

PASSPORT TO PLAY



ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 43 (COQUITLAM)

Play is one of the best ways to support all learning and development. It is vital to children's learning, growing, and meaning making.

(BC MINISTRY OF EDUCATION)

www.sd43.bc.ca/rsl



Through play, we are building the skills in children that will support their growth towards being lifelong learners. Invaluable learning happens as children are given opportunities to engage in playful experiences. As one of the central ways to make sense of the world, play should have a role in the lives of young children and continue to provide joy for people of all ages.

Let's Play

This guide is an invitation for you to have fun as a family! There is no set way to complete. Choose an activity, look up the instructions, and get started!

Note: Children should be supervised with an adult while completing most of these activities for safety.



ACTIVITY GUIDE

WELL-BEING & BELONGING

- _____ Sandwich Faces
- _____ Sensory Pathway
- _____ Mindful Nature Walk
- _____ Gratitude Search

ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHERS, MATERIALS, & THE WORLD

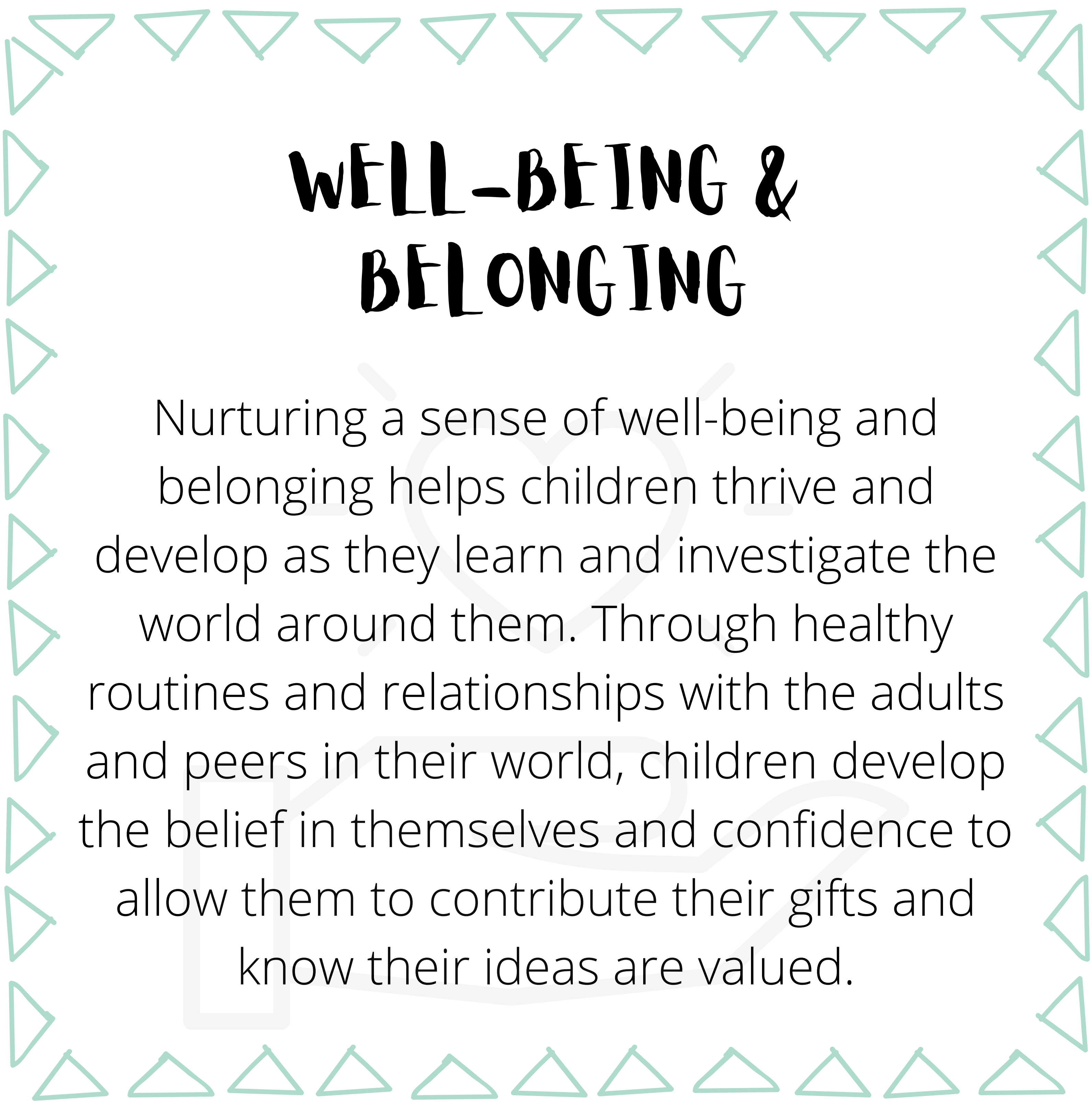
- _____ Pick Up Sticks
- _____ Reuse, Recycle, and Create
- _____ Shadow Play
- _____ Sit Spot

COMMUNICATION & LITERACIES

- _____ Picture Book Scavenger Hunt
- _____ Story Stones
- _____ Shape Hunt
- _____ Sidewalk Math

IDENTITIES, SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, & DIVERSITY

- _____ Face Collage
- _____ Family Tree
- _____ People Playdough
- _____ What's in a Name?



