

FAMILY TIME

STRENGTHEN YOUR FAMILY

FALL

PENNSSTATE



Ages 4-6



Your Child from 4-6

- Asks endless questions.
- Sees play as the big business of life.
- Imitates grownups and role plays extensively.
- Values playmates.
- Accepts the principle of taking turns.
- Likes slapstick humor.
- Wants to be “good.”
- Needs to be praised.
- Likes to be near home; family is important.
- Plays rough and tumble games all the time.
- Shows off, giggles, and acts silly.
- Is doggedly independent.

To Do Family Time You Must

- Have a firm desire to help your family grow stronger.
- Make a strong commitment to regularly do *Family Time* activities.
- Set aside time to do the activities.
- Be determined to involve all the family members.

To Get Started

- Pick an activity.
- Before the family gathers, be prepared by getting together any materials that you need to do what you have planned.
- Set aside some time each week when all the family members can be together. Turn off the TV, radio, or other distractions.

A Word to Parents of Younger Children

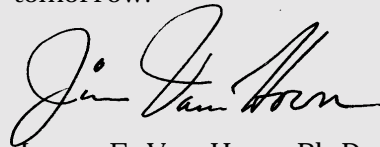
Members of a strong family see themselves as a vital part of the family. This feeling of being important in and to the family doesn't just happen—it develops.

Parents who adopt *Family Time* and do the activities regularly are helping each member feel important.

Each member of the strong family sees his family as the most important group he is a part of. Obviously, the young child feels his family is important, but as children grow older, outside groups can gradually replace the family. *Family Time* helps parents with younger children develop the idea that the family is the important group. A sense of loyalty to the family develops.

Family Time helps the family learn together. Young children are beginners who need to explore and learn. Regardless of the child's age, the parent is the child's first teacher. Exploring and learning in an atmosphere filled with parental love is the finest climate for learning. Most of the greatest lessons the child will learn and use for the rest of his life are taught by loving parents.

Family Time is fun for the entire family. The enjoyable moments spent doing *Family Time* will become the happy memories of tomorrow.



James E. Van Horn, Ph.D.
Professor of Rural Sociology and Certified
Family Life Educator

Let's Explore...

Our Family

Include your child in the festive preparations for fall holidays. The whole family can join together to make apple turkeys and jack o'lanterns.

Apples

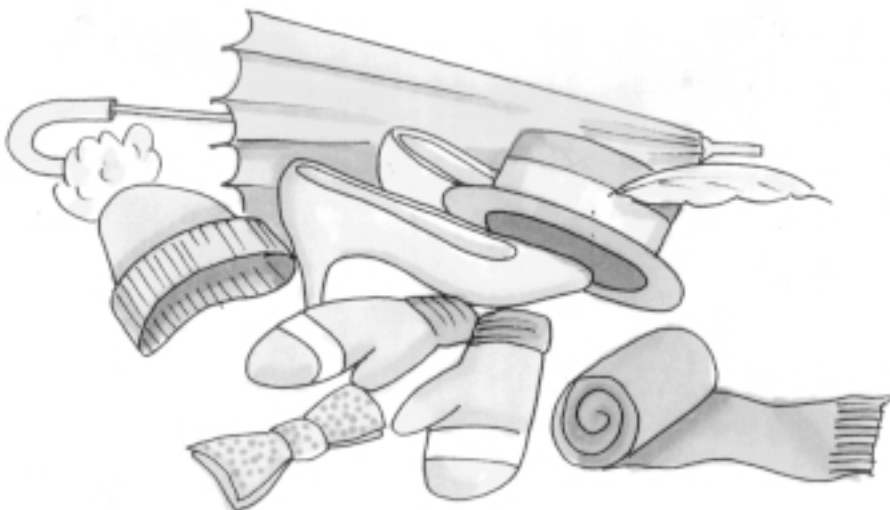
Use apples for the body. Use tail feathers cut from orange peels and attach with toothpicks to the apple. Cut the head and feet from heavy paper. Attach with toothpicks held onto the paper with tape.

Jack O'Lanterns for Halloween

Your child can help choose the pumpkin. He can help the family design the face, and can take out all the pumpkin seeds and string. He can help make a pumpkin seed snack. (See Let's Explore... The Foods We Eat.)

