

INTERGEN CONNECTIONS



**Bringing Together
Seniors and Children
in the Community**

**INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITIES
PROGRAMMING GUIDE**

Produced by: Families Canada

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Letter From the CEO

Dear Families Canada Members,

At Families Canada, we work hard on your behalf to ensure that all family members thrive. Of late, this includes recognizing and reducing the social isolation that may be experienced by older adults, especially those that come to Families Canada member centres as caregivers, or those who simply live in your neighbourhood. We recognize that the life experiences and skills of older adults are worth sharing: that older adults can be a volunteer resource, especially for very young children who could benefit from more focused adult attention than family circumstances perhaps allow.

Families Canada has identified intergenerational volunteering as an initiative and has built an expert partnership network with several organizations with expertise in gerontology, early childhood development and positive discipline. We are also conducting small pilot projects in order to build our own knowledge in this area. This initiative pairs established Canadians as well as newcomer older adults with preschool-aged children, such that they can participate together in activities that are beneficial and enjoyable for both.

We are aware that Families Canada members are already working with an older demographic from within their community. We hope to learn from your experiences, add some research-based information to the mix, and pilot a more structured approach. We would like to thank all of the Families Canada members who are partnering on this new project for their support.

Warmest regards,



Kelly Stone

President and CEO
Families Canada

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We were also supported by Families Canada members as partners on this project. We gratefully recognize the invaluable contribution of Conception Bay Family Resource Program, Marpole Oakridge Family Place, Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network, South Vancouver Family Place, and Vanier Community Service Centre in providing their technical and practical expertise in shaping this resource kit. You will see that it has been enriched with some examples from their already successful programs. Many of the points made in the 'Tips, tricks and food for thought!' are based on insights from both Team InterGen and our partners' practical experience.

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Introduction

What is intergenerational programming?

Intergenerational programming creates opportunities for older and younger generations to participate together in shared activities. There are four models of intergenerational practice:

1. Older adults mentoring young people or young children. Example: school-based reading programs.
2. Young people, including children, providing assistance to older adults. Example: teaching computer skills.
3. The two age groups coming together for a shared purpose. Example: community arts or local history projects.ⁱ
4. Common locations which bring together young and older populations. Example: family support centres, community hubs, pre-school daycares, and geriatric care facilities.

The importance of intergenerational programming:

The practice of separating generations into same age spaces has resulted in fewer opportunities for young children and older adults to interact and learn, both from and about one another.ⁱⁱ Intergenerational programming is designed to bridge this gap. Creating opportunities for young and old to participate together in mutually beneficial activities has been shown to increase understanding and respect between the generations, improve health and well-being in older adults, help development in early childhood, and contribute to building more connected communities.ⁱⁱⁱ

Benefits include:

Opportunities for older adults to:

- Remain active, healthy, and engaged in community life;
- Pass on their skills and knowledge to younger generations;
- Feel a sense of belonging;
- Enjoy the enthusiasm and playfulness of young people.

Opportunities for young people to:

- Develop social, emotional, cognitive, and motor skills;
- Learn about older people and the ageing process;
- Enjoy one-on-one attention.

Creating this resource kit:

While many Canadian community-based resource centres actively engage older adults, these family and community centres are largely set up to serve younger family members. However, Families Canada member centres have been experiencing an increase of older adults looking to become more involved. The idea for an intergenerational resource kit came from a desire to address this gap in services by offering our service providers a collection of intergenerational activity ideas.

In developing this resource kit, Families Canada consulted Team InterGen members from five partner family resource centres across Canada to collect ideas for simple, effective, and low-cost intergenerational activities that can be shared by young children (0-6 years) and older adults (65+). In this resource kit, personal experiences, examples, and anecdotes are combined with findings from academic and professional publications of existing international intergenerational initiatives.

You can benefit from this resource kit!

The resource kit is designed as a tool to support service providers in developing, implementing, and expanding intergenerational programming with older adult volunteers. The following activities are designed to be used as both a reference as well as a practical guide for activity facilitators.

The activities in this resource kit are low-cost, sustainable, and flexible. To assist service providers in the early stages of starting intergenerational programs, we also provide an accompanying webinar. The webinar contains organizational as well as health and safety guidelines to assist intergenerational program development.

