

Art Activities for Children



April/May

Finger Paint—Mix 1 ½ cups cold water starch and 1 ½ cups soap flakes together. Add 2 cups cold water. Stir slowly to mix. Stir until mixture reaches the consistency of whipped potatoes. Separate into several containers and add tempera paint to individual containers for color.



Sponge Painting—Make or collect sponges of different shapes. Dampen them in water and wring them out. Put tempera paint in shallow pans. Dip each sponge into paint. Use sponge shape to stamp print on paper.

Clay Dough—Mix 2 cups flour and 1 cup salt in a bowl. Add 1 cup water. Stir until mixture is dough-like. Add food coloring to get desired colors. To keep mixture from drying out, add 2 Tablespoons cooking oil or baby oil. If dough is divided, divide the oil also. Store in zipped bags.

Feeling Pictures—Collect items such as feathers, sequins, dry cereals, textured materials, scrap tiles, pine cones, seed pods, pebbles, shells, and buttons to let children make “feeling” pictures with smooth, rough, glittery, shiny, soft textures.

Family Fun--Families Growing Together

Enjoy Springtime Activities with Kids



The warm spring weather makes us all want to get outside and do something. Children can be especially curious and restless at this time of year. It is a great time to experience some family time activities together.

Think of activities that you can share with your children, grandchildren or children in your neighborhood or church. Following are a few ideas to get you started.



Visit a farm. A lot of things happen on farms in the spring. Plan to show your child the field of work and animals, particularly baby ones. Look at the farm equipment.

Watch the road repair crew. Spring is a good time to watch crews repair winter damage. Children love trucks, bulldozers and cement mixers. You might also visit a construction site. Be sure to follow safety precautions in these areas.

Make Mother’s and Father’s Day cards. It’s never too soon to encourage your children to do special things for the family. If they are too young to write on the card themselves, write the messages they tell you.



Learn signs. If your child gets lost, he/she will feel and be safer if they recognize familiar signs. Point out signs as you walk and drive. Talk about their shapes and colors. Afterwards, have them draw signs or cut them from magazines and paste them on paper.



Made available by

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Critical Parenting Practices

You can strengthen your parenting skills through learning and experience. Consider first, what influences you as a parent. Your temperament, your child's temperament, your childhood experiences, your relationship with your mate and your own parents, your family and work situation, your community and your support networks all can affect your parenting.

To become the best parent possible, you need to learn about:

- **Caring** for yourself
- **Understanding** yourself and your child(ren) at various stages
- **Nurturing** your child and your relationships
- **Guiding** your child through each life stage
- **Motivating** your child to do his or her best
- **Advocating** for your child's best interests

Note: *This month I have included the last two critical parenting practices.*



Motivation

You are motivating when you teach your child to think and learn. Parents who take their responsibilities seriously, and look for ways to teach throughout their children's lives, are more likely to have children who become confident, skilled learners who reach high educational levels.

The most successful motivators nurture and guide their children. You can learn how to foster learning as you can learn to motivate and to nurture. If you are motivated yourself, you will be more capable of motivating your child. And if you feel nurtured, you will find it natural to nurture your child.

To develop your skills to motivate your child, you will need to learn how to teach your child. Children need to learn about themselves, others, and the world around them. To be a good teacher, you need to let your child be curious, develop an imagination, and search for knowledge. Work to create positive learning settings and help your child think about new information.

Advocating

Effective parents locate helpful community resources and work to meet their children's and family needs. Seek out programs and people to provide services important to your child and family. Notice and speak up about your child's needs. When something in the community becomes a barrier to your family's functioning, speak up for change.

Children of advocate parents are less likely to get lost between the cracks. Parents who weave a thread between home and the community increase the quality of the community for all children. To advocate for your child, learn to find, use, and create community resources that help your own and other children. Encourage supportive environments for children and families. Build relationships with family, schools, neighborhood, and community groups.

By reading, enrolling in parenting classes, being active in a child's schooling, and continuing to learn throughout the life of your child, you can develop these critical parenting skills.