Raking and Jumping in Leaves

In autumn when the leaves begin to fall, take rakes outside and let the family enjoy working in the yard together. Many children like to rake a pile of leaves of their own and use wagons, wheel barrows, etc., to move them from one place to another. A large pile is fun to jump into. Leaves can be raked into the shapes of rooms to play house. When the playing is over, all can help to put the leaves in trash bags or rake them to the curb.



Dress-up Box

Children love to dress up. A large box, filled with your discarded clothes and shoes, perhaps an old wedding dress or tuxedo, lots of hats, and many other items is a source of enjoyment for boys and girls alike.

It's fun to get the family together on a rainy day or evening, put the box of discards in the center of the room, and see who can dress up in the funniest costume.

Table Talk

Establish a routine during dinner of asking each family member: "What nice thing happened to you today?" Make mealtime a time for positive talk as well as a problem-solving arena.

Pretend Visit

Have your child make a pretend visit to your home. She can knock at the door and you invite her in for juice and a snack.

Ask her about her work and "children" if she says she has any. When the visit is over she can pretend to leave.

Later, talk about the visit and how you all felt.

Is Everyone Taking Part?

Measuring Heights in the Family

Materials

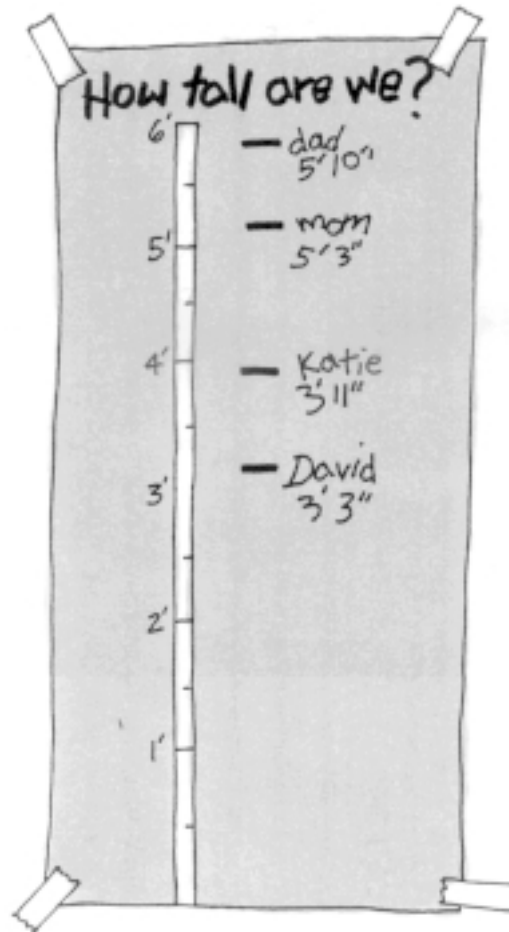
large roll of brown paper or shelf paper, or a doorway
yardstick
magic marker or crayons
masking tape

Directions

Tape onto the wall a roll of paper higher than the height of the tallest family member. With a magic marker or crayon, mark the height of each family member using a yardstick to measure. Note the feet and inches. (You can use a doorway instead if you don't mind marking it, or else put a strip of masking tape to mark each person.)

The roll of paper can be left up permanently or rolled up and stored until the next measurement is taken in three or four months. Use a different color marker or crayon each time you measure so your child can see his growth.

This is a good time to notice that your child is growing, but his parents are not. Why is this?



Other Family Activities to Do:

Let's Explore... Our Community

An Autumn School Visit

Your child will catch all the excitement of other children in your community as the start of school approaches in the fall. Help your child get ready with a visit to your school before school starts.

Schools are often open before school actually begins. Call and find out if you may come to visit the school and see the classroom where your child will be assigned. Let him see where the room is and explore where the bathroom, the cafeteria or all-purpose room, and the library are.