Building a relationship through shared activities:

This resource kit is designed with specific ages in mind. Focusing on younger children (0-6 years) and older adults (65+) is important because it provides a way to connect these generations through shared activities.^{iv}

Building relationships between older adults and young children can take many forms. In this resource kit, we provide ideas around two main themes: 'Passing on Life Skills' and 'Together Activities.'

Passing on Life Skills

Older adult volunteers bring a lifetime of experience that can be shared with young children. Demonstrating life skills, such as growing vegetables, knitting, and cooking are opportunities for older adults to pass on wisdom and life experience to children.^v They can also be occasions for remembering and storytelling. For example, teaching skills can be combined with sharing childhood stories.

A number of these activities involve creating something physical that the children can take home and show their parents: a seed planted in a paper cup that they will water and watch grow, freshly baked cookies, or a drawing. In this way, intergenerational activities become multi-generational, helping to bridge distances and build connected communities that benefit us all.

Together Activities

This theme is about enjoying time spent together. Shared activities can include reading stories, singing songs, drawing and painting, and expressive movement.

Let us know!

Above all, we want to encourage you to mix and match and add to the ideas provided in this resource kit. For this purpose, we have included a number of blank pages so that you can record intergenerational activities inspired by the lives and cultural heritage of old and young participants alike. We would love to hear about your ideas. Reach out to us over email at info@familiescanada.ca or post on our Facebook page!

Forming Positive Relationships with Young Children Through Play

What is play?

Play is any activity that anyone (child or adult) does just for the pure pleasure of it. It is not play when it is not freely chosen. It is not play when the focus is on an end product. Play is how children learn. In fact, we all (children and adults) learn best through play.

What is parallel play?

Parallel play is when an older adult plays near a child, but does not try to influence what the child is doing. The adult offers a friendly, comforting presence. The child may gradually approach the adult or join in the adult's play. The adult can show interest in what the child is doing without interfering. For example, "I see you are building with the big blocks. Your building looks very tall to me! I am playing with the little animals..." The adult can then pause. Pausing gives the child room to take a speaking turn if they are ready. This is a way to slowly build a relationship with the child while being respectful of their choice to join.

What is an invitation to play?

An invitation to play is making the environment enticing for children to come and explore. If the invitation peaks the child's interest, they will use all of their senses to examine and shape the materials that have been set-up. The older adult can be part of the invitation. They can be sitting engaging with the materials as the child comes in. As the child joins, the adult can show interest and follow the child's lead.

How do I follow the child's lead?

It is important to notice what the child is interested in. If a child is playing with the Play-Doh and they seem to be making little balls, be interested in what they are doing. Join in!^{vi}

An important note on language!

No matter the language differences, if you're sitting at the child's level and showing enjoyment, you'll be building a relationship with that child.

It's the relationship that is important:

- Not every interaction has to be a teaching moment. Children are always learning. It is enough for the adult just to enjoy being with the child. It is the time spent together and the building of the relationship that's important.
- You can let the children know that you are interested in them by making eye contact, paying attention to what they are doing or saying, and asking their opinion.
- Young children need to come and go. It is important to understand that their brains are constantly learning. This may make them appear easily distracted. It is important to be respectful of young children's need to move.

ACTIVITY SECTION 1: PASSING ON LIFE SKILLS



1.1 Gardening

There are lots of fun gardening projects that will interest young children, from planting and growing seeds, to collecting leaves, to harvesting vegetables.



1.1.1 ACTIVITY:

Growing beans

Ideal age of children:
4-6 years

Suggested Book: *One Bean* by Anne Rockwell

What you need:

- A bean
- Cotton wool ball
- Paper cup

What you do:

Both the older adult and the child do the following, each with their own bean:

1. Wet the cotton wool ball.
2. Put the bean inside the cotton wool ball and place both inside the paper cup.
3. Find a sunny spot and keep the cup there!
4. Water it every couple of days.
5. Watch it sprout!



Watching something grow:

Henry, an experienced gardener from Vanier Community Service Centre describes:

"The process began in March when the children planted seeds in paper cups – tomato, pepper, cucumber, radish and lettuce – and were told to water them. When the sprouted seeds were ready for planting, we squared off our garden two feet by two feet, and the kids put their plants in one of the squares. That way they all knew where their plants were. Some of the children even gave their plant a name! Once the seedlings were planted, the seniors here took care of them, but the children were invited to come back any time during the summer with their parents to look at their plants."