WELL-BEING & BELONGING

Nurturing a sense of well-being and belonging helps children thrive and develop as they learn and investigate the world around them. Through healthy routines and relationships with the adults and peers in their world, children develop the belief in themselves and confidence to allow them to contribute their gifts and know their ideas are valued.

Sensory Pathway

Sensory pathways are interactive pathways that provide a physical outlet for children. They are mini obstacle courses designed to encourage children to hop, crawl, tiptoe and skip to release stress and cope with different emotions. They provide a great brain break to help children refocus and self-regulate.

Step 1: Planning Your Sensory Path

First, you will need to find a space! Think of areas where you have plenty of room, such as a driveway, sidewalk or patio. No space of your own? Perhaps there is a nearby parking lot space you can use.

Sketch out your plan before you start drawing. It'll help you with space and keep you on track to include your favourite activities. Use what you love (spaceships, animals, monster) to inspire activities for your path. For example, instead of just jumping on circles, draw a spaceship and "blast off" onto the planets! Stomping like a dinosaur, hopping like a rabbit, and leaping like a frog onto lily pads add some pizzazz to your path!

Some ideas to include in your path:

- Spin/twirl - draw a twirly circle starting from the middle outward
- Climb - draw a ladder (or a beanstalk!) and kids "climb" on hands and feet
- Balance on a "tightrope" (even if it's just a line on the ground!)

Next, check the weather! If you plan on using it for more than one day, make sure it's not going to rain for a few days to avoid seeing your beautiful creation washed away.

Step 2: Drawing Your Sensory Path

Using sidewalk chalk, head to your chosen space and create your own pathway. Be sure to include a variety of different movements and different patterns and directions to mix it up. For an example, scan the QR code to check out this [video](#).



Step 3: PLAY!

Make sure to take pictures/video to help you remember everything for next time! This is something everyone will want to do over and over again! Have fun!

Adapted from [Tejeda's Tots](#)

Sandwich Faces

Get children involved in their food preparation to help support their food literacy! The more children help grow, select and cook their food, from an early age, the more likely they are to be healthy eaters. These sandwich faces are creative, fun and of course, deliciously nutritious. And they are a great introduction to safe knife skills using a (non-sharp) dinner knife for learning to spread as well as chop soft fruit like banana.

Yield: 10 child-size portions

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 0 minutes

Common Allergens: Wheat, nuts (depending on type of nut/seed butter used)

Equipment List

Knives (dinner, not sharp)

Cutting board

Platter or tray

Small bowls

Small spoons

Ingredients

10 slices whole grain bread

1 cup nut or seed butter (dependent on any allergies)

1 cup blueberries (cut in half if large to reduce choking risk)