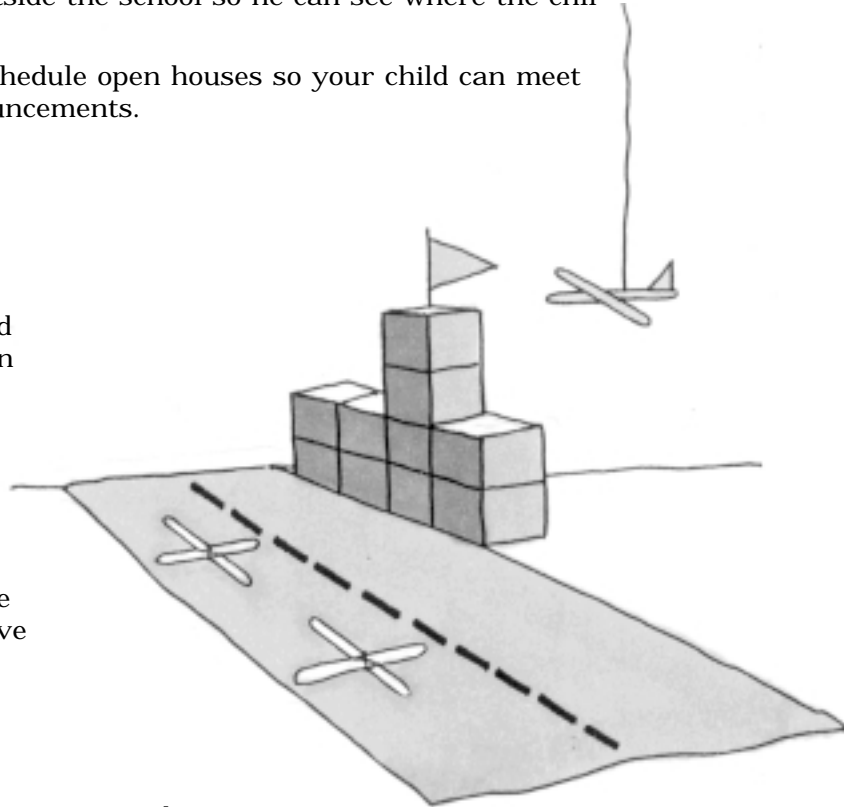
Also spend some time in the playground outside the school so he can see where the children spend recess.

Many public schools and nursery schools schedule open houses so your child can meet his new teacher. Watch the paper for announcements.

Playing Airport

Construct "airplanes" from two tongue depressors or popsicle sticks, crossed over and taped together with masking tape. These can be crayed or painted. A strip of brown wrapping paper or shelf paper about 1 foot by 5 to 8 feet can be taped to the floor for the runway. Boxes or blocks can be used as hangers, airport terminals, and control towers.

Let your child decide whether to spend more time in constructing the airport or in creative play.



Gas Station Visit

Take your child to your local gas station or car repair shop.

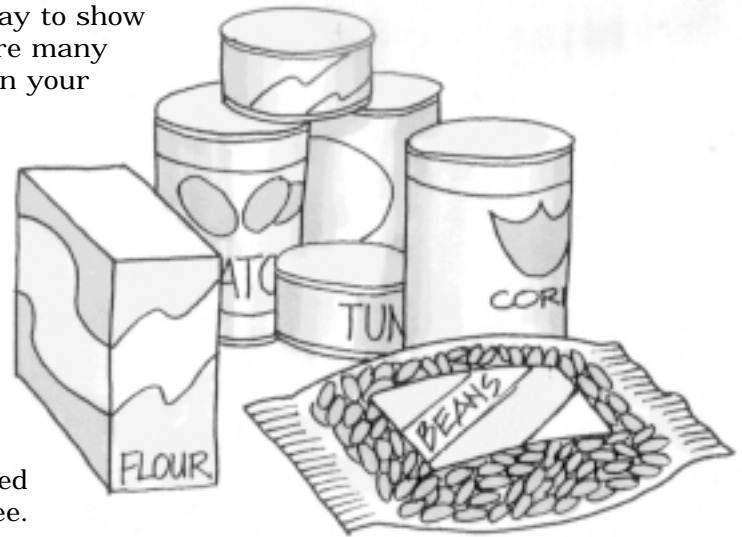
At the gas station or car repair shop, he can watch when a car goes up on the lift. He can see all the different kinds of tools that are used, watch a tire being mounted, or watch wheels being balanced.

Be sure to watch with him and explain to him what is happening, naming the tools and parts of the car involved.

Sharing with Others

People living in a community need lots of things, but most of all they need friends. How can your family be a friend and show that you care about people? Sharing is a good way to show people you don't know that you do care. There are many ways you can share what you have with others in your community.