An example from Conception Bay Family Resource Program:

Together, the older adults and young children prepare the garden beds, plant the seeds, and take care of them. When the vegetables are ready for harvesting, they pick the produce and either take it home or have it for a snack at the Centre.

Tips, tricks and food for thought!

- Draw the sprouts as they begin to grow.
- Take photos of the seeds as they grow and put these on display.
- Paint flowerpots for the seedlings.

- If the older adults have gardening experience, ask them to share their expertise with the group.
- If the weather/space permits, and the older adults feel comfortable being outdoors, consider taking this activity outside! This can also be an opportunity to learn about the area's plants and trees.

Tips to follow the child's lead:

- Adults often become focused on *one* specific task; but for children, this can be harder to do. For example, children can become more interested in finding a worm while a hole is being dug than planting a seed. The gardening activity may then turn into a worm or ant finding activity.
- Young children often enjoy running and twirling around when they get outside in the sun and fresh air. Twirling and running are lovely, however, the child needs to be in a safe place. On the way to the garden, if a safe place is found, run, twirl, jump, and roll until the child wants to move on to planting.



PASSING ON LIFE SKILLS



1.2 Cooking

Food is important in every culture, and teaching children how to cook is a fun way for older adults to pass on cultural traditions and lifestyles.

Suggested books:

Cooking with Grandma by Rosemary Mastnak

Little Chef by Matt Stine & Elisabeth Weinberg



1.2.1 ACTIVITY:

Baking cookies

Ideal age of children:
3-6 years

Suggested book: *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* by Laura Numeroff

What you need:

- Mixing bowl
- Measuring cups
- Wooden spoon
- Rolling pin
- Enough baking sheets for 3-4 dozen cookies

Ingredients:

1 cup shortening or 1 1/8 cup butter	1 egg, beaten	1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 cup brown sugar	1 tsp. grated lemon rind	1 tbsp. milk
1/2 cup white sugar	2 1/2 cups flour	
	1/2 tsp. salt	

What you do:

1. Cream together the shortening or butter and sugars.
2. Beat in the egg and lemon rind.
3. Add the dry ingredients.
4. Stir in the milk.
5. Roll out and cut into 2" cookies.
6. Bake at 375°F for 5 minutes or until brown. Makes 3-4 dozen cookies.

The busy baker:

At Conception Bay Family Resource Program, baking activities take place around a table. One child measures the flour, another cracks an egg, and so on. Then, each

child has their turn to stir the mix while counting to ten. The children are learning and their grandparents (and/or older adult volunteers) are there to cheer them on!



Suggested book: *Dumpling Soup* by Jama Kim Rattigan

What you need:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 large pot • 1 large bowl of cold water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 large bowl for mixing • Measuring cups • Mixing spoon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frying pan
Ingredients:	1 kg green leafy vegetables (like baby bok choy and/or napa cabbage) ½ kg ground meat (not too lean)	1-2 tbsps. vegetable oil 3 tbsps. sesame oil 1 tbsp. salt 3 tbsps. soy sauce ¼ tsp. white pepper	2 cups water, plus more for assembly 3-4 packages of dumpling wrappers
What you do:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wash your vegetables thoroughly and place them briefly in a pot of boiling water. Transfer them to the bowl of cold water. Ring out all of the water from the vegetables and chop very finely. 2. In a large bowl, mix together the vegetables, meat, sesame oil, salt, soy sauce, white pepper, and 1 cup of water until it is well-combined. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Dampen the edges of each dumpling wrapper with some water. Put a little filling in the middle and fold the circle in half. Pinch the wrapper together at the top to make sure it's completely sealed. Repeat until all of the filling is gone. 4. Heat 1 to 2 tbsps. of vegetable oil in the frying pan and cook the dumplings on each side until browned. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Pour 1 cup of water into the frying pan, cover, and cook until the dumplings are tender and the meat is cooked through. This should take about 5 minutes. 6. Serve with soy sauce or other dipping sauces of your choice!

