



Boston Children's Museum **Home Edition**

L **T** **S** **to know.**
to do.



26 Activities Families Can Do Together!





**Knows what's
important to me.**

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Boston Children's Museum
Home Edition



LET'S to know.
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Foreword



Parenting has never been easy and today it is more challenging than ever. Parents and children both have more demands on their time than previous generations had. Family members tend to be more isolated, not only in relation to their neighbors but also to each other. The image of a family engaged in a cooperative activity like playing a board game, taking a drive together, or pitching in around the neighborhood is rapidly becoming as nostalgic and anachronistic as a Norman Rockwell painting.

And yet, even as our activities and priorities have changed, the world around us has changed as well, and many of us find ourselves ill-equipped to face the challenges and demands of the new order. Our schools and our workplaces are more competitive, requiring different skills to succeed. No longer is it enough to be smart, polite, and hard-working. Children and adults both are judged by how well they can work together, show initiative, problem-solve, and see a project through to its completion.

Whatever their size or configuration, families are ideally a source of love and support for their members, where each person feels valued, respected, and safe. While parents provide this emotional support to their children, parents have needs as well. The more they feel a sense of competence as parents, of being socially connected to other parents and sources of support, and of being able to positively influence their children’s future—the more they will be emotionally available to their children.

In our Touchpoints model of child development, we assume that:

The parent is the expert on his/her child

All parents have strengths

All parents want to do well by their child

All parents have something critical to share at each developmental stage

All parents have ambivalent feelings

Parenting is a process built on trial and error

Boston Children’s Museum has a long history of providing cooperative learning opportunities in which parents and their children can explore, create, and play together, strengthening bonds of attachment and trust. With this book, the Museum is giving parents an easy-to-use tool to help them lead positive and collaborative activities at home and in their communities. These activities have real benefits to children, parents, and to the family unit as well.

We believe that when families are strong, they strengthen their communities as a whole. And a strong community is one where children can thrive, which is what every parent wants for their children. So use this book, build on it, and allow yourself to be as creative and spontaneous as possible. The important thing is that you do these activities together as a family—perhaps even involving other families. The results and rewards will be apparent on your children’s faces—and in their ability to face the challenges that await them at every stage of their development.

T. Berry Brazelton, M.D.
Professor of Pediatrics Emeritus, Harvard Medical School
Founder, Brazelton Touchpoints Center
Boston, Massachusetts



Welcome! Are You Ready For Some Fun?



As the new President and CEO of Boston Children’s Museum, I am delighted to present to you *Boston Children’s Museum: Home Edition*.

Boston Children’s Museum exists to help children and families enjoy, understand, and become active citizens of the world in which they live. We want children to grow up as successful learners who respect others and the natural world. We encourage imagination, curiosity, investigation, innovation, artistic expression, and play. And we hope that

children will learn and play alongside their adult caregivers and other family members.

Of course, this kind of exploration doesn’t only happen at Boston Children’s Museum—it can happen at home as well. This resource book encourages families to recreate the sense of adventure and excitement of discovery we offer at the Museum. As a mother of two children myself, I know you will appreciate the many activities that get every member of the family involved and engaged in playing and learning together. This shared experience builds greater closeness and unity, strengthening our family relationships.

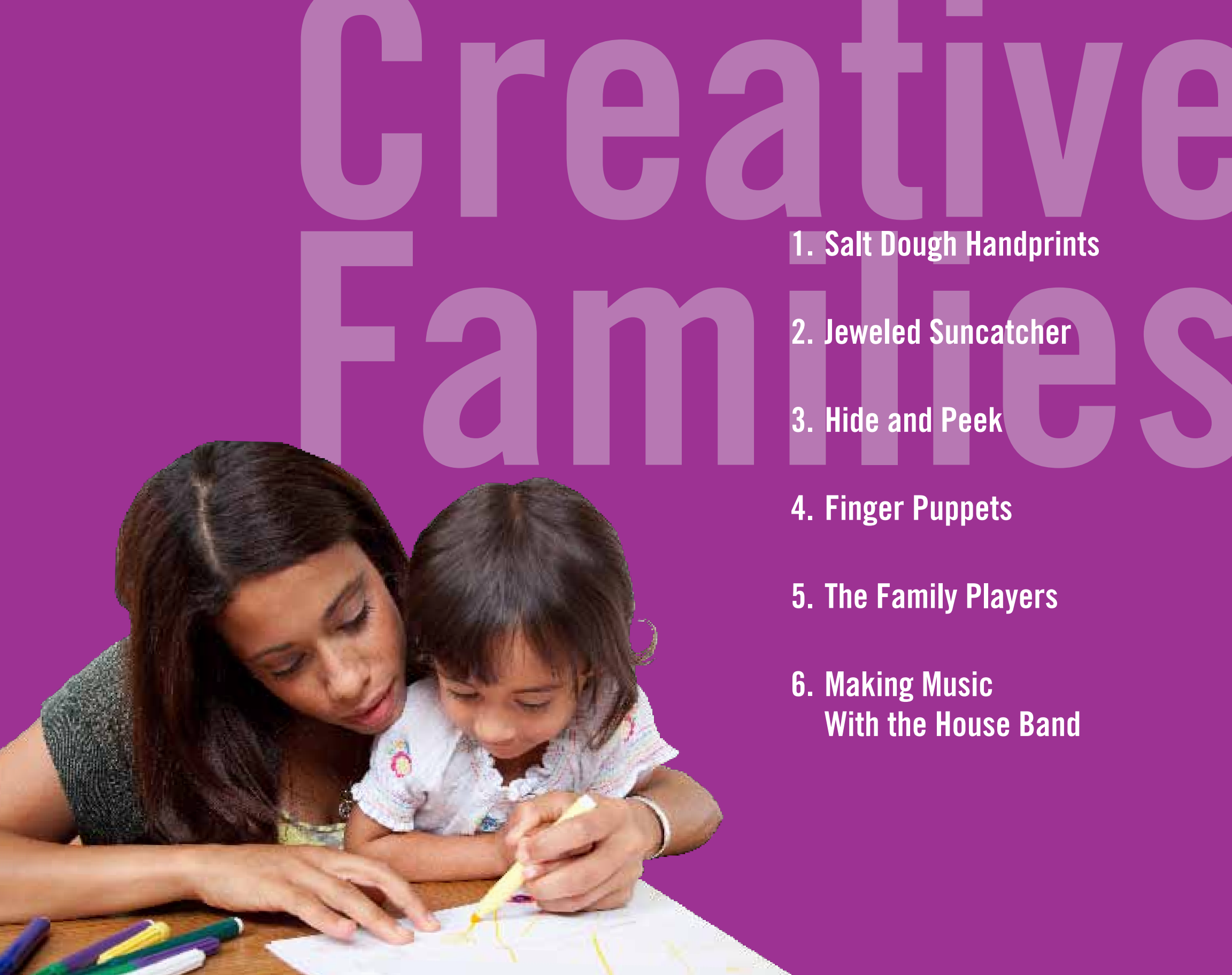
I hope this is a book that you will refer to again and again and that you will mark your favorite activities, write notes in the margins, and document your own enhancements and experiences.

I also hope you will share it with your friends and neighbors, and use it during your family visits and events. This book is meant to be used and look used—if some ingredients get spilled on it or if it gets dirty in the process, then I know the book has been a resounding success!

On behalf of everyone at Boston Children’s Museum, I want to thank you for your interest in this book and wish you hours, days, weeks, months, and years of fun with it. And don’t be a stranger: even with *Home Edition* on your bookshelf, you and your family will want to come back to Boston Children’s Museum for more exciting, inspiring, and educational experiences.

Enjoy!

Carole Charnow
President and Chief Executive Officer
Boston Children’s Museum



Creative Families

1. Salt Dough Handprints

2. Jeweled Suncatcher

3. Hide and Peek

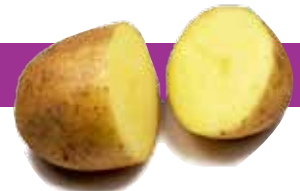
4. Finger Puppets

5. The Family Players

6. Making Music
With the House Band



Creative Families



Making an Impression with Artistic Expression

Access to the arts is not a luxury for children—it is fundamental to their development. Research suggests that the visual arts help children improve their language, math, critical thinking, and communication skills. In addition, the performing arts teach discipline, teamwork, and self-confidence. And doing any kind of art provides important opportunities for creative self-expression.

Best of all, anyone can be creative anywhere and at any age, and arts activities are especially fun when families do them together. While less art education is being offered in the public schools these days, you can be an artist at home. Parents should handle materials that are sharp or that cause stains, and children can let their imaginations run free. It's also nice having some extra sets of hands to clean up afterward.

It's important to note that making art does not require a gargantuan budget. You probably have plenty of materials around your home that can be transformed into art projects. Old magazines, cereal boxes, and newspapers can be cut up to make collages. A carved potato can be used for stamp art. And who needs paintbrushes when you have fingers?

The joy of creating art together is one that will last throughout your lives. As the refrigerator art gallery gets covered with the fruits of your child's work, you will be both beautifying your home and strengthening your family. Just remember that the most important things you and your family can create are good memories. In addition to making wonderful works of art, we have prepared activities to encourage the whole family to sing, dance, and act. So turn the page and start creating!





1

Salt Dough Handprints

This activity makes a decoration for your home that looks good enough to eat—but don't. It's way too salty! Mix together a very simple salt dough recipe, pat it out flat, then make a handprint in it. Then you bake it until it's hard, paint it, and hang it. You can make a handprint of every member of your family—including your pets! Depending on hand size, this recipe should make enough for two or three decorations.

Here's what you do: Combine the salt and flour. Add the water gradually until a soft dough forms. Knead the dough until it becomes smooth. When the salt dough is formed, preheat the oven to 300 degrees. Give each person a ball of the dough. Use a rolling pin to form a round, flat shape that is almost an inch thick. Make a handprint in the center of the dough—deep enough to make a clear impression but not so deep that you reach the bottom and risk cracking the dough when it bakes.

Write each person's name in the dough with a pencil, and use the pencil to make a hole at the top if you want to hang them. Place the wax paper on the baking sheet and place the pieces of dough on the paper. Bake for 30 minutes or until the dough hardens. After the pieces cool completely, everyone can paint his or her own handprint. If you made a hole for hanging, feed a length of string or ribbon through the hole and tie a knot.