- Sort through the clothing your family has outgrown. Groups like the Salvation Army, community outreach centers, and churches collect clothes for others. Your child will enjoy helping to take clothes to these centers.
- Some areas have food banks that provide emergency food to families. A donation of food and a trip to the center is a good way to see what others in your community are doing.
- The Humane Society or S.P.C.A. might have need for cat or dog food or newspapers. Call first to see.



The Working World

Talk about the jobs people do. Talk about the kinds of work your family members do. Talk about the tools people use at work.

Together, look through magazines to find pictures of people doing different kinds of work. Help read the pictures by asking questions. "What kind of work is he doing? Why is she dressed that way? Have you ever seen a person doing this work?"

Children love picture reading and it helps to strengthen your child's ability to understand what is written.

A favorite picture of a worker can become a jigsaw puzzle. Glue or paste the picture to stiff paper or cardboard. Mark several dark lines over the picture. Cut only a few lines if you want to make the puzzle easy. After your child has mastered it, you might want to cut a few more lines to make more pieces.

Let's Explore...

The Foods We Eat

Corn Meal Muffins

Native Americans taught the settlers how to make corn breads. Try this one with your family.

Ingredients

- 1 egg
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons milk
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1 1/4 cups corn meal
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons vegetable shortening

Directions

Heat oven to 450°. Generously grease 12 muffin cups. Heat these in oven while preparing batter. Beat ingredients together until just smooth with a rotary beater. Pour or spoon batter into hot pan until almost full. Bake 10 to 15 minutes. Serve piping hot with butter.



Apple Pudding

Ingredients

- 1 cup leftover rice
- 1 cup applesauce
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt

Directions

Place cooked rice into mixing bowl. Add applesauce and cinnamon. Stir mixture. Add yogurt and stir. Spoon into dishes.

Roasted Pumpkin Seeds

Ingredients

- pumpkin
- salt
- margarine or vegetable oil

Directions

Cut open the pumpkin. Scrape out the insides and save the seeds. Wash the seeds in a flat pan to rid them of any pumpkin membrane. Drain the seeds and spread them in a baking pan. Sprinkle salt over the seeds and add a few teaspoons of margarine or oil. Toast in a 300° oven, stirring occasionally, to brown the seeds evenly. They are finished when brown and crisp. Eat, shell and all.



Flipping Animal Pancakes

Children love to name the animal shapes created by flowing pancake batter. Your child can measure and mix the ingredients if you tell him the quantities.

Ingredients

Your favorite pancake recipe

Directions

To make animals, dip a teaspoon into your batter and pour into the shape of an animal.

If you are really experimenting, try personalized pancakes! With your teaspoon of batter, draw a letter or number backwards on the griddle. When the underside is lightly browned, pour a spoonful of regular batter over the letter or number so that the pancake will completely surround it. Bake until bubbles appear, then turn and brown the second side. The letter or number will stand out darker than the surrounding pancake.

Shake-M-Up Cake

Ingredients

- 1 cup flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup oil
- 1/2 cup orange juice



Icing

Mix 3 tablespoons orange juice with 1 1/2 cups sifted confectioner's sugar.

Directions

Preheat oven to 375°. Have child grease 8 x 8 inch cake pan. Help child measure flour, baking powder, and salt and stir them together in bowl. Set aside. Have child break each egg into a small dish, then slip into a 1-quart plastic jar or bowl with a tight-fitting lid, cover, and shake forty times. Then add the sugar, oil, and orange juice and shake forty times or until blended. Add the flour mixture and shake forty times or until smooth. Pour batter into pan and bake for 20-25 minutes or until cake pulls away from the sides. Cool on wire rack.

Other Recipes to Make:

Let's Explore...

Plants and Animals

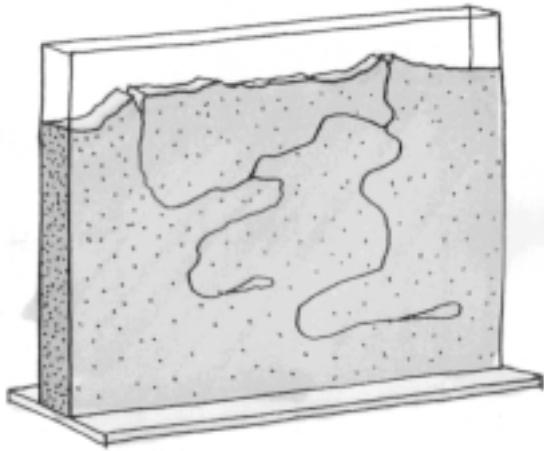
Grow an Avocado Plant

When you've finished eating an avocado, you can save the pit and grow a graceful plant from it.

