



August 2014

Keeping the Learning Going and Just for FUN

www.alternativesforchildren.org

Alternatives
For Children



Gross Motor FUN for the Whole Family Developmental STRENGTH Activities

Here are some activities that you can try at home that are a carry-over of developmental play activities intended to increase strength for toddlers and preschoolers. These are activities for children with or without physical challenges and they are just plain FUN!



- **Walking** - try it backwards or sideways.
- **Walking on a balance beam** - or line of masking tape on the floor - or a line drawn with chalk on the driveway.
- **Running** - just plain running - race from here to there and everywhere.



- **Jumping** - play hopscotch - pretend to be a bunny - jump in and out of hula hoops.
- **Climbing** - create an obstacle course - climb in - out - over - under - on - off.
- **Pushing or Pulling Toys** - make toys heavier or lighter to make it easier or harder - have a fire truck? Race to the fire!



- **Kicking a Ball** - try Monkey in the Middle!
- **Throwing/Catching** - balls - water balloons - wet sponges - just about anything is fair game for this one!
- **Walking on Tiptoes** - pretend to be quiet so as to not wake up the monster or animal!



Creating a Healthy & Active Lifestyle

Kids (and adults too) need 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play every day. It may sound like a lot, but it doesn't all need to happen at one time. Physical activity throughout the day all adds up. And when you get moving, you're more likely to:

- Feel less stressed.
- Feel better about yourself.
- Keep a healthy weight.
- Build and keep healthy bones, muscles and joints.
- Sleep better at night.



Get more info on creating a healthy & active lifestyle
for you and your family

<http://www.letsmove.gov/get-active>

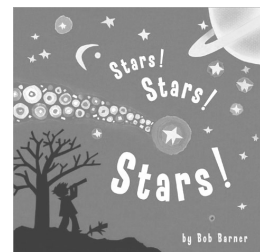
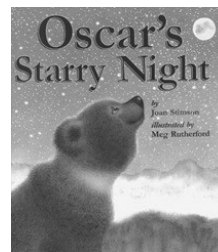
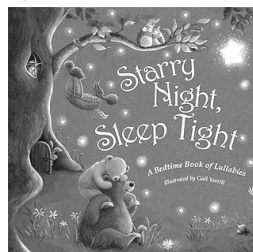
or on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/letsmove>

Help your Child's Imagination Take FLIGHT! READ A BOOK!



Visit your local Library to find these and
other books about
STARS



Create a Starry Night Mural

Tons of Fine Motor skills fun in this activity! You will need:

- blue or black construction paper
 - yellow tempera or finger paint
 - Sponges cut into star shapes - you'll probably need to assist with this part!
1. Set out sponges cut into star shapes.
 2. Place folded paper towels in shallow trays and pour on small amounts of yellow tempera paint.
 3. Give your child a sheet of dark blue/black construction paper.
 4. Let your child press the star sponges into the paint and then press on to their papers to make star prints.
 5. Let dry and then hang the papers together on the wall to make a starry night mural.

Star Rubbings

You will need:

- Cardboard, Scissors, Plain white paper
 - Crayons with the paper wrapper removed
1. Cut small star shapes out of cardboard.
 2. Tape them in a cluster on a table.
 3. Set out some sheets of plain white paper and unwrapped crayons.
 4. Let your children take turns placing a sheet of paper over the stars and rubbing the side of the crayon over the paper to have the stars appear.

For more fun have your child count the number of stars he finds on his paper.

Star Sort

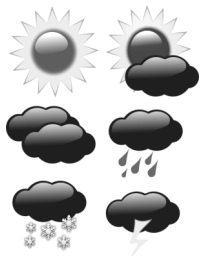
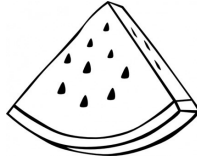
You will need: Assorted colors of construction paper, pencil, scissors

1. Draw four different sizes of star shapes on three different colors of construction paper - or more for a greater challenge.
2. With your supervision allow your child to cut out the stars.
3. Mix up the stars and place them on a table. With your child - take turns sorting them by size and then by color.