For more details, visit: <https://thewoksoflife.com/2013/10/dumpling-recipe-youll-ever-need/>

Making dumplings:

Hong from Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network describes how she taught her three-year old niece to make Chinese dumplings:

"We made the dough together, rolled it, cut it and rolled it again to the dumpling size, stuffed the dumplings, and pinched them together. Then we cooked and ate the dumplings together!"



1.2.3 ACTIVITY:

Making roti

Ideal age of children:
3-6 years

Suggested book: *Hot, Hot Roti for Dada-Ji* by F. Zia

What you need: • Mixing bowl • Rolling pin • Measuring cups

Ingredients: 2 cups flour ½ tsp. salt Frying pan
¾ cup water 1 tbsp. vegetable oil Rolling pin

What you do:

1. In a medium bowl, stir together the flour, water, salt and oil, until the mixture pulls away from the sides. Place the dough onto a well-floured surface. Knead until smooth and pliable, about 10 minutes.
2. Divide dough into 12 equal parts, form into balls, and cover with a damp cloth.
3. Preheat an unoled frying pan to medium-high heat.
4. Flatten the balls with the palm of your hand, then use a rolling pin to roll out each piece into a 6 to 8-inch diameter circle.
5. Cook each side of the roti for 1 minute. The roti should have some brown spots when finished.
6. Best served warm and eaten with curries, dips, jams, or spreads.

For the recipe, visit: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/17225/roti-bread-from-india>

Tips, tricks and food for thought!

- Start simple!
- Give the children plastic knives so they're able to safely help with chopping.
- If cooking in a small group, divide the tasks so that everyone is involved.
- Encourage the children to personalize what they make. For example: decorate a cookie with a raisin or walnut, put their initials on the cookie, or work the dough into a unique shape.
- At each of the cooking sessions, invite one of the participating older adults to teach a simple recipe from their childhood and/or share a memory, song, or custom.
- Traditions surrounding food can be found across cultures! Bring culture into your food programs by:
 - Preparing international dishes. This provides an opportunity for newcomers to share their homeland's history and lifestyles while introducing children to new flavours.
 - Promoting the celebration of different cultures each week. Each session could begin with some interesting facts about the culture of choice and how they are similar to and different from Canadian culture.
 - Incorporating other activities with cooking. This can be done through learning languages, singing traditional songs, or performing cultural greetings.



Tips to follow the child's lead:

- A young child may not be interested in all aspects of cooking. If the child is more interested in playing with the flour, then scoop some flour onto the counter, give the child a utensil, and let them play.
- Once the dough has been made, the child may want to play with it. If so, the adult can pinch off some dough and the child can make it into a shape. This shape can then be cooked with the other pieces that the adult has made.

PASSING ON LIFE SKILLS



1.3 Fun Food Paired Activities

One-on-one activities where an older adult and a young child engage in a shared task encourages conversation and cooperation.^{vii} The following are two popular food-making activities recommended by Apples and Honey Nightingale.^{viii}



1.3.1 ACTIVITY:

Making sandwiches together

Ideal age of children:
4-6 years

Suggested books:

Sam's Sandwich by David Pelham
The Bear Ate Your Sandwich by Julia Sarcone-Roach

What you need:

- One paper plate for each participant
- Sliced bread
- Plastic knives
- Margarine or soft butter
- Plates of different sandwich fillings (e.g. cheese slices, peanut butter, cucumber slices)

What you do:

1. The pairs butter two to four pieces of bread each.
2. Each pair chooses their filling(s).
3. The child and older adult help each other make their sandwiches.
4. If needed, the older adults can help the children cut their sandwiches into smaller pieces.
5. Feel free to share the sandwiches with the group!

Tips to follow the child's lead:

- Sometimes, children may not want to eat the sandwiches, or they may like to eat parts of the sandwich separately. The child may enjoy the process of making the sandwich, but have no desire to eat it. Any decision should be warmly acknowledged and supported by the older adult.
- If the child is not interested in eating the sandwich at all, go on a quest with them to find something else that they want to eat.