First, wash the pit clean. Let it soak in a glass of water for two days. Then strip off the outside layer.

Fill a 4-inch pot almost to the top with soil. Plant the pit so the more pointed end faces up and is covered with about a half inch of soil.

Water the soil well. Place the pot where it won't get direct sun. When the soil dries out, water again. When the sprout appears, move to a sunny window.



An Anthill

An anthill is a fascinating project. Your child can watch what goes on and keep track of how the ant colony changes over several months. An ant-hill can be bought inexpensively at pet shops and comes in a tight flat container. It's sealed, so you needn't worry about ants getting out into your house.

Take a Nature Smell Walk

Children are born fully equipped with a set of "natural tools," the senses of sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell. These tools enable them to explore and discover the world of which they are a part.

Try your powers of smell by taking a nature smell walk. Blindfold one member of the family and guide her on a smelling walk. Have the blindfolded person guess what she is smelling. Flowers, leaves, fruit trees, pine trees, dirt, animals, trash items, cement, and fences are all good items to have your child smell. If you have a garden, try onions, parsley, mint, tomatoes, and other garden vegetables or the leaves of their plants.

Take turns. Let your child lead you and see how you do.

Spider House

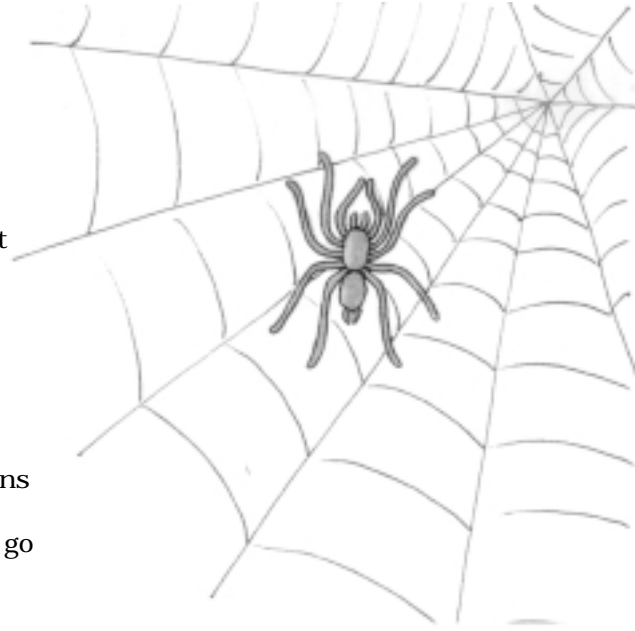
Materials

large glass jar with screw lid with small holes punched in it
sand or dirt
cotton
twig
spider (check spider book to be sure of what you have)

Directions

Fill jar with about 2 inches of sand or dirt. Put twig in the sand so that it stands up almost to the top of the jar or leans against the side. A piece of cotton should be in the jar and moistened every fourth day. It is a good idea to let spiders go after a couple of weeks, as feeding them is very difficult.

A good book on spiders is the How and Why Series.



Nature Constructions

Provide various containers to be used as bases, play dough or clay, and quantities of natural materials such as twigs and dried weeds.

Your child may want to flatten the clay and use it as a base for a standing garden. She might want to press various items flat into the flattened clay, or she might want to make three-dimensional sculptures.

Materials

one- or two-quart milk carton, small cut-off throw-away pie plates, sections of egg cartons, or clay

pine cones, dried leaves, pine needles, rocks, pebbles, pieces of bark, wood, and other natural materials

(Go on a hike and collect your own.)

Other Things to Make:

Let's Explore...

The World of Crafts

Tissue Ghost Puppets

Materials

cotton
white facial tissue, extra large size
rubber band
felt marker

Directions

Place about four cotton balls in the center of an extra large facial tissue. Wrap the tissue around the cotton to form a round head. Use a rubber band to hold the tissue in place. With a felt tip pen, draw the facial features on the head.

Place your index finger through the rubber band and slightly into the head. Allow the remaining tissue to cover your hand. Your puppet is now ready for use.



Laminated Leaves

Materials

wax paper, leaves, and iron

Directions

Place leaves on top of one sheet of wax paper and place another sheet on top of the leaves.

