Delicious summer snacks for you and your toddler

CHOCOLATE BANANA GRAHAMS

A graham cracker smeared with Nutella and topped with banana and coconut is a light way to satisfy your sweet tooth!



Ingredients:

- 1 square graham cracker broken into 2 rectangles
- 1/2 tsp. Nutella or peanut butter
- 2 slices banana – about 2 inches long
- 1/2 tsp. sweetened shredded coconut

Make it:

Spread each graham cracker piece with 1/4 tsp. Nutella and top with a slice of banana and a sprinkling of coconut. Let your child help you spread the Nutella to work on using two hands- one to hold the cracker steady and one to spread. You can count the banana slices and crackers and talk about the ingredients using vocabulary like sticky, sweet and slimy.



SUGAR-FREE GUMMY WORMS

Ingredients:

- 2 small packages sugar free jello
- 4 envelopes of plain gelatin
- 1/2 cup water
- Worm-shaped molds

Make it:

Combine ingredients in a pan. Heat over medium heat until dissolved pour into molds and cool for 20 minutes. If you don't have molds – let it cool in a thin layer on a cookie sheet- you can cut into worms or other fun summer shapes! Don't forget your child will love to help you stir and dump the ingredients!



THE DIRT PILE

Summer sensory play ideas

Summer is a great time for sensory play! Play involving a variety of sensations is not only fun, it's good for a child's development. It can be calming, improve body awareness, increase attention span and improve motor skills. Here are some ideas for outdoor activities:

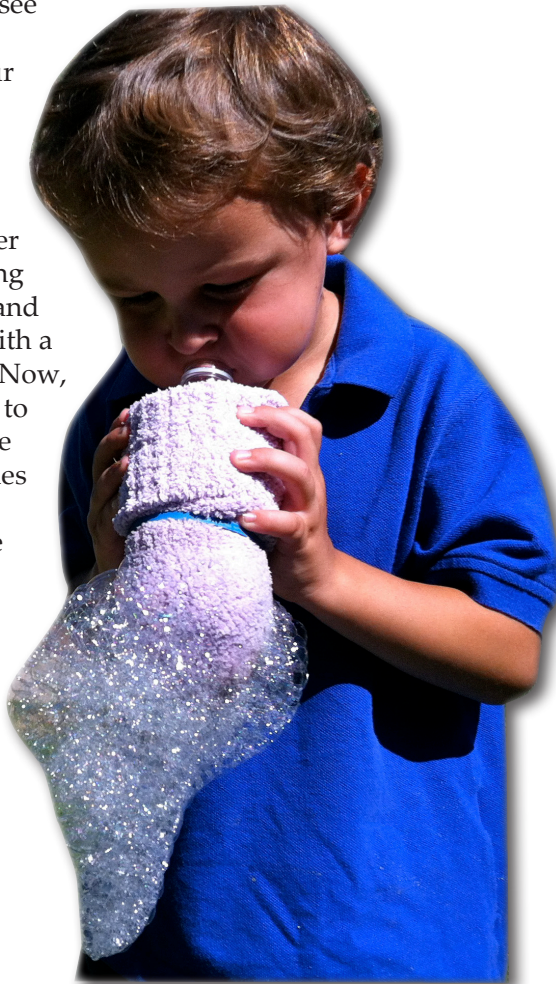
Homemade Bubbles and Wand

Supplies:

- 1 1/2 quarts of water
- 1/2 c. light corn syrup
- 1 c. liquid dish soap
- 20 oz. water bottle
- Washcloth and rubberband (optional)

Add water and corn syrup and stir until completely mixed. Slowly stir in dish soap. Store in an airtight container.

Cut the bottom off of the 20-ounce bottle making sure the part you cut is nice and even. Dip this end into your bubbles and blow into the "drinking" end of the bottle! Now, see how BIG you can make your bubbles! To blow bubble "snakes", place a washcloth over the cut opening of the bottle, and fasten it on with a rubberband. Now, dip and blow to make a bubble snake – bubbles come out as suds in a tube shape!



Gloop

It's an interesting mixture with a unique texture that is great for sensory play and learning about the concepts of a solid and liquid.

Supplies:

- 2 c. corn flour
- 1 c. water
- Food coloring
- Large container or bowl



Place the corn flour into a large container and add a few drops of coloring into the center. Have the water ready for your child to pour into the container. Encourage your child to mix and play with the Gloop before it is completely mixed together. Explore the texture and talk about what it feels and looks like: sticky, slimy, soft, hard, runny, gooey, cold and powdery.

Corn flour is made of long, stringy particles. When water is added, they do not dissolve in water, but they do spread themselves out. This allows the Gloop to act like both a solid and a liquid. When you roll the mixture in your hands or apply pressure to it, the particles join together and the mixture feels solid. But if it is left to rest or is held up and allowed to dribble, the particles slide over each other and it feels like a liquid. It is super fun and super messy!

Tip: Clean-up is easy as Gloop can be picked up or wiped off of the table and easily washed off hands and clothing. Food coloring may stain clothes or hands so dress appropriately. Wear play clothes or an apron.

Water Play and How to Make a Homemade Sprinkler

Did you know you can make a garden sprinkler from a plastic water bottle? Make some holes in the bottle's body with a nail and then attach the hose nozzle to the bottle nozzle using tape. Turn on the water and let the children enjoy running through the sprinkler!

In addition to sprinkler play, children can enjoy all kinds of water play in the summer – always with adult supervision for safety! Swimming in a large pool with an adult's help or playing in a baby pool can be a lot of fun. Children also enjoy water tables or playing in a dishpan or plastic container of water. Float rubber ducks or toy boats, or use measuring cups and containers to practice hand-eye coordination to scoop and pour. Colored ice cubes added to the water can be lots of fun!