To do this activity, you will need:

- * 1½ cups salt
- * 1½ cups water
- * 4 cups flour
- * Rolling pin
- * Wax paper
- * Large baking sheet
- * Pencil
- * Non-toxic paint



2

Jeweled Suncatcher

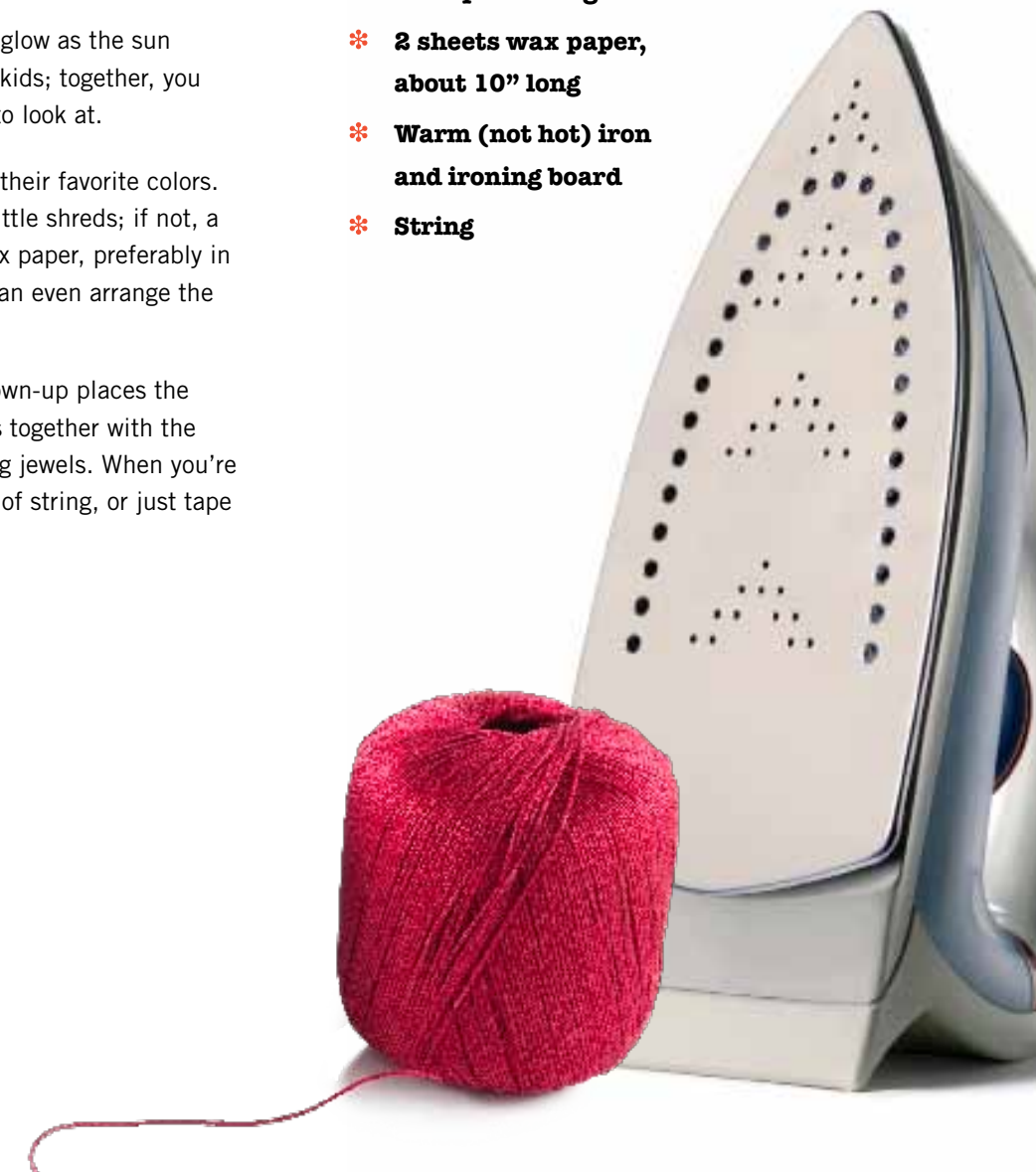
Nothing brightens a home like a beautiful suncatcher, with rich colors that glow as the sun shines through them. This activity has specific steps for grown-ups and for kids; together, you will create one-of-a-kind suncatchers that are both fun to make and lovely to look at.

Here's what you do: First, have the kids select crayons in a range of their favorite colors. If they are old enough to use a grater, they can grate the crayons into tiny little shreds; if not, a parent should do it. Next, kids sprinkle the grated crayons on a sheet of wax paper, preferably in a single layer. Make sure there are spaces for light to shine through. Kids can even arrange the shreds to form a picture or write their name.

When the kids are happy with their arrangement of the crayon shreds, a grown-up places the second sheet of wax paper over the grated crayons and seals the two sheets together with the warm iron. The heat will melt the crayon shreds, turning them into sparkling jewels. When you're done, poke a hole or two in the paper and hang in a window using a length of string, or just tape it to the glass. Then, let the sun shine!

To do this activity, you will need:

- * Bunch of crayons, preferably broken ones that you may have been thinking of throwing out
- * Food peeler or grater
- * 2 sheets wax paper, about 10" long
- * Warm (not hot) iron and ironing board
- * String





3

Hide and Peek

This is a drawing and writing activity for children of all ages. Anyone can doodle and draw, and if children can't write by themselves, they can dictate to an older sibling or a parent. The fun is in seeing how people in your family observe and describe things differently.

Here's how you play: Person 1 writes a sentence at the top of a piece of paper that describes a scene. For example: "I went to the store to buy some cat food." Then he or she gives it to Person 2. Don't let anyone else see it. This person has to draw a picture that illustrates the sentence. Before passing the paper on to Person 3, fold the top of the page over so that the sentence is hidden. Person 3 now sees only the picture and not the sentence it was based on. This person has to look at the picture and write a sentence describing what he or she thinks the picture is about. When Person 3 is done, he or she folds the paper again so that only the new sentence is showing, and the next person now has to draw a picture describing the new sentence. This goes on and on, around and around, until you have filled up the sheet of paper.

NOTE: It's best if the sentences take up no more than one inch in height of space, and the drawings no more than two inches. That allows several turns to occur on the same sheet of paper.

When you fill up the page, you can continue on a second sheet or start over. When you're finished playing, unfold the paper and compare the original sentence and picture to the final ones. You'll find that you've traveled quite a distance on a single sheet of paper! This can spark an interesting conversation about how family members interpreted each other's work differently.

To do this activity, you will need:

- * 1 or 2 sheets of notebook paper
- * 1 pencil, pen, crayon, or magic marker



4

Finger Puppets

These simple finger puppets offer kids a creative starting point from which they can use tools and materials to imagine and create the parts of people, animals, or funny characters. While having fun, they are developing their fine motor coordination and social skills. Kids can make the puppets come to life through dramatic play, different voices, and movement. This is a great activity for any time and any place.

Here's what you do: It's best if an adult prepares a base for the finger puppet. Cut a rectangle about the size of a playing card. Punch two holes near the center of the top edge (if you are holding it like a playing card). These will be the "eyes" of the puppet. Presenting kids with this shape gives them some understanding of where they are going with the project, but is still a blank slate in desperate need of their imagination!

Ask your children to think about what kind of puppet they would like to make—any animal, person, or creature they can think of. (This is a creative "poke"—inspiring them without telling them what to do.) They can use scissors to change the shape of the card any way they need to. They can also add anything on to the card using scrap paper. Perhaps they just want to use markers to transform the card. What's important is that all of the choices are left up to the child. When they are done decorating the card, roll a strip of scrap paper one to two inches wide around their pointer finger for a "custom fit" finger tube. Tape it to the back of the base and slip the puppet back on to their finger—the minute they wiggle their finger, it's alive!

To do this activity, you will need:

- * Any kind of thick paper—file folders, oak tag, card stock
- * Index cards
- * Markers
- * Scissors
- * Tape
- * Assorted scrap paper and glue stick (optional)
- * Hole punch (optional)



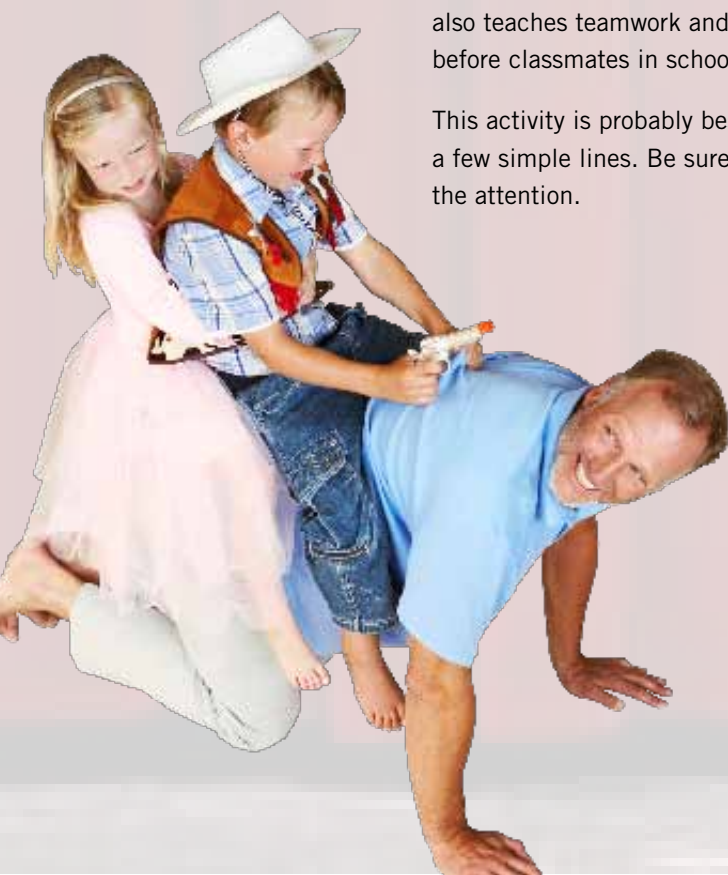


5 The Family Players

Have your kids ever thought about becoming an actor or actress? Perhaps you have taken them to see a play, or they've already had a part in a school production. In this activity, the family joins together “onstage” to put on their own show.

Acting involves convincing an audience that you are someone completely different from who you really are. You can do this through facial expressions, tone of voice, movement, and, of course, costumes and makeup. By taking on the role of a different person, kids can learn empathy—being sensitive to how other people think, feel, and react to a situation. Acting as part of a cast also teaches teamwork and helps build self-confidence for when it's time to make a presentation before classmates in school. And it's a lot of fun, too!