1.3.2 ACTIVITY:

“Drawing” faces on paper plates

Ideal age of children:
3-6 years

Suggested books: *Can I Eat That?* by Joshua David Stein
Andrew Potato Face by Debbie O'Connor

What you need:

- One paper plate for each participant
- Plates of different sliced fruits and vegetables (e.g. sliced grapes, sliced bananas, sliced cucumbers, orange segments, lettuce)

What you do:

1. Place the chairs of the children and older adults on either side of the table, so they are facing one another.
2. Ask the children and older adults to study each other's faces.
3. On the paper plate, each person “draws” what they see using the sliced fruits and vegetables. For example: cucumber slices for eyes, sliced grapes to form a smile, lettuce pieces to represent hair, etc.
4. Each person presents their delicious masterpiece.
5. Eat the result!

Tips, tricks and food for thought!

- Share the plates of ingredients.^{ix}
- This activity can serve as an opportunity to discuss facial expressions and recognizing different emotions. For example: making a sad, happy, or angry face while “drawing” with the food.

Tips to follow the child's lead:

- Children may not be interested in creating faces or even know the language of the different facial features. They may be more interested in putting different pieces on the plate randomly. Talk with the child, show curiosity and wonder! Ask and comment about what they're doing.
- Talk about what you are “drawing.” For example, an adult can say, “These two cucumber circles are for the eyes. I have green eyes. I wonder about the colour of your eyes.” Accept any response!



PASSING ON LIFE SKILLS



1.4 Paws-itive Friendships

Interacting with animals has many benefits for people of all ages. Hands-on experiences with animals can help develop a sense of empathy and compassion for all living things. By interacting with pets, children and adults are able to communicate through their actions.

Note: Not everyone is comfortable being around pets and may be frightened of them. It is important to check with all the seniors in your group before doing this activity.



1.4.1 ACTIVITY:

Hanging out with animals

Ideal age of children:
0-6 years

Suggested books: *How Do Animals Talk?* by Katie Daynes
Where's Spot? by Eric Hill

What you need:

- A friendly pet brought from home

What you do:

1. Announce what type of animal will be joining *before* it enters the room.
2. Have everyone wash their hands to prevent spreading germs.
3. Allow the person who is bringing the animal to introduce them along with a prepared list of facts.
4. Interact with the animal based on guidance from the person who brought them in.
5. Wash hands after the activity.



Closer to home:

Jerry explains how kids that visit the Vanier Community Service Centre love to pet his Dachshund named Café au Lait:

"The first thing they ask is 'Does she bite?' And I say 'No, she doesn't bite. She bites if you hurt her. But not if you stroke her.' Another day I gave the leash to a little boy and he was so happy. 'Oh mum, he said, I took that dog for a walk!'"

Tips, tricks and food for thought!

- If pets are not available, many local animal shelters and zoos provide community outreach programs and services that are child-friendly.
- Encourage children to share their experiences or stories about animals.
- Model behavior for the children to follow, such as how to pet the animal.
- Animals benefit people of all ages. This is a good time for both the children and the adults to play with the animal!
- People of any age may be scared of some animals. It is possible not everyone will want to participate. However,

watching positive interactions between individuals and animals can be very reassuring.

- If someone is bringing a pet from home, consider whether the pet responds well in groups.

Tips to follow the child's lead:

- Some young children are afraid of being close to animals. They may be interested in these animals from a distance and not want to get close. The child could show their fear by being aggressive or by being quiet and withdrawn. It is important that the adults pay close attention to the children's behaviour.
- Unless a child has animals at home and has learned how to relate to them, this can be a very challenging activity to do with young children. Ideally, this activity would be better with smaller groups of children.
- Keep in mind that young children may not understand the idea of "asking a question." This is an excellent opportunity for the older adults to share experiences, understandings, and stories with others.

ACTIVITY SECTION 2: TOGETHER ACTIVITIES



2.1 Reading Together

Reading together can take place as a group or one-on-one.



2.1.1 ACTIVITY:

Reading a storybook together

Ideal age of children:
2-6 years

Suggested book: *Changes, Changes* by Pat Hutchins

What you need:

- A fitting storybook with lots of pictures!

What you do:

1. Explain to the children why you are choosing a specific story.
2. Find a quiet, comfortable place to focus on the book.
3. Enjoy the creative story-telling adventure!

Reading together:

Sharon from South Vancouver Family Place describes the favourite activity of her one-and-a-half-year-old granddaughter:

"We would sit together on the couch. She would select the book and I would read, or she would pretend to read."

Tips, tricks and food for thought!