With warm iron, iron the top wax paper to seal both sheets. Trim and hang the picture in a window.

Paper Plate Masks

Materials

paper plates
crayons or pencils
scissors
small styrofoam or paper cup
construction paper
glue, tape, string, or yarn

Directions

Punch holes in the sides of a plate and tie a piece of string or yarn to each hole. Mark a nose hole in the middle of the plate. Draw two eyes above the nose hole. Cut out the eye and nose holes. Turn cup upside down and tape in over the nose. Decorate as you would like, adding ears, hair, fur, etc.





Dressing Clothespin Dolls

With fine markers, let your child mark a face on a clothespin. Cut a small hole (large enough for the head of a clothespin to go through) in squares and circles of fabric of different designs and patterns (whatever you might have in scrap material). Let your child dress the clothespin dolls. Provide fasteners (rubber bands, pipe cleaners, or bread loaf fasteners) to go around the waist to help hold the doll clothes on. Also provide play dough or clay for a base. You could suggest making pilgrims or Native Americans for Thanksgiving; or ghosts, witches, or dressups for Halloween.

Materials

fabrics, a variety including different designs and patterns
clothespins (nonspring kind)
markers
play dough or clay

Have other materials available, if your child wishes to go farther in dressing his dolls, such as buttons, cotton, yarn for hair, and felt for hats. Let your child decide for himself what materials he wishes to use.

Crayon Leaf Prints

While you are on your nature walk, gather perfect leaves from nearby trees. When you get home, make crayon leaf prints.

Materials

paper
crayons
scissors
paste

Directions

Lay your leaf, vein side up, on a table or other smooth, hard surface. Place a sheet of paper over the leaf. Color the paper on top of the leaf, rubbing evenly over the entire leaf.

The leaf and its veins will show clearly on your paper.

Cut out the colored leaf and paste it on a fresh piece of paper. Crayon leaf prints can be used for stationary and for leaf collections. They are especially pretty if you choose the bright autumn leaf colors for your prints.



Other Craft Ideas for the Family:

Let's Explore...

Other Fun Things

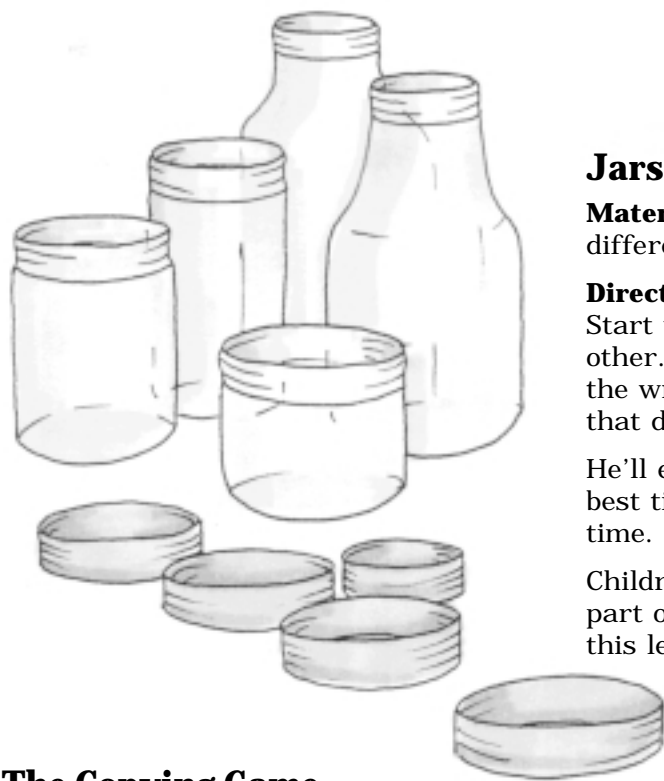
Making Mirrors

Materials

bucket or pan of water
aluminum foil
highly polished plated steel
silver or gold contact paper
mirror tiles
(other reflective surfaces)

Directions

Take turns viewing yourselves in each of the mirrorlike materials and describe your reflections. Do they look natural or distorted? Move or bend each material and see what happens to the images. Observe what happens to your reflection in the water when the water is set in motion.



Jars and Lids

Materials

different sizes of jars with lids (12 if possible)

Directions

Start with the jars in one box and the lids in another. The task is self-checking; if your child puts the wrong lid on a jar, he will have a lid in the end that does not fit the remaining jar.