This activity is probably best for children of reading age. But even the little ones can memorize a few simple lines. Be sure to make the kids the stars of your play. They'll be adorable and love the attention.



To do this activity,
you will need:

- * **Create a simple story**, perhaps based on a family experience, or taken from a favorite fairy tale or book.
- * **Focus on the characters in the story**, and make up dialogue (your “lines”) that each family member will perform to tell the story.
- * **Choose which members of the family will play each of the parts.**
- * **Rehearse your play** so everyone knows where to stand, what to do, and when to speak.
- * **Prepare costumes and makeup** from materials you have at home.
- * **Make some simple scenery** from cardboard or construction paper and some paint or markers.
- * **Designate a place in the home for your stage** or, if the weather is nice, you can have summer theater outside.
- * **Invite neighbors and friends to be your audience.** The kids will love the applause and curtain calls from enthusiastic attendees.



6 Making Music With the House Band

Making music together as a family is a fun way to use your imagination and practice your listening skills—because playing music in a group means that the sounds you make are mingling with the sounds everyone else is making. The more the different sounds seem to be talking to each other instead of talking over each other, the better it will sound. (Family members who talk to each other rather than over each other create a different, and even more important, kind of harmony together!)

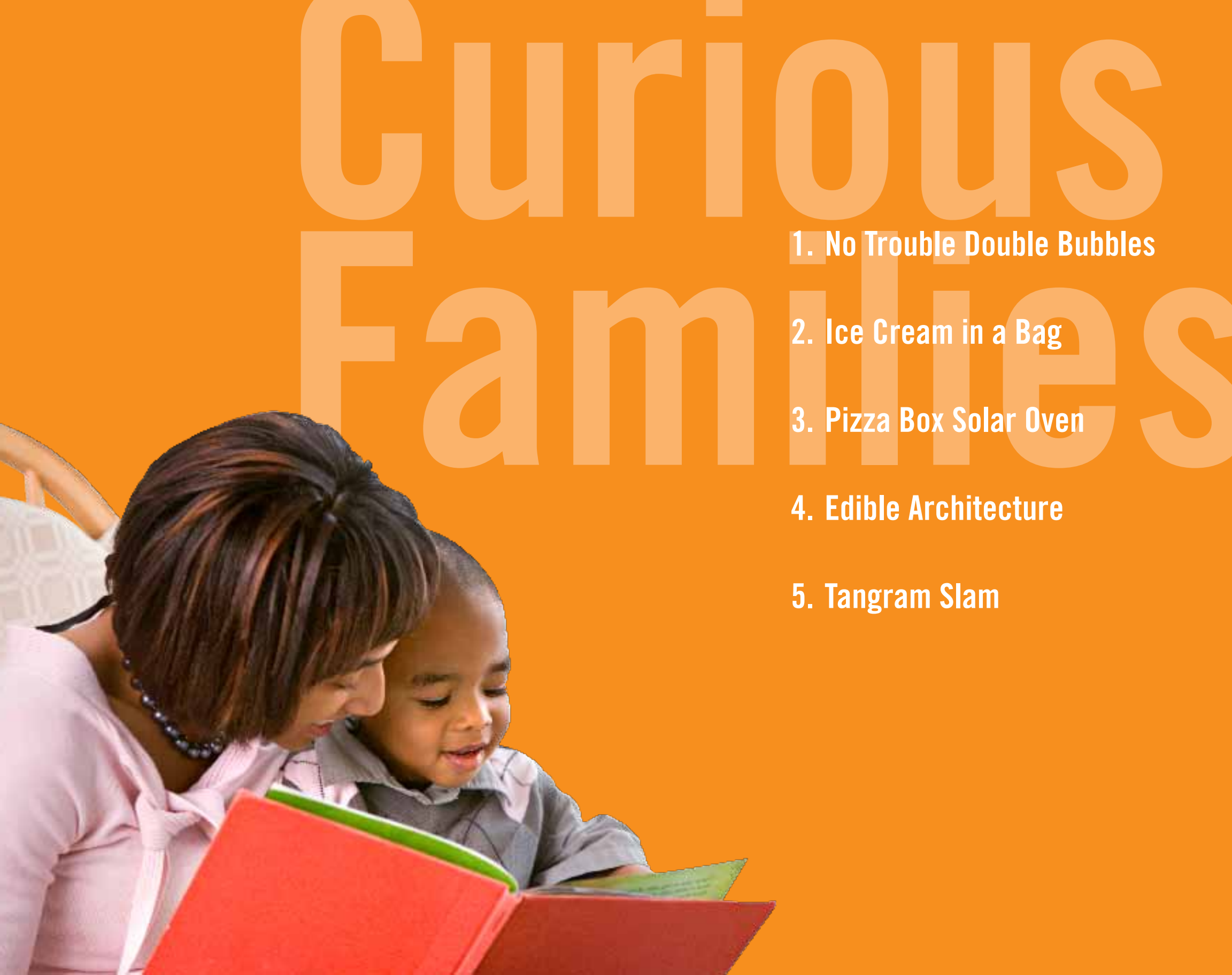
This activity is easy to do because you don't need to know how to play or read music and you don't need real musical instruments. Just find items in your home that you can make music with.

Now you have the music, it's time to make a song. You might start by playing a rhythm that everyone can keep up with. Experiment with tempos (how fast you play) and dynamics (how loud or soft you play). Once everyone is comfortable playing, take turns singing a verse about yourself. Include your name and sing about your favorite color or ice cream flavor, favorite toy or school subject, best friend, or happiest memory. Don't worry about making it rhyme. Just sing, and when everyone pitches in, you'll have created a “Top 10” song about your family.

To do this activity,
you will need:

- * **Wooden spoons** to use as drumsticks
- * **Pots and pans** to use as drums; **lids** to use as cymbals
- * **Rice or dried beans sealed in an old spice jar or Tupperware container**
- * **Glasses** with different amounts of water and wooden spoons or pencils to gently tap them with
- * **Rubber bands placed around a small box or plastic storage bowl** and plucked like a guitar
- * **Bottles or jugs to blow across and make a sound like a low flute** (you can add water to change the tone)





1. No Trouble Double Bubbles

2. Ice Cream in a Bag

3. Pizza Box Solar Oven

4. Edible Architecture

5. Tangram Slam



Curious Families



Putting the “Quest” in Question

Curiosity is a hallmark of science and the first thing you need to know about science is that it’s fun. It’s also not about knowing all the answers. Rather, it’s about asking questions. Your kids are good at that already. No doubt, they’ve asked you challenging questions about why leaves turn color in the autumn, why milk turns sour if it’s left out too long, or where electricity comes from. No doubt, you’ve struggled to provide answers. But don’t worry, you’re doing your job simply by letting them ask about the things they don’t understand.

And let’s face it, there are lots of things in this world that are hard to understand. That’s why trying to find out the answers together is such a fun family activity. At Boston Children’s Museum, our science programs encourage investigation, build skills through the use of tools, and use interactive play to promote science learning. You can do that, too. Just keep in mind these four simple principles:

- * Good scientists are good observers
- * Science is an active process
- * Science is not just found in a lab—science happens everywhere
- * Science play leads to learning

Science begins with questions that lead to experiments (which involve observing, comparing, and measuring), which lead to results, which often lead to more questions: What happened? Why? What would have happened if we changed x? Why might Dad and sister have gotten a different result than Mom and brother?

The important thing to remember is that science is more about process than product. How you approach a problem is often more important than whether or not you’ve successfully solved the problem. The habits of mind your children will form when doing science together can be applied throughout their lives whenever they have to figure something out for themselves—which, as you know, will happen to them every day. So go ahead, let curiosity get the best of you and your kids, starting today and on the very next page.





1

No Trouble Double Bubbles

Everyone likes playing with bubbles. But to double the fun, make your own bubble solution and bubble tools. It's easy! Then, while you're having fun blowing, watching, and popping bubbles, you can all try to figure out what makes bubbles so interesting.

Here's what you do: Combine all ingredients in a large bowl or tray. Stir gently. Set aside. Now it's time to make bubble tools. Basically, anything you can hold in your hands that has a space to hold the bubble solution will work. Here are some suggestions:

- * Slide a length of string through two drinking straws and tie a knot. Leave enough string between the straws so that by pulling the straws apart, they form the two short ends of a rectangle. Put the straws together, dip in the bubble solution (with the straws still touching), and pull them out. Now, spread the straws apart. What do you notice? You should see a flat "bubble" in the straw/string frame you have created. Move your bubble frame around a little. What do you notice now? Experiment with this tool by moving the frame or blowing through it.
- * Remove the bottom of an empty cardboard can of juice concentrate so you have a cylinder with both ends open. Now, have the kids dip one end and blow through the other.
- * Place your hands together with palms facing down and only index fingers and thumbs touching each other. This creates a space that looks something like a teardrop. Press your hands in the bowl and blow gently.



Ask your kids: "What shape is a bubble?" Have them create some bubbles and observe the shapes. Blow some bubbles in the air, and blow some on the counter or in the bathtub. Are bubbles always the same shape?

"When do bubbles pop?" Have you tried touching a bubble with your dry hand? What happened? What would happen if you touched a bubble with a wet hand? A wet finger can penetrate a bubble without popping it (Try it!). Bubbles also pop without anything touching them—the moisture in bubbles evaporates quickly, making them too thin to maintain their shape. That's why bubbles last longer on cool days (especially right after a rainstorm) than on hot, sunny days.