5 bananas, halved

1 cup shredded unsweetened coconut

½ cup seedless jam

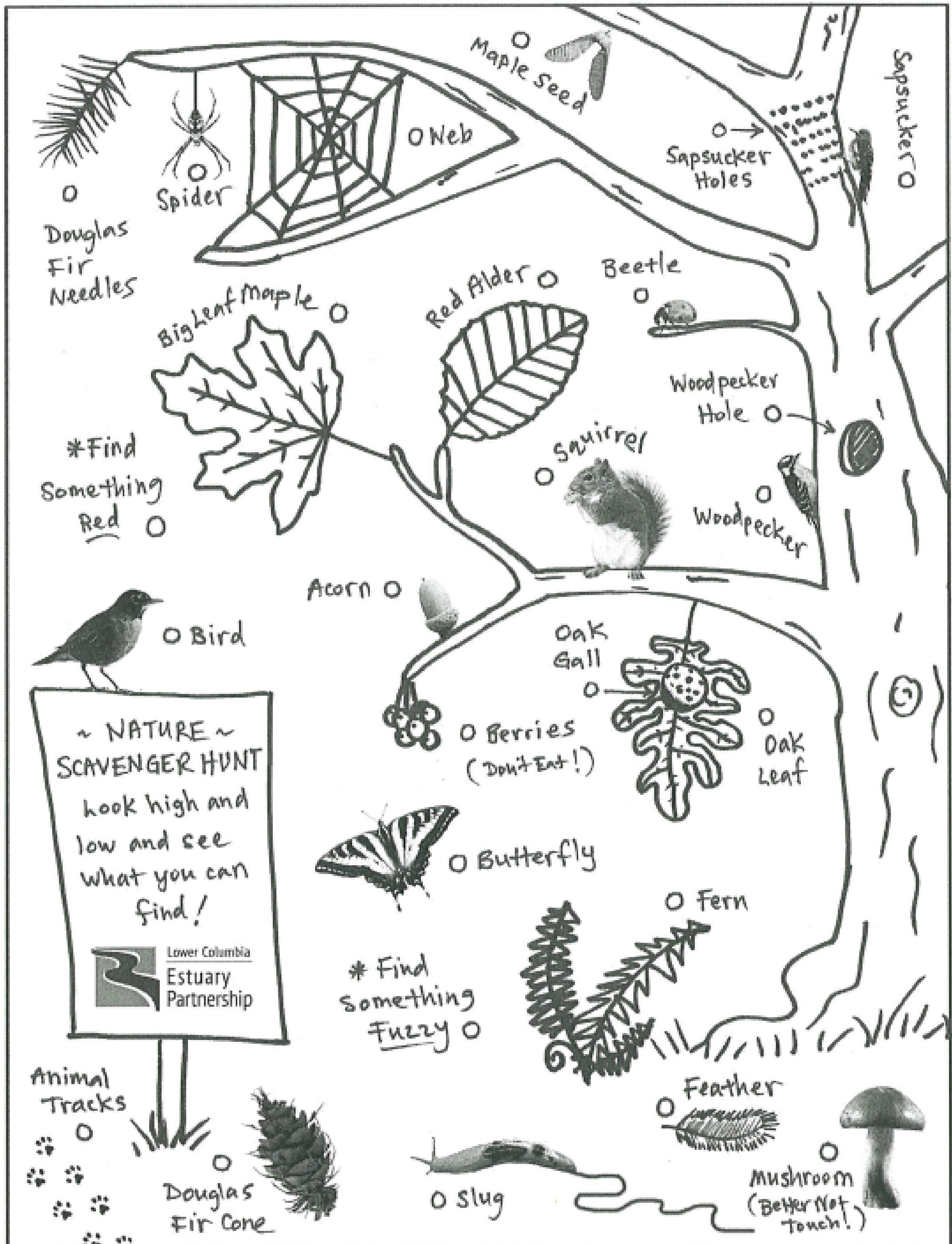
Instructions

1. Lay out all the ingredients on a platter and in bowls on a clean work surface accessible to children.
2. Have each child select a piece of bread, spread nut/seed butter thinly, then create a face with the other toppings like “coconut hair”, “banana smiles”, “jam cheeks” and “blueberry eyes”. Younger children may need help spreading the nut/seed butter and shaping the banana pieces.

Source: Nicole Fetterly, RD ([Appetite to Play](#))

Mindful Nature Walk

Explore a neighbouring forest or wooded park in your community. Use this guide as a way to look closer at your surroundings to discover what might otherwise go unnoticed.



Gratitude Search

Taking a moment to to be grateful primes our brains for learning! The act of noticing or expressing gratitude is associated with many benefits, including happiness, a positive outlook, and improved overall well-being. While it helps promote social competencies of helping others and acts of kindness, it also nurtures our emotional development and resilience. Think of gratitude like a muscle: the more we use it, the more it develops. Follow this guide to encourage your child to search for those places or moments where they find gratitude.

A place that you love

Something that makes you
laugh

Something that smells
amazing

Something that makes you
feel safe

Something you like doing
with others

Something that makes you
smile

Something that you like
looking at

Something that makes you
feel calm

Something you know
someone else will enjoy



ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHERS, MATERIALS, & THE WORLD

Children construct meaning as they engage with materials, peers and adults, the environment, community, and the world. By engaging through play, we invite children to interact and inquire to make sense of the world around them through creativity, exploration, wonder and curiosity.

Pick Up Sticks

Equipment

Sticks

Physical Activity

Running, Coordination

How to Play

Find an area with sticks on the ground, or prepare in advance by collecting sticks and spreading them around your outside space. Some children may explore the sticks by themselves. For those that don't, offer them one to explore! After your child has had a little time with them, start repeating the phrase "Pick Up Sticks" and move them into one pile. Once the pile is complete, engage with the sticks in other ways, such as:

- Making music by banging them together, on trees, rocks, or fences.
- Sticking them in the mud!
- Piling sticks up.
- Lining them up in rows or end-to-end in a long line and see if your wee one follows suit.
- Making squares and jumping in and out of them.

Adapted from Tinkergarten (Appetite to Play)

Reuse, Recycle, & Create

WHAT

One way to support creativity and exploration with children is to keep things simple!

Create the Environment

- On a table or flat surface, place a variety of recyclable items such as plastic bottles, paper, and cardboard tubes or boxes.
- Ask your child to help you collect materials like tape, glue sticks, string, and scissors.

Explore

- Encourage your child to get started!
- Ask, 'I wonder what we could do with all of this?'

HOW

Provide an opportunity for your child to explore the items with their senses. Children will manipulate the different items and begin to explore, evaluate and inquire. Some suggested items: egg cartons, empty milk bottles or caps, cardboard boxes, toilet paper rolls, plastic containers, old CDs, or gift wrapping papers or bows.

Depending on the interest of your child, you might place images of animals, structures, or objects that they could try to replicate using recycled items.

WHERE

This experience can be completed on a flat surface: ideally at a table, indoors or outdoors.

Shadow Play

Do you know what a shadow is? Have you seen your own shadow? What other kinds of shadows have you seen? What do the shadows look like? How might you create different shadows?

Materials

- A few objects, such as dolls, trucks, balls,
- Paper and markers
- Paint, crayons

Take a "Shadow" Walk

Look for all sorts of shadows - birds, trees, houses, clotheslines, cars, signs, people, animals. Do the shadows of things look the same as the actual objects? How are they alike? How are they different?

Tracing Shadows

On a sunny day, find an interesting shadow outside. Lay paper on the shadow and trace it with a marker. Try to make several overlapping tracings of the same shadow by moving the paper in different directions.

Try leaving the paper in the same spot for an extended period of time. Choose two or three times to visit and trace again. Did it change? How?

Get creative! Use markers, paint or crayons to colour in some of the shadow spaces created from your tracings.

Shadow Stories

Use your hands, cut out paper, or household objects to use as characters. Find a light source (window, flashlight, lamp) and place your objects in front of it. What sort of setting could you create? What stories can be told? Share with a family member!

What else do shadows inspire you to think about or do?

Sit Spot

The outdoors has amazing benefits for our development – physically, cognitively and mentally. Being outside gives us the space to take risks by challenging our bodies in small and big ways. It provides us opportunities to think critically and creatively as problems arise. Being outside also improves our moods and increases our ability to focus.