- Talk with the child about characters, animals, colours, and items in the illustrations. For example, "I see a funny gray duck! What do you see?" This will help to keep their attention while reading.
- Promote imagination and creativity by asking the child what they think will happen next!
- Consider any language, vision, and/or motor (e.g. arthritis in the hands) challenges that may exist and select the book accordingly.
- Not every interaction has to be productive, active, or a teaching moment. Children learn best through positive interactions with caring adults. At times, adults may feel that the activity is not valuable because they don't see its "purpose." Children learn much more when the focus is on building a positive relationship than on actively trying to teach them.
- Often it is enough just to enjoy being with the child. It's the relationship that is built from the time spent together that's important.
- When possible, welcome pauses for the older adults to link the story to their own experiences. The older adults can also prompt the children to make connections.
- Consider traditional story-telling that may not be accompanied by a book, such as oral story-telling.
- Modeling oral story-telling can help children realize that they too have stories to tell! Children will begin to share their own stories as the relationship between them and the older adults grows stronger.



Tips to follow the child's lead:

- It is important to be mindful about the books that are chosen. Consider asking the child about what books they want to read. Books that have strong illustrations, interesting characters, and not too many words are usually the most appealing to young children. The books don't need to have a moral or teach a lesson!
- Sometimes children lose interest in the story. They may start to wiggle around, get off the chair, or leave. It is always okay to stop reading a story! If the child loses interest, it may be time to start another book or a more active activity.
- Don't feel as if you need to read the book word for word! Instead, describe the pictures to the child, point out details in the pictures, and talk about what is happening in the pictures. Get the child to do this with you!

TOGETHER ACTIVITIES



2.2 Singing Together

Singing with children is universal! All cultures have their own lullabies, songs, and rhymes they share with children.



2.2.1 ACTIVITY:

Creating a song bag

Ideal age of children:
2-6 years

Suggested book: *The More We Get Together* by Caroline Jayne Church

What you need:

- A large bag
- A selection of toys to represent songs

What you do:

1. Put a collection of toys in a canvas bag (each toy must be associated with a song).
2. Pass the bag around.
3. Everyone takes turns putting their hands in the bag and pulling out a toy.
4. Everyone sings the song associated with that toy.



The song bag activity:

The Apples and Honey Nightingale Intergenerational Nursery suggests using a song bag to guide singing time. The bag is filled with toys linked to particular songs. For example, “a bus can be linked to ‘The Wheels on the Bus’ song, a car is linked to car songs, a dolly to ‘Miss Polly.’ In this way, both the children and the older adults learn what to expect when they see a particular toy pulled from the bag.”^{viii}

Tips, tricks and food for thought!

- Routine is important for both younger and older participants. As Apples and Honey Nightingale explain: “This familiarity puts both groups at ease and gives them a sense of ownership over the activity.”^{viii}
- Use the song bag as a welcome activity. This activity can be modified by using the same bag but replacing the songs with stories.
- Let the children invent gestures or motions to go along with the songs.
- Many classic songs have versions in other languages. This may be a chance to share alternate versions of English songs.

- If the older adults play a musical instrument, invite them to bring it in!
- Invite older adults to share and teach a song in their additional languages. Encourage them to sing it through a few times while others listen, and then invite them to sing it one line at a time letting the others repeat each line. They can bring in an object related to their song, and this can be added to the song bag.

Tips to follow the child’s lead:

- Fifteen to twenty minutes is a reasonable length of time to spend on this activity. Remember to welcome the children to join in with smiling faces, open arms, and warm eyes.
- If an adult brings an instrument, the children will want to touch it and play it. It is important that the adult has a safe spot to keep their instrument when they’re not using it.
- Sometimes a young child may lose interest in singing and wander away from the group. Their older adult partner should follow the child and find another activity to play.

TOGETHER ACTIVITIES



2.3 Creating Together

Combine collecting natural materials with other outdoor activities, such as nature walks or gardening.



2.3.1 ACTIVITY:

Painting rocks

Ideal age of children:
4-6 years

Suggested book: *If You Find a Rock* by Peggy Christian

What you need:

- Smooth rocks
- Paint colours
- Newspaper to protect the work surface
- Paint brushes
- Water

What you do:

1. Gather, rinse, and dry rocks of various sizes prior to the activity.
2. Have each child and each older adult select one rock at a time to paint.
3. Have the older adults and children paint faces on some of the rocks.
4. When the children and older adults have each painted a few, the older adult can use their rock to begin a conversation with the child's rock.
5. Provide a basket of other materials for the older adults and children to expand their play. They may create characters for the rocks and/or create a world for their rock to live in.