To do this activity,
you will need:

- * 1 gallon water
- * 1 cup dishwashing liquid

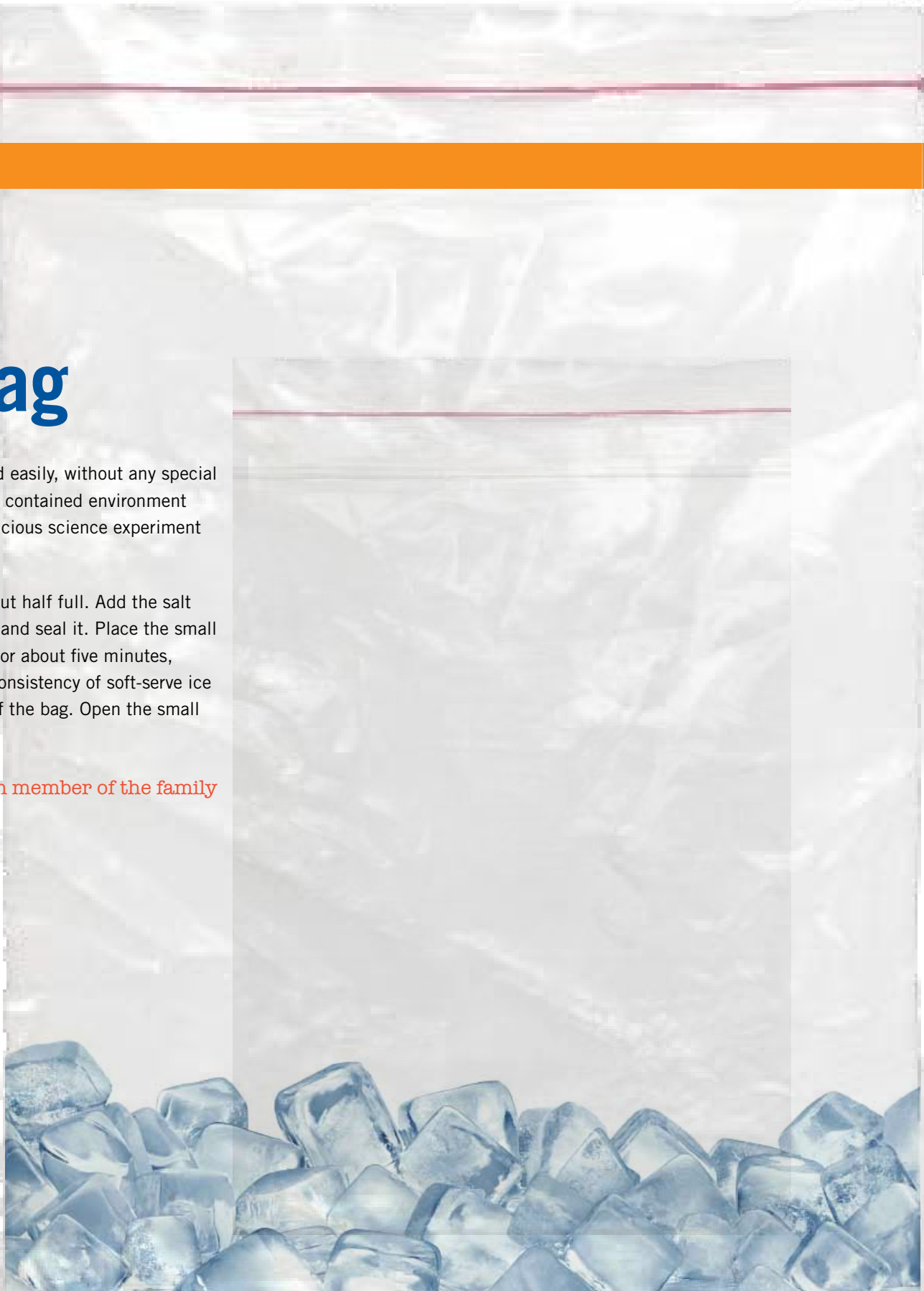


2 Ice Cream in a Bag

Did you know that you can make a serving of ice cream quickly and easily, without any special equipment? It's true. You'll use regular table salt to create a small, contained environment cold enough to turn milk into ice cream. This may be the most delicious science experiment you've ever tasted!

Here's what you do: Place ice in the large bag until it is about half full. Add the salt and seal the bag. Put the milk, vanilla, and sugar in the small bag and seal it. Place the small bag inside the large bag and reseal the large bag. Shake the bags for about five minutes, until the ice cream mixture in the small bag has hardened to the consistency of soft-serve ice cream. Remove the small bag and wipe the salt from the outside of the bag. Open the small bag and taste it.

Note: Since this recipe makes only one serving, let each member of the family make his or her own.



Curious Families

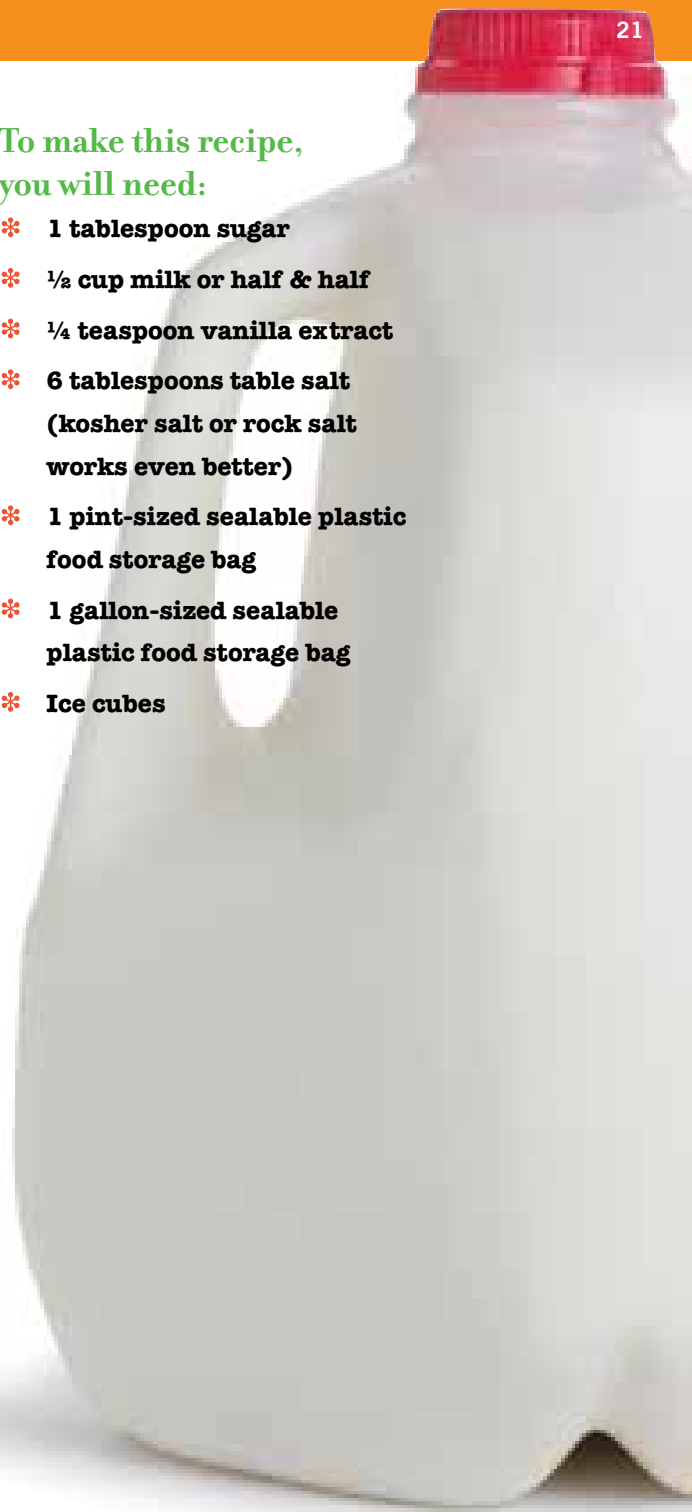


How did this work? Your child may ask you “Why did we need salt?” or “How does the salt help make ice cream?” If you don't already have a good grasp of the concepts behind this process this can be tough, because the truth is that explaining WHY it works gets pretty complex—even for adults. Here's the short answer: When salt and ice mix, it lowers the freezing temperature of the ice a few degrees. This is why we use salt to melt ice in the winter. It also means that the ice will melt at a temperature colder than 32 degrees Fahrenheit. This allows the ice to get colder than 32 degrees. In fact, the ice and salt mixture in your plastic bags will drop down to around 0 degrees Fahrenheit!



To make this recipe, you will need:

- * 1 tablespoon sugar
- * ½ cup milk or half & half
- * ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
- * 6 tablespoons table salt (kosher salt or rock salt works even better)
- * 1 pint-sized sealable plastic food storage bag
- * 1 gallon-sized sealable plastic food storage bag
- * Ice cubes





3

Pizza Box Solar Oven

Ever hear the expression, “It’s so hot out today you can fry an egg on the sidewalk”? Well, it’s not just an expression—you really can use the energy of the sun to cook food. Of course, a sidewalk isn’t a clean surface, so you can make your own “easy-bake oven” that will cook small pieces of food with no gas, coal, electricity, or fire.

Here’s what you do: With the pizza box closed, draw a 9x9-inch square on the lid. Cut three sides (don’t cut the side along the back of the box) to create a flap and lift it up to make a crease. This will be the door to your oven. Cover the inside of the flap with aluminum foil and secure with tape or glue. Lift the lid of the pizza box and cover the hole where the flap is with the plastic. Glue or tape it tightly so hot air from inside the oven doesn’t escape. While the pizza box is still open, line the bottom of the box with aluminum foil and cover the foil with black construction paper.

Place some food (no raw meat) in the oven so that it is fully exposed when the flap is open. You can heat a hot dog, cook s’mores, bake apple slices, or even make your own pizza with a flour tortilla, tomato sauce, and shredded cheese. Use a stick to prop the flap open and place the oven in direct sunlight, positioning the box so the sun shine directly onto the foil side of the flap. Watch the food and remove it carefully when it’s done. (Food will generally take about twice as long to cook in a solar oven than in a conventional oven.)



To do this activity, you will need:

- * **Pizza box**
- * **Black construction paper**
- * **Piece of clear plastic**
(a heavy plastic laminate will work best, but you can use the top of a large plastic take-out container, an old turntable cover, or see if a local hardware or home-improvement store can cut you a 10x10” square)
- * **Aluminum foil**
- * **Scotch tape or non-toxic glue**

4

Edible Architecture

Did you ever wonder how engineers and architects come up with designs for their buildings? They have to think of a lot of things—most importantly that their building is sturdy and well-constructed. You and your children can be engineers at home and create your own small structures out of materials you can find in your kitchen. Try this activity a few times, and challenge yourself each time to create a taller and stronger structure.

Here’s what you do: Build the tallest building you can using just these materials. The marshmallows are used to connect the strands of spaghetti. You might start out experimenting with different shapes. Which is stronger: a square or a triangle? How about a cube or a pyramid? Once you’ve experimented with different shapes, start building your structure. How tall a building can you create that still stands up on its own and holds its shape? What can you do to make your structure sturdier?

You will likely notice that triangles make very sturdy shapes. Because of this, pyramids are stronger than cubes. If your spaghetti structure doesn’t seem as sturdy as it could be, try to figure out what parts of it are weak, and how you might add spaghetti and marshmallows to help make it stronger. Feel free to cut pieces of spaghetti to create shorter “beams” for your construction. Also, think about how you are using the marshmallows—should the spaghetti pass right through the marshmallows, or just stick into them without passing all the way through? You could also experiment with larger marshmallows, especially for the base of your structure.