A Sit Spot is somewhere in nature you visit over and over again to form a relationship. You might visit this place to let your mind wander or you might have a specific focus. While visiting your Sit Spot, you have the opportunity to heighten your senses, deeply notice the surrounding environment and recognize patterns over time.

Step 1:

Find something to draw on – whatever you choose, make sure it is something you can keep adding to over time. You might choose a journal, a notepad, a stack of blank papers. Sometimes it helps to brainstorm key images to inspire your observations. Here's an example of how you might set up your page (template included in guide):



Step 2:

Find your Sit Spot – somewhere comfortable that you can revisit over time. Once you're settled in, focus your attention towards the environment around you. Connect with your senses. What are you noticing? Find time to visit your Sit Spot regularly. Are you noticing any patterns? Changes?

Step 3:

Take risks with how you record your observations! You might:

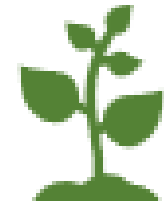
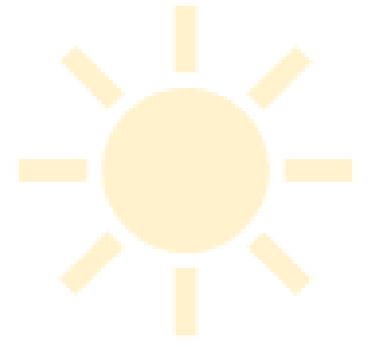
- Sketch like a scientist by looking closely, adding as much detail as possible. Take your time.
- Paint a picture. What details might you include? Include anything you might notice or wonder during your visit.

Interested in learning more about Sit Spots? Scan the QR code to check out this [video](#):



Source: Lauren Maclean, [Mentoring Nature Connections](#)

Sit Spot Observations





COMMUNICATION & LITERACIES

Children are natural communicators. Through playful exploration and enjoyment of language through conversations, stories, songs, and poems, children learn the importance of language in their world. As children engage with the adults and peers around them and engage in play to make sense of the world, they are developing and utilizing important numeracy and literacy skills naturally.

Picture Book Scavenger Hunt

WHAT

This is an interactive way of exploring literacy while incorporating physical activity. Use picture books as the basis for a scavenger hunt.

Create the Environment

- Pick a favourite picture book (preferably one with human characters and familiar locations). After you read it through once or twice, ask your child if they would like to try and find things they see in the book!

Play Scavenger Hunt

- With your child, identify the things that you see in the book and that you will hunt for (e.g., dog, table, car, tree). Take your book outside or to a new room and try to find things from the real world that match what is in the book.

HOW

Start inside your house with toys or items that are familiar to your child. Try choosing a book with one object on each page, then find the object together. Hold the object close to the picture and label it twice. For example, if you're reading a book about children's toys, and you see a teddy bear, go together to find one and say "bear" while pointing at the picture, and then "bear" while pointing at the object.

Try moving beyond looking for simple objects by looking for types or categories of things. For example, if you see an apple in the book, ask your child to find another fruit, or another healthy food at home or the grocery store. You could also look for colours or shapes based on the images you see. If you see squares in the book, ask your child if they can find a square near you. Try looking for numbers or letters as well.

WHERE

This activity can occur anywhere you are. You can do this activity at home, out and about while you go about your day, or during a walk while exploring. By taking the activity outside and searching for items, not only will you be supporting your child's literacy, you will be promoting physical activity at the same time.

Story Stones

WHAT

This activity originates from a tradition of Aboriginal peoples of Australia. Story Stones are painted stones kept in a small pouch and used as a tool to tell stories.

Simplicity is key for this activity. Paint or draw various simple images that support different interests on small rocks. Once dried, place them in a pouch.

Explore the stones and create stories using the rocks.

HOW

Paint simple images on the stones: house, dog, cat, tree, car, mountains, waves, and individual people (possibly even small caricatures of family members). For some, this will act as more of an explorative or sight-word activity. Together, repeat the name of the image several times.

Explore the stones. Some children might automatically create a storyline whereas others may need some encouragement. You can support your child's development by having them explain the symbolism of the stones and ask them who the characters are or what the images represent. Ask probing questions such as "Where do they live?" or "What are they doing?" to help them develop a storyline.

Your child can paint their own rocks. This will allow them to take full ownership over the activity and highlight and encourage their ideas and creative thinking. Also, try encouraging your child to develop a storyline.

WHERE

This experience can be completed anywhere, preferably in an area with ample room for the child to spread out the stones to create their story.

Shape Hunt

Shapes are all around us! There is not just one shape that makes up our world; there are many including triangles, squares, rectangles, circles, ovals, and diamonds. You may find even more than that!

There are many ways to become shape hunters described below. You might try one or you might try them all - the choice is yours!

Shape Hunt 1:

Prepare for your hunt by learning and singing the Shape Hunt Chant (lyrics included in guide), a song that invites children to search for shapes. Repeat the chant for each shape. As you get familiar with the song, invite your child to take part by pausing after the line "Do you see a...?" To support your child, you might choose to hold up an image of the shape as a reference as you sing.

Shape Hunt 2:

Using the Shape Chart (template included in guide), record a tally mark each time you see one of these shapes in the world around you. For example, your pancake may be shaped like a circle, so on the sheet you would record a tally mark on the row with the circle.

Shape Hunt 3:

Simply go outside and explore! Look around your home and neighbourhood. Where do you see shapes? Take photos or draw what you see on a piece of paper.