Tips to follow the child's lead:

- Young children may be interested in washing and drying the rocks. If so, show them how different the rocks can look when they're wet.
- Young children may not have the fine motor skills to paint facial features on the rocks. They may only be interested in covering the rocks with paints. Some children like to keep painting the same rock, layering on many colours, creating a muddy look. This should be encouraged as the children are learning about colours and colour mixing.
- Don't worry if the children are not interested in playing with the finished result! Young children are often more interested in the process of art.



2.3.2 ACTIVITY:

Decorating a chain of paper dolls

Ideal age of children:
4-6 years

Suggested book: *The Paper Dolls* by Julia Donaldson

What you need:

- Paper
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Coloured crayons

What you do:

1. The older adult makes a chain of paper dolls (see following steps):
 - a. Cut a piece of 8.5" x 11" paper in half lengthwise.
 - b. Fold each length of paper into quarters, accordion (pleated) style.
 - c. Draw a figure of a person on the top layer. Make sure the arms extend beyond the folded edge.
 - d. Cut out the figure and unfold.
5. Give the paper doll chain to the child as a special gift.
6. Invite the child to colour or decorate the chain of dolls with facial features and clothes or in anyway they like.
7. Talk with the child as the decorating happens. For example, discuss the colours they are using or make up stories about each doll.

For more instructions, visit: <https://www.origami-resource-center.com/paper-dolls.html>

Tips to follow the child's lead:

- There is a wide range in the development of fine motor skills. Some four-year-old children are able to hold crayons and draw fine details and some are not. All of these children fall within the "normal" range of development. Therefore, let the child decide what they want to do with the materials.
- If a child shows no interest in creating paper people, invite them to draw a picture, snip paper strips, or tear the paper.
- The child and older adult could also mark a piece of paper together. They take turns marking the paper back and forth. During this, the older adult and child can talk about what they're doing and what they can see in the marks.



Suggested book: *Fall Leaves: Colorful and Crunchy* by Martha E. H. Rustad

What you need:

- Construction paper
- Paints
- Paintbrushes
- Unwrapped crayons
- Leaves
- Newspaper to protect the work surface
- Old shirt or smock to protect clothing

What you do:

1. Collect the leaves. Choose leaves that are still fresh and strong.
 - a. If there is time, go for a walk and collect the leaves together. Talk about the different parts of a leaf, which tree the leaf came from, what leaves do for trees, etc. Young children are often very interested in nature.
2. Cover a leaf with paint.
3. Gently flip the leaf paint-side down onto the paper.
4. Repeat with multiple leaves. Be creative!
5. Let dry.
6. Give the opportunity to share and talk about the collages with each other.

For more instructions, visit: <https://m.wikihow.com/Make-Leaf-Prints>

Tips to follow the child's lead:

- This activity requires a great deal of fine motor muscle control and dexterity. It can be very challenging to hold the leaf with one hand and paint it with the other. Often the paint can be sticky and resistant when applied to the leaf, which can lead to frustration. Remember, it is not necessary that the children follow the instructions perfectly. If the activity is too difficult for them, let them take the lead in doing what they want with the leaves.
- The child may be interested in making hand prints with the paint. Compare the hand prints to the leaf prints! Older adults can make comparisons. For example, "I am noticing that your hand has lines and the leaf has lines" and "I am noticing that some of the leaves are bigger than your hands and some of the leaves are smaller."
- If the child is not interested in painting the leaves, they may want to paint the newspaper and create a picture.



- The child can also make leaf rubbings. To do this, a leaf is placed under the paper and the child takes an unwrapped crayon and rubs the paper with the side of the crayon, creating an impression of the leaf. It is helpful to tape the leaf onto the table top so that it does not move.