Try this! Spaghetti and marshmallows aren’t the only materials you can use. Thin pretzel sticks and gumdrops also work. We use drinking straws and pipe cleaners at Boston Children’s Museum for lots of activities like this. Use your imagination and build your very own city at home!



To do this activity, you will need:

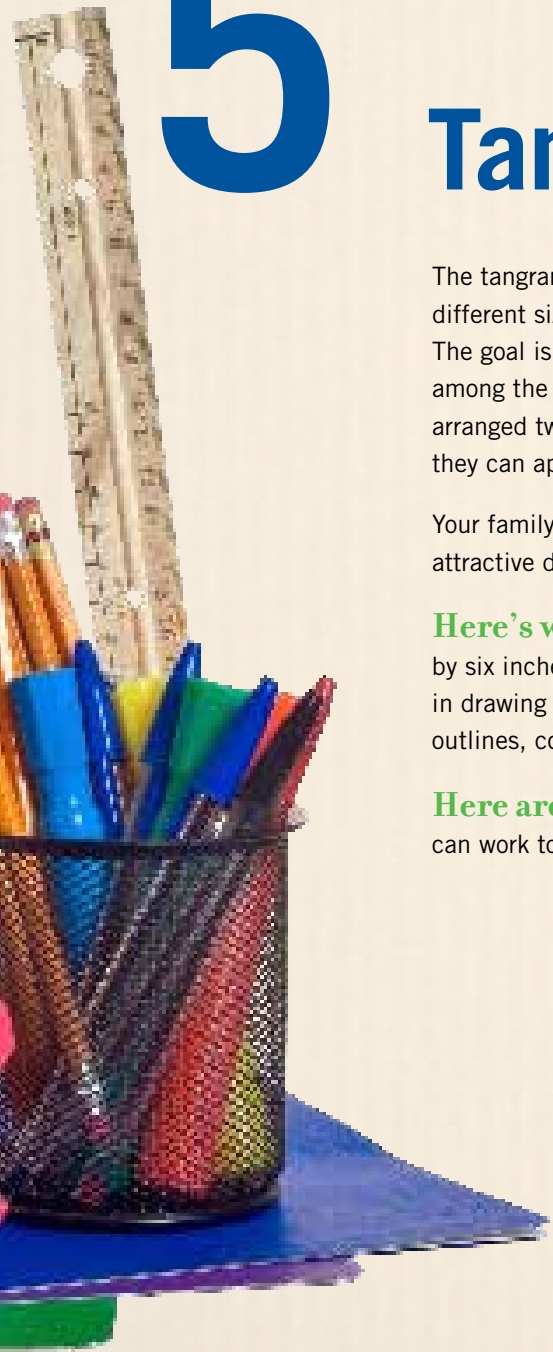
- * **1-2 boxes uncooked spaghetti**
- * **1-2 bags mini marshmallows**





5

Tangram Slam

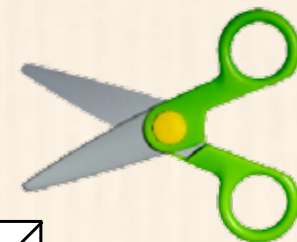
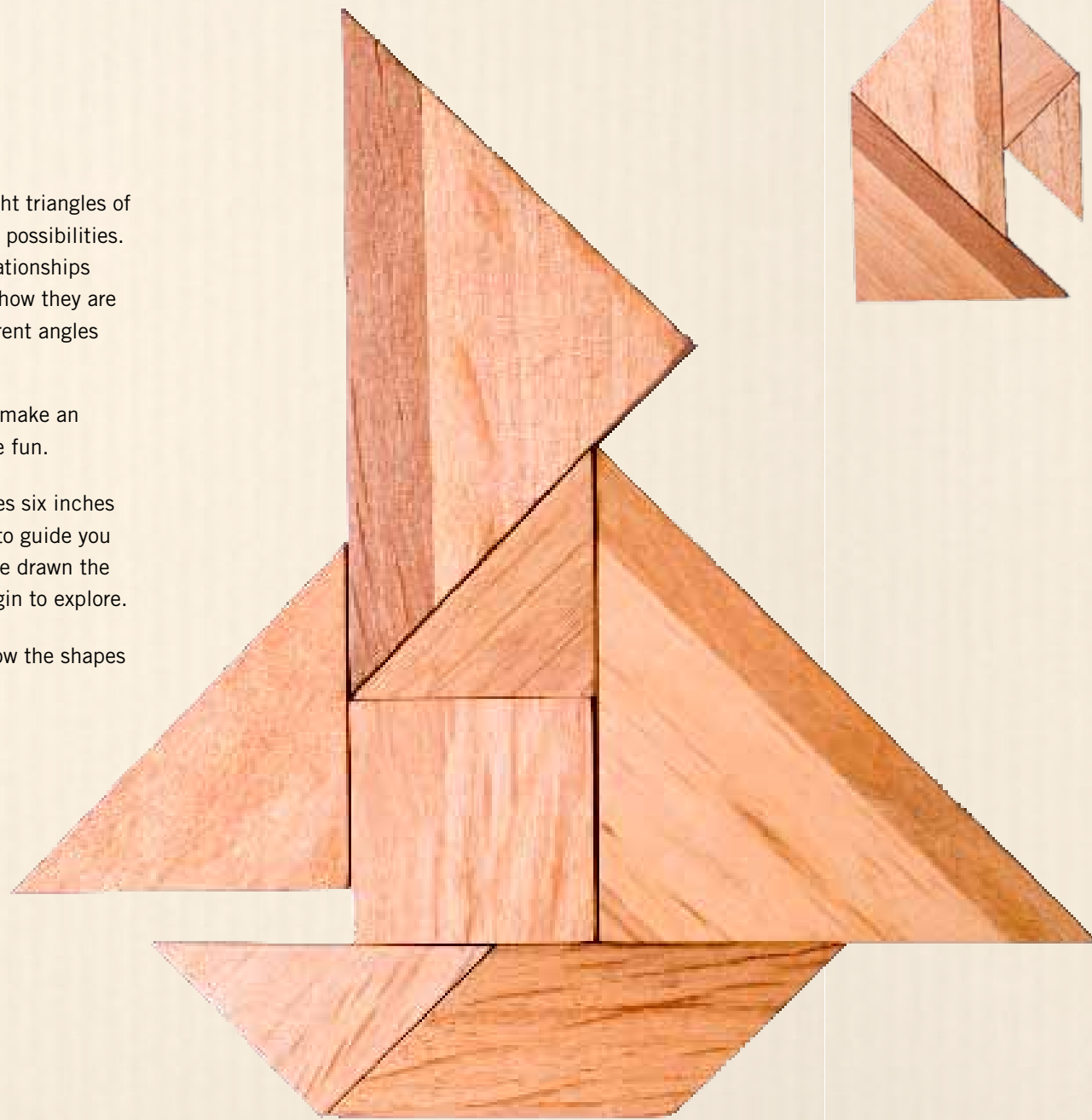


The tangram is a puzzle of Chinese origin. With just seven simple shapes—five right triangles of different sizes, one square, and one parallelogram—there are thousands of design possibilities. The goal is to use all seven shapes to form a specific image. The key is to find relationships among the shapes that reveal more than they appear. For example, depending on how they are arranged two triangles can make a larger triangle, a square, or if arranged at different angles they can approximate a curvy shape.

Your family can work together to create a specific image or just use the shapes to make an attractive design. You can add colors or patterns to the shapes to make them more fun.

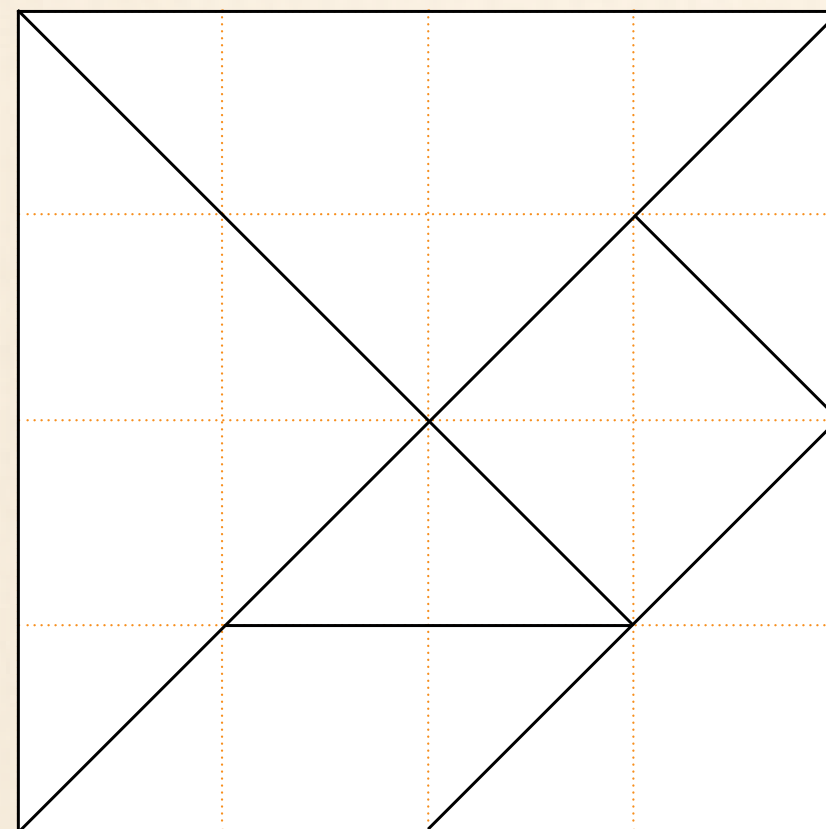
Here's what you do: Cut a square from the paper or cardboard that measures six inches by six inches. Using a pencil and ruler, create a grid of 16 equal squares. This is to guide you in drawing the outlines of the shapes as they appear on the next page. Once you've drawn the outlines, color or decorate them if you like, then cut out the seven shapes and begin to explore.