Shape Hunt Chant

(Adapted from the traditional children's song Going On a Picnic)

Going on a shape hunt,
Leaving right away.

If it doesn't rain,
We'll stay all day.


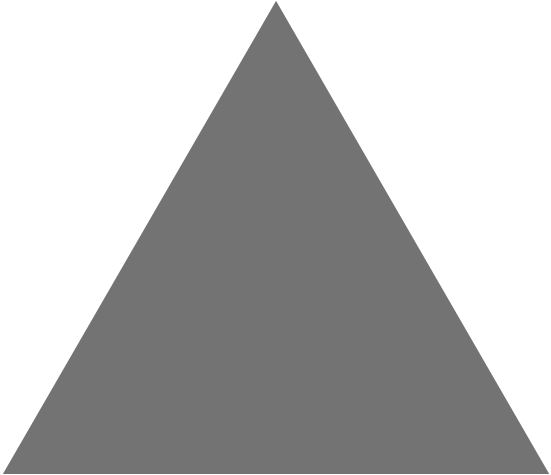
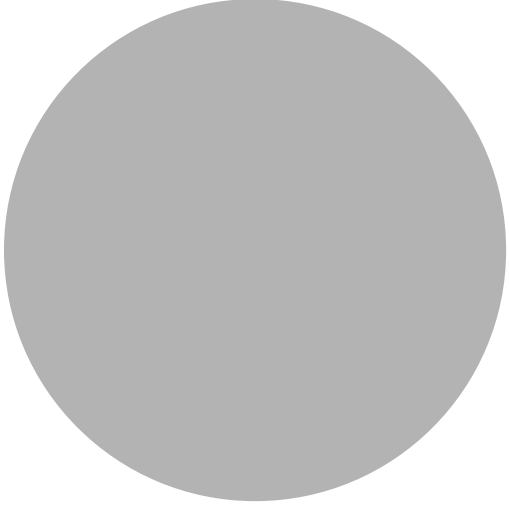
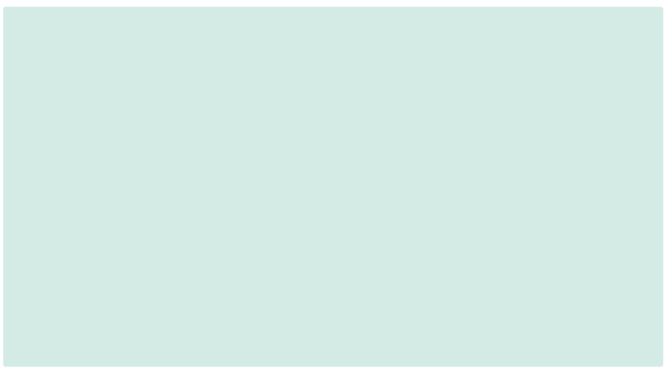
Adult: Do you see a circle?

Child: Yes, I see a circle.

Going on a shape hunt,
Here we go.

Shape chart

Record a tally mark each time you see one of these shapes in the world around you.