2.3.4 ACTIVITY:

Making animal figures from leaves

Ideal age of children:
4-6 years

Suggested book: *Leaf Man* by Lois Ehlert

What you need:

- Leaves of different sizes, shapes, and colours
- Construction paper
- White glue in a flat container with a stick or Q-tip for spreading (glue bottles can be very frustrating)
- Something large, heavy, and flat (like a large book)
- Paper towels

What you do:

1. Collect the leaves.
2. Rinse the leaves and allow to dry.
3. On the construction paper, place the leaves on top of one another to make animal shapes. For example, some leaves can be feet, ears, feathers, etc.
4. Glue the different pieces together and then glue the animal shape onto the construction paper.
5. Remember that young children may choose to create something other than an animal shape and that is great. You can follow their lead!
6. When the glue is dry, put a paper towel over the animal shape and place a heavy object on top.
7. Leave for a day or two until the leaves become flat.
8. The collages can be used as part of story-telling activities. For example, ask the child or adult to give the animal a name and make up a story about it.

For more instructions, visit: <http://kids.sandiegozoo.org/activities/leafy-animal-craft>

Tips to follow the child's lead:

- This can be a very challenging activity for young children. Since many young children are still developing spatial awareness, they may be more interested in gluing leaves on a piece of paper.



Suggested book: *Animals A Mix-and-Match Book* by Woody Fox

What you need:

- Construction paper (2 pieces per pair)
- Complete body pictures of people and/or animals from magazines or old books already cut into large pieces. The pieces should be separated at the head, torso, and legs.
- Glue Sticks

What you do:

1. Invite each older adult and child to take a selection of already cut up pictures.
2. Invite them to create a character out of the pieces selected.
3. Afterwards, each pair can glue their mixed up animal/person to the construction paper.

For more instructions, visit:

<https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2018/05/SharedSites-Report-TriedandTrueActivitiesGuide.pdf>

Tips, tricks, and food for thought!

- For the paper doll chain activity, different figures can be cut out such as a boy, girl, or teddy bear.
- For the leaf prints and animal figures, consider using different materials from nature, such as flowers or twigs.
- Combine collecting natural materials with other outdoor activities, such as nature walks or gardening.
- Consider doing the activities either in pairs or in larger groups. For example, several children and adults could work together to make animal figures on a large sheet of paper.
- Pairs can start a joint scrapbook that can be filled with their work.
- Use the results to decorate the room, walls, door, table edges, lampshades, name tags or any place you can think of!
- Reading *Animals A Mix-and-Match Book* before starting the activity can give both the children and the adults an idea of what the activity will be.

Tips to follow the child's lead:

- Young children may not put the pieces in the expected order to create a character. For example, they may choose two heads or three torsos for their mixed-up character.
- Children may want to glue their pieces in what looks like a random order. The older adults can model this behaviour while celebrating the child's decisions.



TOGETHER ACTIVITIES



2.4 Moving Together

Simple movements can have a big impact on an individual's well-being. Regular opportunities for fun movement can enhance time spent together.



2.4.1 ACTIVITY:

Musical chairs

Ideal age of children:
3-6 years

Suggested book: *Musical Chairs and Dancing Bears* by Joanne Rocklin

What you need:

- A circle of chairs for the older adults
- Music (CD, iPod, and/or vocals)

What you do:

1. Have the older adults sit in a circle facing inwards.
2. The children stand in front of them making an inner circle facing the adults.
3. Start the music! Be ready to pause at random intervals within every two minutes.
4. When the music starts, the children move in a circle. When it stops, each child will stop in front of an adult.
5. The moderator will tell the group to complete a small task. Both the adult and the child facing them will complete this task.
 - a. Possible task ideas include: say your name, make funny faces, give a high five, clap your hands together, say your favourite food, point to a body part, make an animal noise, etc.
2. Repeat! The moderator should stop the music at varying times to ensure the children do a task with different adults. Encourage parents to join in this activity.

Tips, tricks and food for thought!

- Props such as scarves and hoops can be used to get everyone involved and moving together regardless of skill or mobility.

Tips to follow the child's lead:

- Remember that children should always be given a choice. Some children may not yet feel comfortable enough with so many adults to enjoy this activity or may find the instructions confusing. They may just want to watch or play somewhere else.
- The older adult should follow their child partner to a different play area.



Activity Template

Ideal age of children:

Suggested book(s):

What you need:

What you do:

Tips, tricks and food for thought!

Tips to follow the child's lead:

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