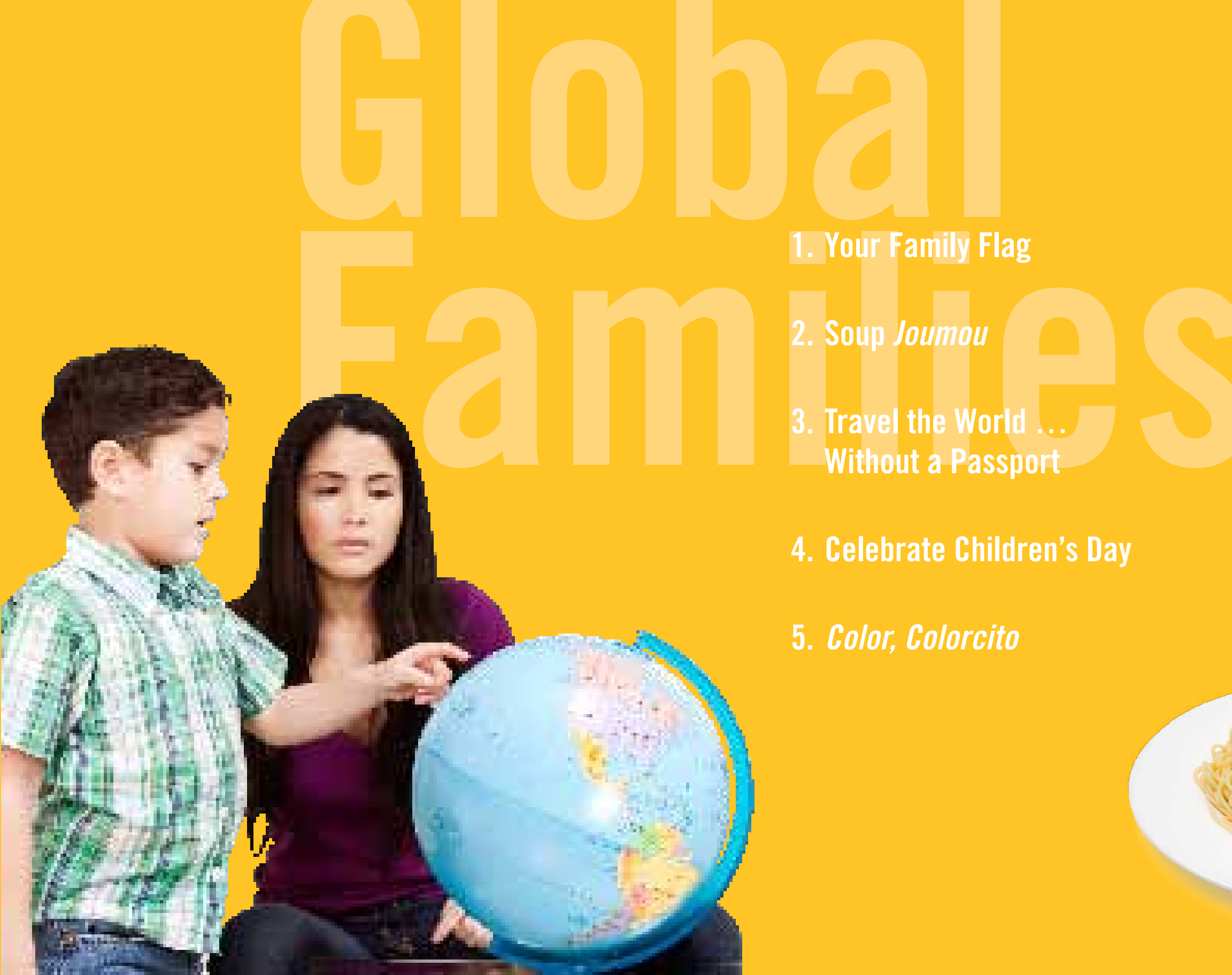
Here are a couple of images to get you started. Experiment with how the shapes can work together and begin creating your own pictures with them.



To do this activity, you will need:

- * Sheet of thick paper or cardboard
- * Ruler
- * Pen or pencil
- * Scissors
- * Crayons or magic markers (optional)





1. Your Family Flag

2. Soup *Joumou*

3. Travel the World ...
Without a Passport

4. Celebrate Children's Day

5. *Color, Colorcito*



Global Families



27

Enjoying the Diverse Flavors of Our World

Whether described as flat or small, the world is shrinking and we are all very connected with one another. In 2000 the U.S. Census found Boston to be a “minority majority” city, meaning that the racial makeup of its residents is less than 50% Caucasian. Furthermore, the foreign-born population of Boston and Massachusetts has grown at a faster rate than the country as a whole. Boston’s immigrant population accounted for 26% of the total population in 2000—the fifth-highest proportion of foreign-born residents among 23 of the largest cities in the U.S. In Massachusetts, a quarter of school children are either foreign-born or children of first-generation immigrants.

What an amazing opportunity for all of us! With today’s global economy and the reach of the Internet, international borders are rapidly blurring. That doesn’t mean that differences are dissolving, too. It means that everyone, adults and children alike, must be more knowledgeable, experienced, and comfortable with people from other ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. Children are growing up in a diverse society and a shrinking world, one very different from the world that you and especially your parents grew up in. You can all help each other navigate this rich new world and learn what it means to be a good global citizen in the 21st century.

The activities in this section offer family experiences for learning about different customs, music, and food from around the world and around the block. Whatever your own background, you can enrich your lives by learning more about other cultures. From a very young age, children pick up on non-verbal and verbal cues about adult attitudes toward diversity, which is why exploring multiculturalism as a global family is so important—and doing it together as a family is what makes it so much fun.





1

Your Family Flag

Flags are not only important symbols of the nations they represent, they are also typically decorated with specific symbols that relate to different aspects of their respective countries; for example, religion (cross, crescent, Star of David), history (battles for independence, number of states), and other defining national symbols, such as coats of arms or important crops or industries.

In this activity, you will make your own flag that features symbols that define your family. It could include your pet(s), the kind of home you live in, the number of people in your family, the meaning of your last name, or the country or countries your family is from. You can use any materials you like and your flag can be any size and shape you want. Use as many symbols as you can make fit.

Here's what to do: Go to your local library or the Internet and look up flags of the world. What are the symbols you see on the flags and what do they mean? For example, the flag of Belize includes a coat of arms with symbols representing the country's timber industry, including axes, a saw, and a mahogany tree. The flag of Chile features a blue square in the upper left corner that represents the sky, a white stripe next to it that represents the snow of the Andes Mountains, and a red stripe beneath the two that symbolizes the blood spilled in the fight for independence. The flag of South Korea features a yin-yang symbol surrounded by four black trigrams that represent heaven and earth, fire and water. Together they symbolize harmony and movement.

Get inspired by how countries around the world express their identity and pride through the symbols and colors they use on their flags. Then work together to decide which symbols you want on your family flag. When you know what you want to include, try sketching out what you think it should look like. When everyone in the family agrees on the design, work together to create the flag. Display it proudly in your home and explain its meanings to visitors.

To do this activity,
you will need:

- * Paper
- * Pencil
- * Markers

2

Soup *Joumou*

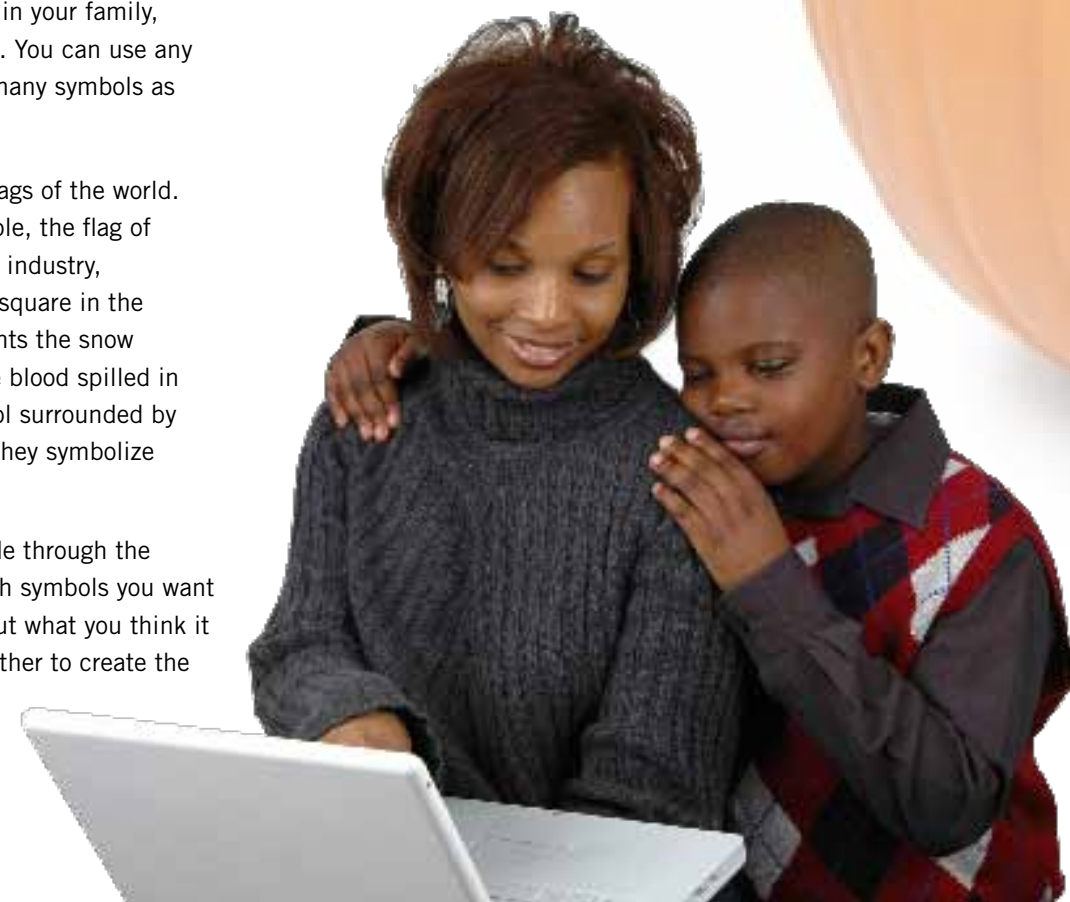
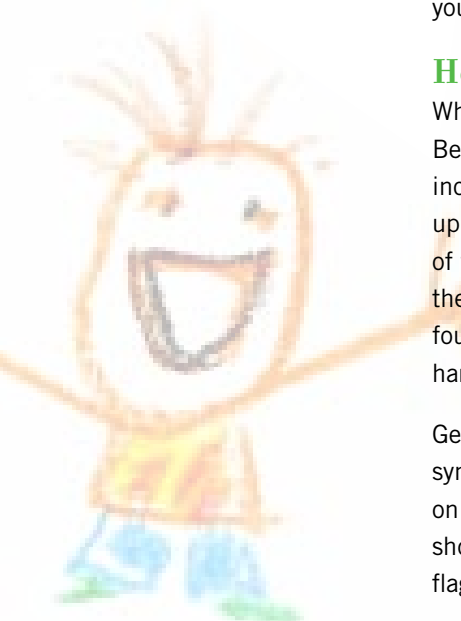


In Haiti, January 1 is a dual holiday: not only is it New Year's Day, it is also Haiti's Independence Day, commemorating the end in 1804 of 13 years of conflict, as Haiti emerged from French colonial rule and enslavement, and established the first republic ruled by people of African ancestry. It is believed that the newly freed slaves ate pumpkin soup, which had been forbidden during colonial rule. Because of that, a traditional dish eaten on January 1 in Haiti is soup *joumou* (joo-moo), a pumpkin-based soup with vegetables, noodles, and beef (you can omit the beef if you like).