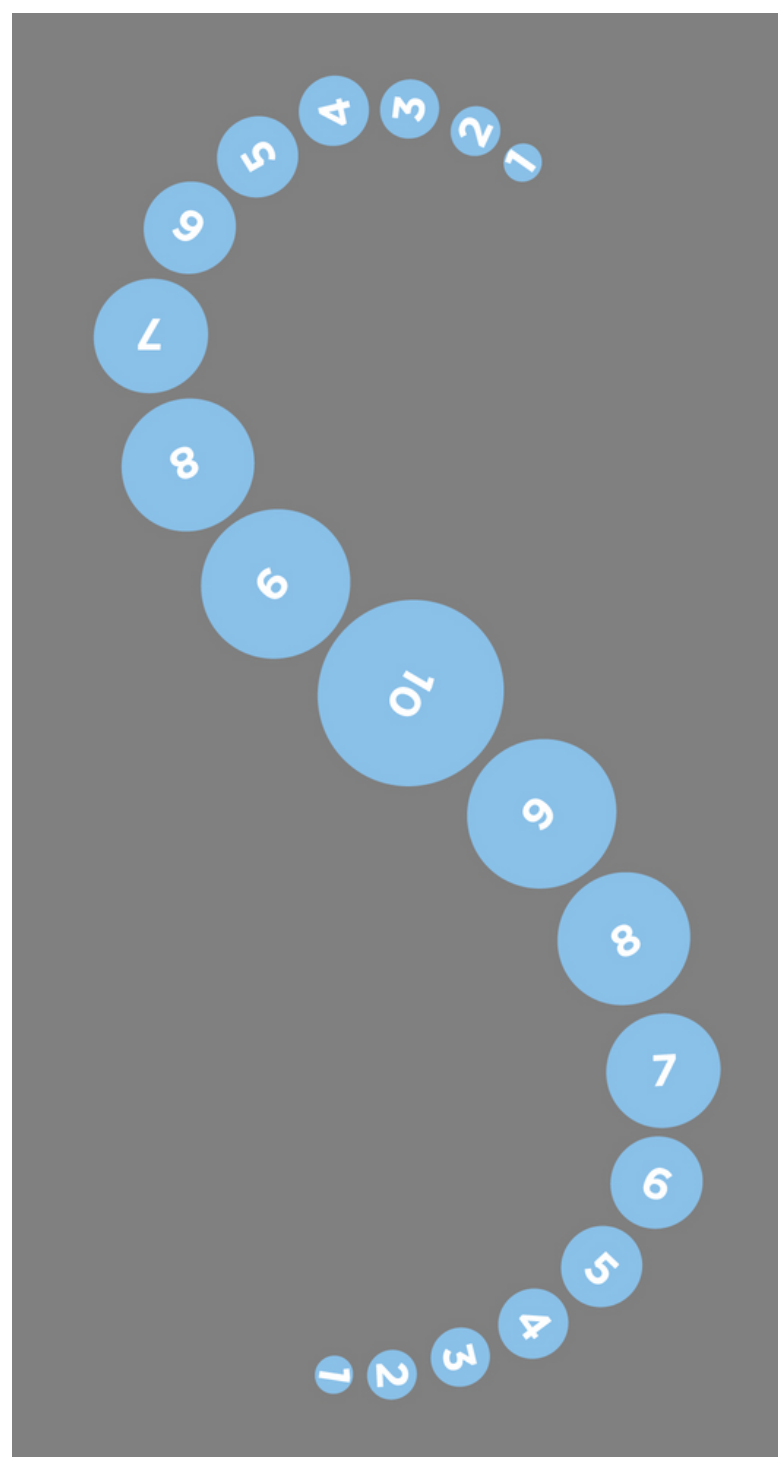
	
	
	
	

Sidewalk Math

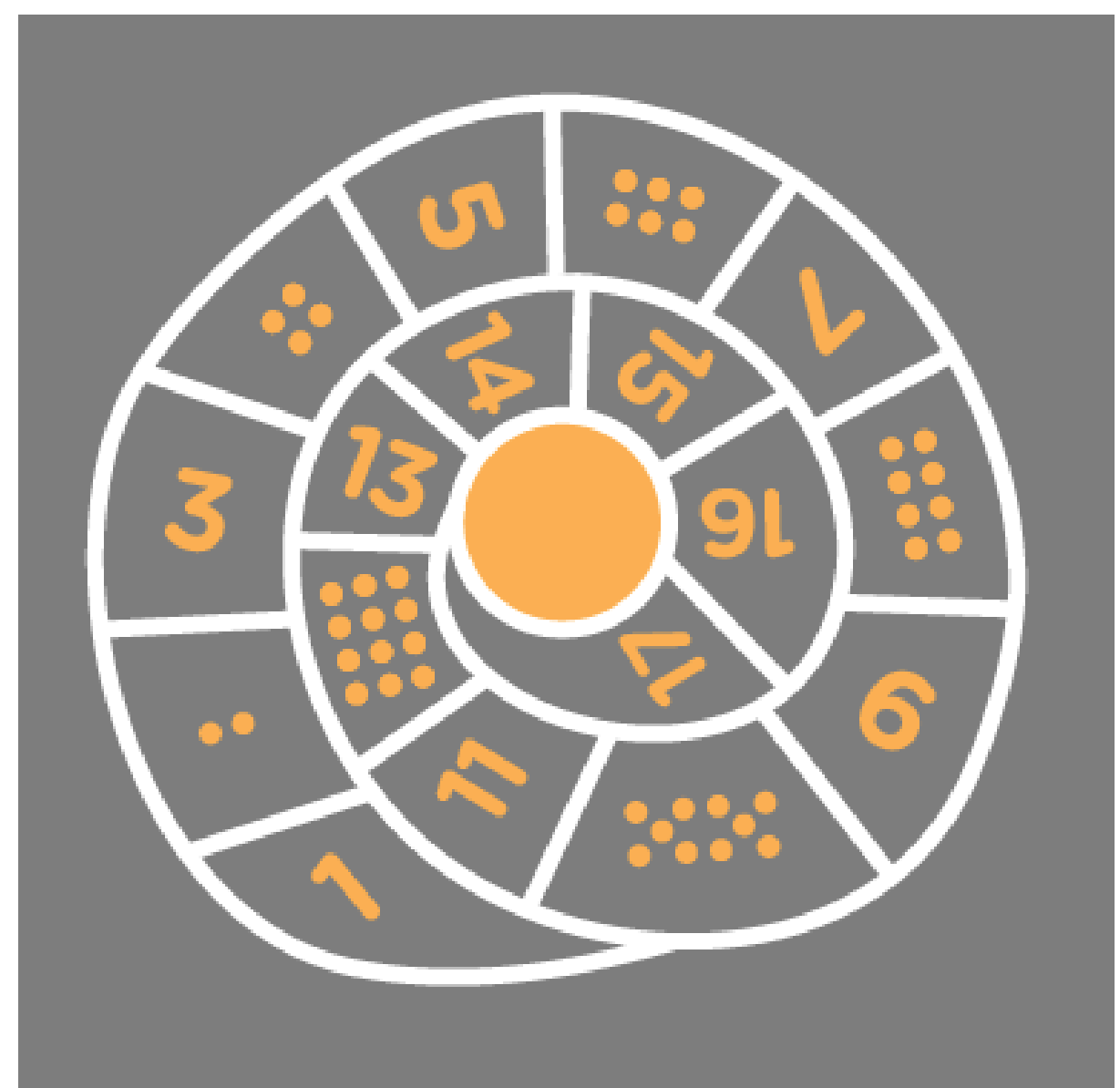
Turn a sidewalk into a math playground! Design a mathematical pattern and invite your community to walk, hop, jump, and skip through colourful designs that you create! Find some sidewalk chalk and get creative.