Get Out There and LEARN!

Here are some FUN activities that will reinforce many different skills.

- Family FUN with Watermelon - Have watermelon as an afternoon snack or with dinner. Collect and count the seeds. Make sure you don't buy the Seedless Watermelon!
- What are you Wearing Game - You can, or ask your child to "name" all the things they are wearing - shorts, t-shirt, bathing suit, sandals, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, etc. Always use color descriptors - "You/I are/am wearing blue shorts."
- Take a walk in the evening with the family - and see how many different colors, textures, and sizes of trees, leaves, birds and clouds that you can see and name.
- While helping your child choose an ice pop or getting dressed - hold up two different items to have your child choose one. You can incorporate color identification by saying "Do you want the red ice or the blue ice?" "Do you want to wear the blue shirt or the green shirt?"



What's the Weather?
Talk about the Weather. Is it???
HOT WARM HUMID
RAINY STORMY SUNNY

Then you can make your own weather chart!
You can find tons of ideas on Pinterest



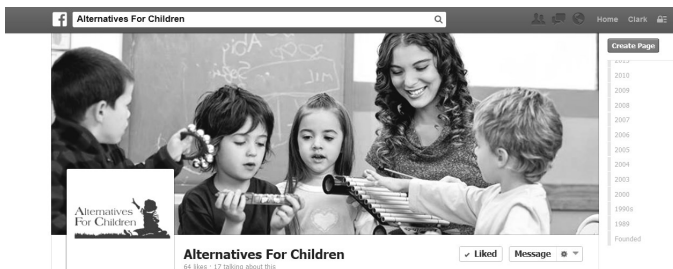
<http://www.pinterest.com/explore/weather-charts/>

- Give your child 2 buckets - 1 filled with water and 1 empty - and a large sponge. Show your child how to "transfer" the water from one bucket to the other by squeezing the sponge. Make it a family FUN hot weather game some evening.



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Resources - Activities - Events



Tons of Tips & Treasures!

Is My Child Ready for Kindergarten

Q: I have a child in preschool. How do I know if he will be ready for kindergarten when the time comes?

A: As a parent, you know your child better than anyone else. Pay attention to the things he says and does. Children come to kindergarten from a wide variety of experiences, and settings, so expecting them all to know and be able to do the same things is unrealistic.

Is your son excited about school? That's a good sign. Beyond that, it would be great for him to have some experience with the following things:

- listening to others and taking appropriate turns for expressing ideas and questions
- handling materials respectfully and putting them away
- sustaining engagement with an activity or process
- identifying and pursuing his own interests, choosing materials and having some ideas about how to engage with them productively
- being safe in relation to the group (staying within school bounds) and attending to personal needs (washing hands, sneezing protocol, etc.)
- asking for help when he needs it.

He may have begun to develop other habits and skills but they may not be fully developed in preschool or even by the end of kindergarten: solving problems with peers, taking the perspective of others, increasing his stamina, and building academic mastery, for example. Hopefully, on the first day of school, your child will enter kindergarten with joy and the confidence that school is a good place to be—a fun, fair, and good place to learn.

Seven Top Readiness Skills

While these skills may not have been attained by every child entering Kindergarten, especially those children with special needs and disabilities, these are goals to work towards for every child.

1. Enthusiasm for Learning
2. Solid Oral-Language Skills
3. The Ability to Listen
4. The Desire to Be Independent
5. The Ability to Play Well With Others
6. Strong Fine-Motor Skills
7. Basic Letter and Number Recognition

Music and the Young Child

Adapted from the
American Music Therapy Association



All young children love music. They experience music by hearing it, by moving to it, by banging to it, and by playing with their voices. Music is a part of the young child's world. Music can: nurture attachment; provide a safe environment for realizing, exploring and sharing creativity; calm when words cannot and offer an outlet for coping with emotions; foster self-confidence and feelings of success.