Here's how to make it: If using beef, add to saucepan, cover with water, and boil slowly, partially covered, for one hour. Drain and remove from pan. Bring four cups of water to boil, add pumpkin, turnips, onion, parsley, thyme, and the garlic. (You can add more vegetables if you like, such as diced carrots, celery, and potatoes.) Simmer until the pumpkin is tender, about 15 minutes. Remove the parsley and thyme sprigs, transfer the pumpkin and vegetables to a food processor with ¼ cup of the broth, and puree until smooth. Return the pumpkin, vegetables, and beef to the saucepan; add milk, butter, and noodles. Cook until noodles are tender, about 10-15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, and enjoy this freedom food with bread.

To make this recipe,
you will need:

- * 1 pound beef stew meat, cubed (optional)
- * 1½ pounds fresh pumpkin, peeled and diced
- * 2 turnips, diced
- * 1 small onion, finely chopped
- * 1 sprig each parsley and thyme, or ½ teaspoon each dried
- * 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- * 1 cup milk
- * 1 tablespoon butter
- * ¼ pound vermicelli or thin spaghetti, broken into 2" pieces
- * Salt and pepper to taste





3 Travel the World ... Without a Passport

International travel is fun, exciting, educational, and, unfortunately, expensive. But you and your family can explore other cultures, see amazing sights, taste delicious new foods, and hear different languages without actually traveling too far—which means you can “go” anytime you like and as often as you wish.

If you live in or near a city with a variety of ethnic neighborhoods, plan a day to explore each one. In Boston, for example, there is the Italian North End, Chinatown, Jewish Brookline, Latin Jamaica Plain, Irish South Boston, and highly diverse areas like Dorchester, Malden, and East Boston, where you’ll meet Dominicans, Jamaicans, Vietnamese, Haitians, and more. Public transportation can take you to wonderful shops and restaurants, examples of native clothing, traditional music, and the harmonious sounds of people speaking the language they spoke in the “old country.”

You can also travel the world with a single trip to the library. There you can look at maps of the world, choose a destination or make a tour itinerary of an entire region or continent. Then find books, movies, and music from those areas. Look online for recipes you’d like to make. Bring them home and begin your journey. You can start in the living room looking at pictures of the people and the natural environment of your country of choice, then move on to the kitchen, where you prepare food from the region and enjoy your meal while listening to music from the same area. Finish up in front of the television to watch a movie about the country and see the architecture, wildlife, natural beauty, and customs that make that place unique.

When you get back “home,” talk about what you liked best, what you learned, and where you’d like to go next. Someday, you may go to some of these places for real, and you’ll be well-prepared for the experience.



4 Celebrate Children’s Day

At some point, most children ask their parents, “There’s a Mother’s Day and a Father’s Day, but when is Children’s Day?” The answer is typically, “Every day is Children’s Day”—which is really a clever way to avoid saying that there is no such holiday, at least not in the United States. But in Japan, Children’s Day is a national holiday that takes place every year on May 5. Called *Kodomo no Hi*, the holiday was known for centuries as Boys’ Day (a separate Girls’ Day is traditionally celebrated on March 3, though it is not considered a national holiday in Japan). However, in 1948 the Japanese government ruled that the holiday was to celebrate the promise and happiness of all children and to express respect and gratitude toward all mothers.

One of the traditions on Children’s Day is to hoist *koinobori* (carp flags) outside the home, each one representing a member of the family. For the Japanese, carp are symbols of strength and perseverance because they swim upstream against strong currents. The hope is that children will inherit these qualities. Here’s an easy craft for making your own carp flags.

Here’s what you do: Place a piece of string along the short end of the tissue paper. Make a one inch fold with the string inside and glue the paper together. Be sure that the string is sticking out at both ends of the paper. Fold the paper in half lengthwise and glue together. Tie the string ends together. Cut out the bottom edge of the paper to make a fish tail. Now you have your carp body!

Now cut one side of each *origami* paper to make round fish scale shapes. Place the *origami* “scales” on the fish body. Glue the *origami* on the tissue paper. Make sure the round sides are visible and not glued inside others. Cut and color eyes and glue them on the tissue paper.

When you’re done, you can fly the *koinobori* like a flag.



To do this activity, you will need:

- * 1 large piece of tissue paper
- * 12 pieces of *origami* paper or colorful wrapping paper cut in 4” squares
- * 2 circle pieces of paper (About the size of a paper cup)
- * 1 long piece of string
- * Colored pencils /markers
- * Scissors
- * Glue sticks





5

Color, Colorcito (“Color, Little Color”)

Games of tag are played all over the world, always with interesting elements that make them different from how they’re played elsewhere. For example, in the Brazilian game *Queimada*, players pretend they are in a cemetery and when someone is hit with a ball they are “dead.” In Saudi Arabia, the person who has to tag other kids is called “the hunter.” In *Korebe*, from Turkey, the person trying to tag others is blindfolded, and in Taiwan, the game is played as an eagle chasing chicks.

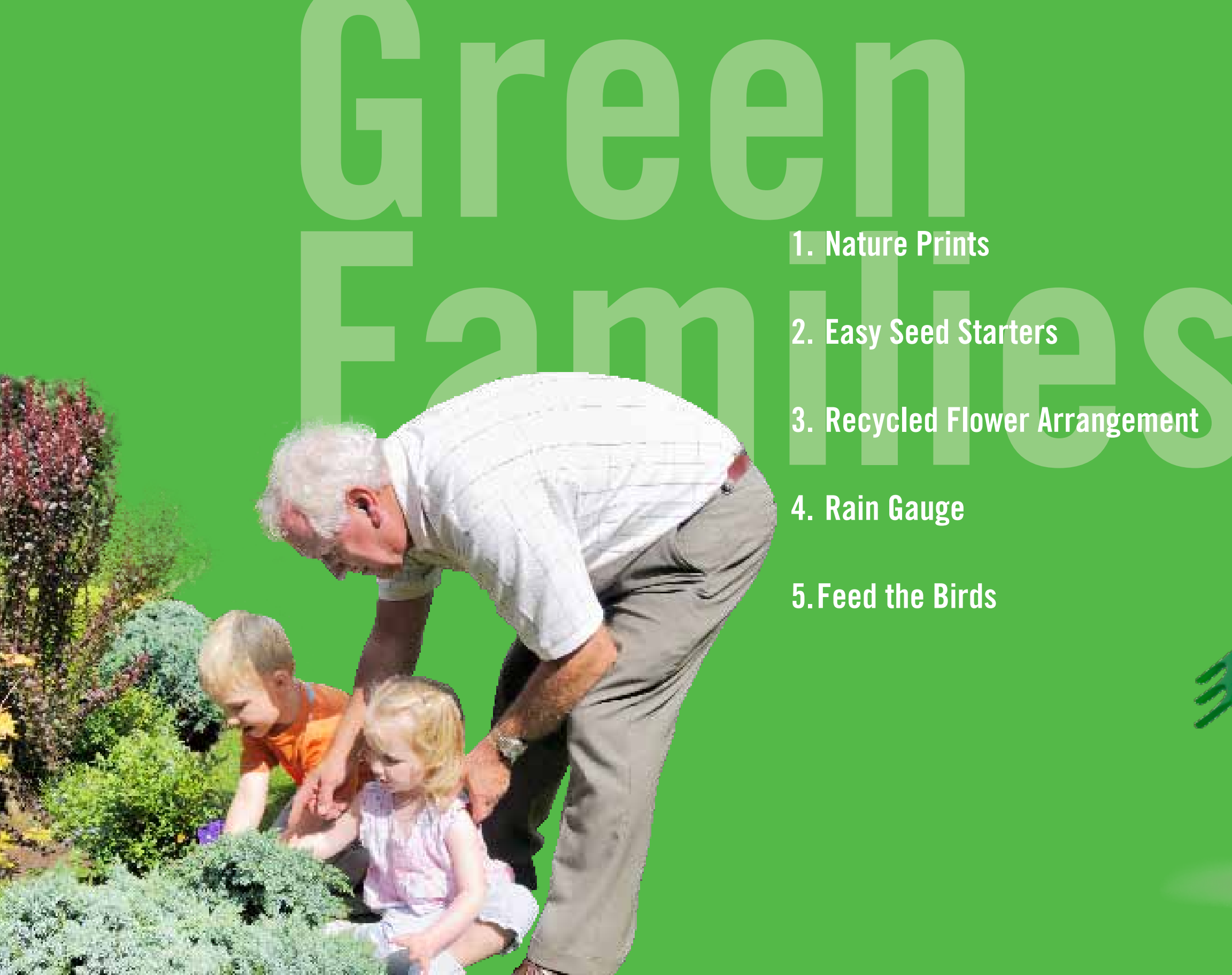
In Spain, children play a tag game called *Color, Colorcito*, which means “color, little color.” It is best played outdoors in a park. The players take turns being “It,” the one who has to tag others. The It Person says “color, little color” and then names a color. The other players have to run to find something that is the color that was selected. The It Person runs after the other players and tries to tag them before they can touch the colored item. If the It Person tags someone, that person is out. The game continues until the It Person has tagged everyone, then a new player becomes It.

Another way to play the game is to choose a “safe” object, like a rock or a tree or a fence. When the It Person names a color, the players have to find something that color and bring it to the safe object before being tagged. This variation of the game might be better in a larger, indoor play space so kids don’t try to search through trash cans to find suitable objects they can pick up and carry.