He'll enjoy timing himself. He can keep track of his best time and compete with himself to improve his time.

Children also enjoy measuring around the widest part of the jar with a piece of string and comparing this length to the jar's height.

The Copying Game

Divide a piece of paper into nine squares. One person can draw something in one square, then the next family member can copy it. Then the role is reversed and the first gets to copy what the second did.

Variations

Copying body movements
Copying hand gestures
Copying movement by puppets
Copying flannel board figures

Think up some of your own!

Sweet Patootie Dolls

Read the story *The Sweet Patootie Doll*, by Mary Calhoun. Then give each family member a real sweet potato. Put out a variety of fabrics, of different textures, colors, and patterns. Discuss the parts of the face. Let your child make the features or show you where to mark them. Your child can wrap a piece of fabric around the potato and pin it.

Materials

sweet potatoes
pieces of fabric
safety pins
marker

This takes the cooperation of children and parents, as four-year-olds may need some help. Your child should be encouraged to make his doll different from those in the pictures or already made. Encourage your child to make block houses, beds, etc., for the dolls.

Nail Chime

Materials

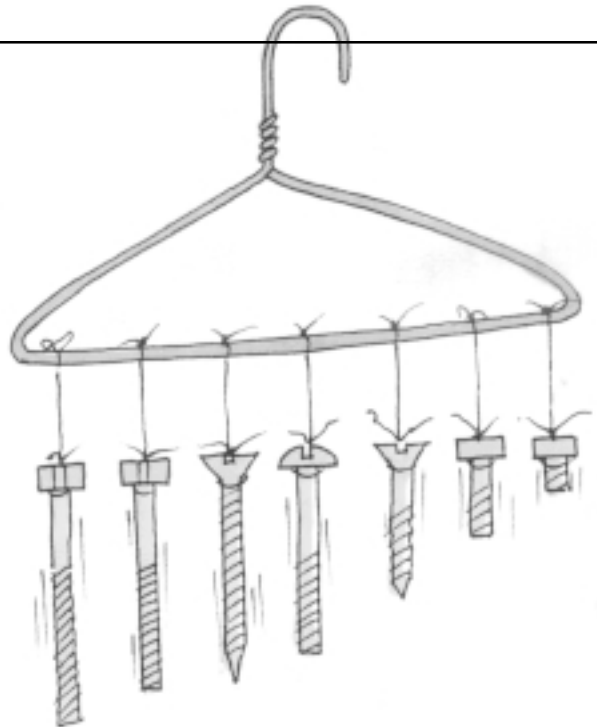
embroidery hoop or hanger
30 nails of assorted sizes, or bolts
string
glue

Directions

Tie one or two nails onto a piece of string. Attach the string to the embroidery hoop and glue in place. Repeat this with the strings spaced 1 inch apart until the hoop is covered. Your child can play the chime with his hand or use a dowel rod. Or the nail chime may be hung outside and used as a wind chime.

Variation

Use a clothes hanger and large bolts of assorted sizes, arranging them from large to small.



Other Things to Do:

Here is a listing of activities for you to do. Tape this sheet to your refrigerator and check off the activities you do together as a record of your good times. Consider starting a notebook or scrapbook of your Family Time together. Include some art work, stories, or photographs of your family.

Let's Explore...Our Family

- Apple turkeys for Thanksgiving
- Jack o'lanterns for Halloween
- Raking and jumping in leaves
- Dress-up box
- Table talk
- Pretend visit
- Measuring heights in the family

Let's Explore...Our Community

- An autumn school visit
- Playing airport
- Gas station visit
- Sharing with others
- The working world

Let's Explore...The Foods We Eat

- Corn meal muffins
- Apple pudding
- Roasted pumpkin seeds
- Flipping animal pancakes
- Shake-m-up cake

Let's Explore...Plants and Animals

- Grow an avocado plant
- An anthill
- Take a nature smell walk
- Spider house
- Nature constructions

Let's Explore...The World of Crafts

- Tissue ghost puppets
- Laminated leaves
- Paper plate masks
- Dressing clothespin dolls
- Crayon leaf prints

Let's Explore...Other Fun Things

- Making mirrors
- Jars and lids
- The copying game
- Sweet Patootie dolls
- Nail chime

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