Design Inspiration

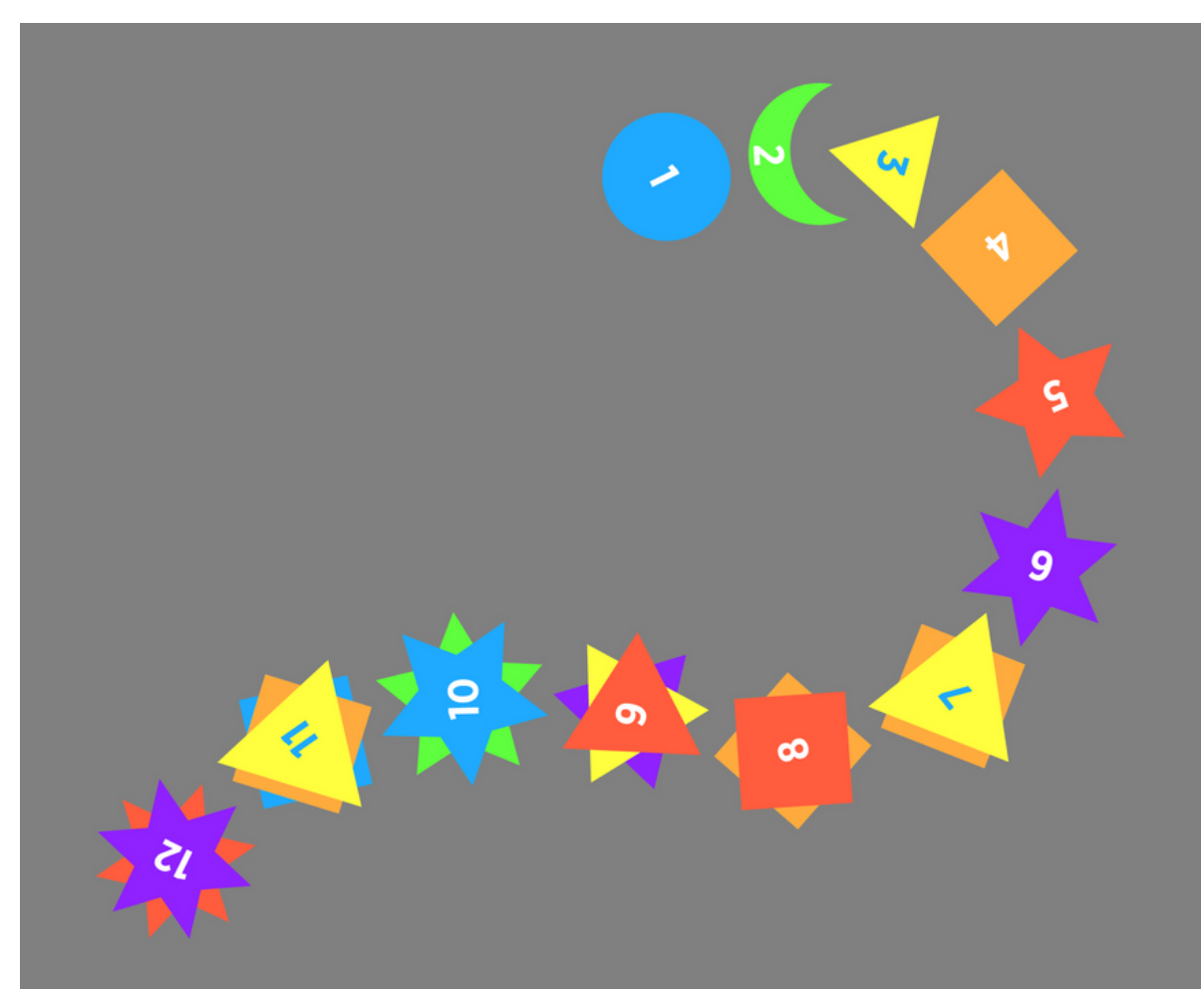
Count to Order



Math Snake



The Dragon





IDENTITIES, SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, & DIVERSITY

Developing a positive personal and cultural identity by building awareness and understanding of family background, heritage, language, values, beliefs, and perspectives has the potential for children to develop a healthy and strong sense of who they are and their place in the world. Through these experiences and interactions, children are supported to become confident individuals who can, and do contribute to reflective dialogue, critical thinking and decision-making.

Face Collage

WHAT

The Face Collage is a wonderful way to teach children about their personal identity, diversity, and foster a sense of belonging.

Create the Environment

- Take full-face pictures of your child, children, or your family members. Print the images on a full standard size paper (best in colour). Cut the picture into four to six vertical wide strips. To make the pieces more durable, you can cover each one with clear laminate or packing tape.
- Mix the strips together into a basket and allow your child time to explore.
- Ask your child what emotions they see in the basket and share your observation. "I see a happy smile. That looks like your mouth!"

Collage

Children can piece the faces together or explore mixing the strips to create unique faces using facial features of themselves, their family, or friends.

HOW

You may start off with one or two faces with four vertical wide strips. Encourage language development by asking your child what they see. Try pointing at the facial features (for example, a nose, or eyes) and repeat the name several times to support word association. Also, if the child completes the face puzzle, you can repeat the person's name with your child. This helps children to strengthen their relationships with their peers and family members.

Add more faces with four to six vertical strips. Ask open-ended questions such as:

- "What/Who do you see?"
- "Do they look the same to you?"
- "What do you think this is used for?" (Pointing to a facial feature)
- "How do you think they feel?"

Dialogue can sometimes be the most powerful way to support the growth and development of children. Building rich conversations based on the interests and inquiries of children can allow endless learning opportunities.

Use images of unfamiliar people and make four to six vertical strips and four to six horizontal strips for each face. After building new faces, make up a story about who they are and what they enjoy.

WHERE

This experience can be completed on a flat surface, indoors, or outdoors. You can also add magnets to the back of the strips and they can be placed on a magnetic board or on a fridge.

Source: [Let's Play! Activities for Families](#)

Family Tree

WHAT

This Family Tree exploration is a wonderful way to nurture a child's sense of belonging and identity as well as learn more about their family lineage and culture. It is also a simple way of exploring diversity between family units and ways of being.

Create the Environment

- The concept of "Family" has many ways of presenting itself. Introduce the idea by talking about your family, looking at family photos together, or reading a story about families.
- Talk with your child about different emotions that may arise within a family (e.g., a sibling might feel sad about a broken toy, an auntie might feel loved when getting a hug).

Explore your Family Tree

- Place images of family members/caregivers on paper or poster-board and begin making your family tree, starting with the child in the centre. Add images of grandparents, uncles, aunts, partners, cousins, or siblings. Do the same for caregivers.
- Try making your family tree resemble an actual tree by placing images on cut-out leaves or use real leaves to mount photos. Images might be connected by a line, string, or stick. This is a good way of visually showing the connection between family members and loved ones.

HOW

Try using the images in guessing games (i.e. guess the person/s name or other things about them).

Children who aren't yet talking can match pictures to people who are close by. Rather than having your child repeat or say the names, ask your child, "Where is _____?" and have your child go to, look for, or point towards a person.

Try drawing images of family members instead of using pictures. You can also add individual family information under each image (where they were born, their favourite food, hobbies).

Children who are still learning the names of family members or caregivers can look at photos. Names might be added on the back of photos. Talk about the images regularly to help your child become familiar with them.

WHERE

This experience can be explored anywhere; however, it is ideally played at a table where you can assist in piecing together the family tree. It is best explored one on one or with a small group.

Source: [Let's Play! Activities for Families](#)

People Playdough

WHAT

Children learn about the world around them through inquiry and observation. They learn from those around them, and eventually, they discover or realize that there are similarities and differences between themselves and others. It is important during this process that parents, caregivers, and educators support development of a positive self-image as well as the understanding that diversity, or difference, is a fact of our world, and something to be celebrated.

Create the Environment

One way to introduce this activity is by reading a story about diversity such as *The Skin You Live In* by Michael Taylor. As you read the book together with your child, talk about the skin tone colours. After reading, look at your own arm and have your child guess what colour your skin tone is. If you are in a group, you can engage other children by asking what colour they identify as. Ask questions about their family members, about what they look like, and most importantly, what makes them unique or special.

Make Playdough

Cooked Play Dough Ingredients

2 Tbsp vegetable oil
4 Tbsp Cream of Tartar
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup salt
Food colouring (see ratios)
2 cups water

Food Colouring Ratios for Different Skin Tones:

Tan: 3 drops yellow, 2 drops red, 1 drop blue
Brown [darker tan]: 3 drops yellow, 3 drops red, 3 drops blue
Olive/Brown: 10 drops yellow, 8 drops red, 6 drops blue
Pink/Blush: dip a toothpick into the red food colouring and swirl it into the water, adding tiny amounts until you reach the desired tone

Directions:

Mix all dry ingredients in a bowl and set aside. In a saucepan, stir liquid ingredients over medium heat for 3-5 minutes, and add dry mixture slowly until the mixture thickens. Once cooled, you can knead the dough on a chopping board lightly dusted with flour. Note: Homemade playdough can be a little bit tricky. If it's not turning out quite right, try adding more flour or water as needed. Playdough is very forgiving, so keep working with it until you reach the proper consistency.

Play!

This child-led activity can be set up on a table with playdough or with a variety of materials such as cookie cutters, buttons, googly eyes, and a variety of yarn (orange, yellow, brown, black, and white). Your child can explore using the items to make a model of themselves, their peers, or any person they wish.

(Continued on next page)

People Playdough (continued)

HOW

Try creating a model of yourselves, peers, or loved ones with the playdough and other items on the table. Reflect their exploration in positive terms. For example, if a child places strands of yarn on the belly of their person, you can say "You're putting hair on your tummy," instead of saying, "You don't have hair on your tummy, you have hair on your head." Observe what the child is doing and encourage explanation and discussion. Remember it's about the process, not the product!

For children who are still learning to talk, create people together and help your child to label them as caregivers, educators, friends, or family. Show them photos if this helps your child to make connections.

To create another layer of sensory exploration, substitute food dye with natural ingredients such as carob, cocoa, ginger, mustard powder, paprika, cinnamon, chili and taco seasoning, to create colour density and a variety of skin tones in addition to different scents. This will encourage children to explore the diverse smell of different foods and engage in discussions about them.

WHERE

This activity is best suited for children to be at a table where they can talk and explore with others.

What's in a Name?

Let's celebrate the significance of your name! Names often come with stories that remind us of the beauty, history and magic that it holds. So, what's the story of your name?

Together as a family, you might discuss:

- Who named you and why were you given your name?
- What meanings does your name have?

Build your Name

Print a tag with your child's name and encourage them to build their names with various items found around your home or outside (magnetic letters, wooden letters, play dough, twigs, straws, leaves). How many different ways can your name be created?

Examples