To make the game more challenging if you don’t speak Spanish, use the Spanish phrase *color, colorcito* and name the colors in Spanish:

	.... Black	<i>Negro</i>	
	Blue	<i>Azul</i>	....
	.... Brown	<i>Marrón</i>	
	Green	<i>Verde</i>	....
	.... Grey	<i>Gris</i>	
	Orange	<i>Naranja</i>	....
	.... Pink	<i>Rosado</i>	
	Purple	<i>Violeta</i>	....
	.... Red	<i>Rojo</i>	
	White	<i>Blanco</i>	....
	.... Yellow	<i>Amarillo</i>	



1. Nature Prints

2. Easy Seed Starters

3. Recycled Flower Arrangement

4. Rain Gauge

5. Feed the Birds



Green Families



Walking Softly on the Only Home We Have

There's no question about it: our earth is a wondrous place. It's the only home we have, and it's up to us to take care of it. But with all the environmental problems facing our planet—from the fossil fuels we burn to the waste we produce—you might think that there's nothing you and your family can do to make a difference.

Not true. Every leaky faucet you fix, every light in an unused room you turn off, each soda can you return, each cereal box you recycle, everything you reuse ... it all adds up and it does make a difference. Working together, your family can live green in a way that is fun, educational, and makes the world a little bit better, cleaner, and stronger.

At Boston Children's Museum, we practice what we preach. We're proud to be Boston's first green museum and for many years we've helped children to connect to nature. The activities in this section were designed with the following goals in mind:

- * **Inspire** children to become the next generation of environmental stewards
- * **Give** families positive steps they can take toward living greener lives
- * **Encourage** children and families to learn about and experience the natural world around them
- * **Empower** children and families to take positive, personal actions to confront global environmental issues

Being green isn't solely about big, confusing ideas like global climate change. It's also about getting out and enjoying the world. A trip to a local park or lake can turn into a scavenger hunt for native wildlife or learning to identify different trees and flowers. Sitting outside, looking at clouds, listening to birds, discuss the naturalist's creed: "Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints, kill nothing but time." Being green is ultimately a gift you give not only to your children, but to your children's children as well.





1 Nature Prints

Throughout history and all around the world, nature has provided artists with endless inspiration for their works. The colors, shapes, textures, and patterns found in nature are not only good subjects for art—they can be the materials for art as well. Native Americans made paints from flowers, for example. In this activity, you and your family will go out and enjoy a nature walk, keeping your eyes open for interesting-looking things you can take home with you. **(Note: Please don't pick live plants or disturb natural habitats; the things you want to collect should ideally be lying on the ground.)** Then you'll go home, spread paint on them, and press them against paper to make beautiful nature prints.

Here's what you do: Go outside! Find cool stuff! Then go back home and gently wipe or wash your items to remove dirt and insects. Next, your kids can either dip the items, one by one, in bowls of paint, or spread paint on them with a brush. Then they gently press them onto a sheet of paper and remove. You can wash the items and the kids can reuse them with a different color or make prints with different items. It's fun for them to arrange the prints in an interesting design.

Ask your kids: Do you see details (such as patterns or textures) in the prints that you didn't notice on the original items? Why might nature have created such shapes and patterns for these things?



To do this activity, you will need:

- * **Paints (tempera paint works well)**
- * **Paper**
- * **Natural objects**, such as pine cones, leaves, seashells, acorn caps, small rocks and twigs, pieces of bark, abandoned bird nests, etc.

2 Easy Seed Starters



Growing flowers and vegetables from seeds is easy. It can also be a lot of fun, especially when you reuse materials to grow them in instead of throwing them away. The idea is to start growing the seeds in small containers indoors, then you can transplant them to larger pots or into a garden outdoors. Grown-ups can prepare the containers, and the kids can plant the seeds, add the soil, and water them regularly. In just a short time, you'll have young shoots pushing up from the soil, adding a nice touch of green to your home.

Here's what you do: Using a pin or nail, carefully poke a hole in the bottom of your container, to allow water to drain out. If you're using eggshells, place them in the egg carton so they don't fall over. Place your container(s) on a large plate or tray to collect water that will drain out the bottom. Add one seed to each container and cover with soil. Water gently, just enough to moisten the soil. Water each day or as instructed on the seed packet. Place in a sunny place and within a week or so you should start seeing some growth. When the seedlings are an inch or two tall, they can be transplanted to larger containers or outside when it's warm enough.

Note: Egg cartons and eggshells are biodegradable, so they can be transplanted as is. If you're using plastic or Styrofoam containers, remove the plant and soil before transplanting. This activity is preferably done in early spring.

To do this activity, you will need:

- * **Seeds (either from a store, or small, clean, dry seeds from fruit you've eaten)**
- * **Potting soil or "clean" dirt from outside**
- * **A sharp pin or nail**
- * **Containers in which to plant seeds—here are some suggestions:**
 - o **Egg carton with the top removed**
 - o **Clean, used plastic yogurt containers**
 - o **Clean, dry eggshell halves**
 - o **Small plastic or Styrofoam cups**



3 Recycled Flower Arrangement



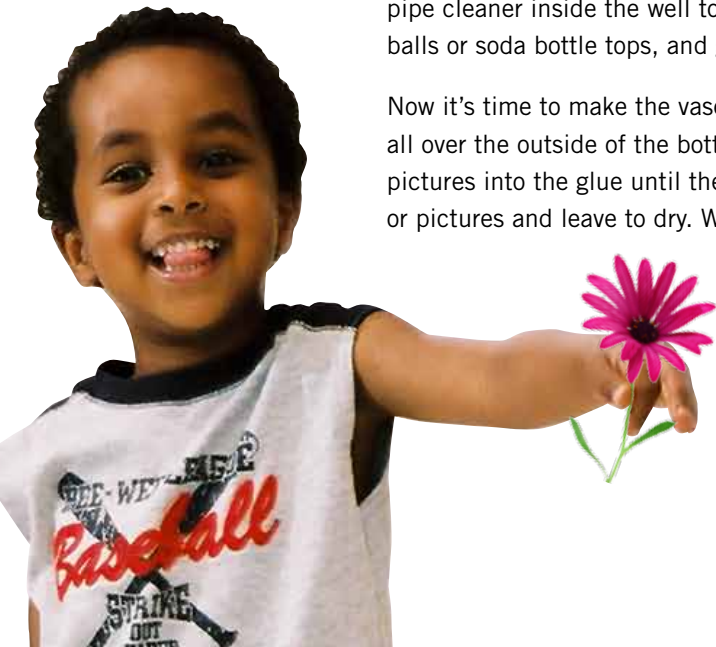
Just to be clear, in this activity you're not going to make an arrangement of recycled flowers. Instead, you're going to make flowers and a vase from recycled materials—things in your house you might otherwise throw out can be transformed into a beautiful decoration for your home (or a great gift). Add a few common craft items and you have something worth keeping (and keeping out of a landfill).

Here's what you do: Cut off the top of the egg carton and recycle the top. Cut the bottom piece into 12 individual wells. You can paint or decorate them with markers—these egg carton pieces will be the flowers. Push a pipe cleaner into the bottom or side of each well (making the flower's "stem"), so just enough pokes through to keep it attached (you can bend the end of the pipe cleaner inside the well to secure it, or glue it into place). Paint or decorate some cotton balls or soda bottle tops, and glue one into each of the egg carton wells.

Now it's time to make the vase. Pour some glue into a dish and use a paintbrush to brush glue all over the outside of the bottle (except the top and bottom). Then press the colored paper or pictures into the glue until the entire bottle is covered. Brush another coat of glue over the paper or pictures and leave to dry. When it's dry, place the flowers in the vase and display proudly.

To do this activity, you will need:

- * 1 or more empty cardboard egg cartons
- * 1 or more empty wine or soda bottles
- * Small pieces of scrap colored paper or small photos cut from magazines
- * White glue (dries clear)
- * Paintbrushes
- * Paint or markers
- * Cotton balls and/or the tops of soda bottles
- * Pipe cleaners (especially green ones)



4 Rain Gauge

A rain gauge is used by weather forecasters—and families—to measure rainfall. It's easy for the kids to make their own—and then your family can keep statistics about how much rain you've had over the course of a day, week, month, or season. **This rain gauge has another green use:** the water collected can be reused to water indoor plants, thereby conserving a precious resource by cutting down on water usage.

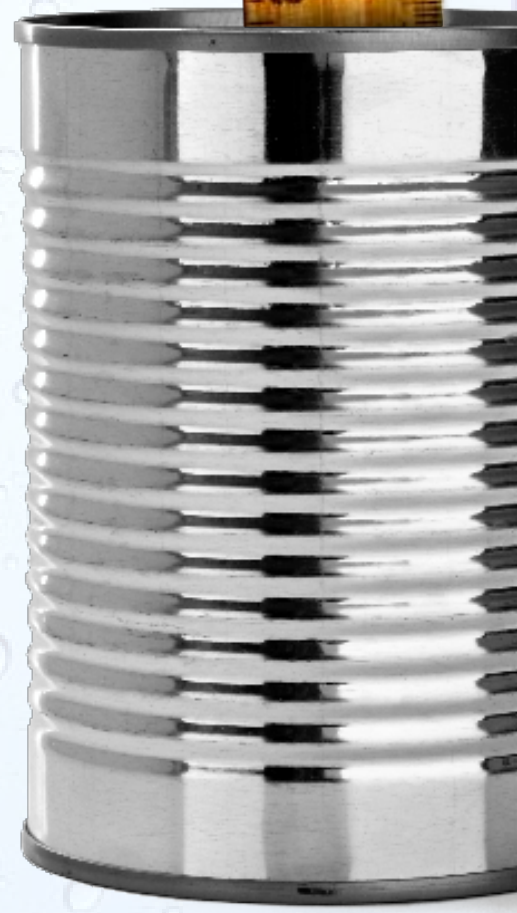
Here's what you do: Place the plastic ruler inside the can or jar. If they like, the kids can also decorate the outside of the can with any materials they want—so long as they will not wash away or fall apart from being outside in all kinds of weather.

Set the can outside in a place where it won't tip over. If you want, you can surround it with rocks so it doesn't get blown around. Each time after it rains, ask the kids to check the rain gauge to see how much rain fell. Have them write the number in a notebook, noting the measurement and the day it was recorded. Empty the can after each reading and every time it rains, add the amount to your previous reading. Bring the water you've collected inside to use for plants or for water-color painting.

Ask your kids: Which day got the most rain? Which was the wettest week of the month? Of the season? How did your measurements compare with the rainfall reports on TV or in the newspaper? What would your measurements look like if you used a wider or narrower can? If you left the rainwater in the gauge, how long do you think it would take to evaporate (or for the neighbor's dog to drink it!)?

To do this activity, you will need:

- * Plastic ruler
- * Clean, empty soup can or a clear jar—like a baby food or mayonnaise jar
- * Notebook and pen



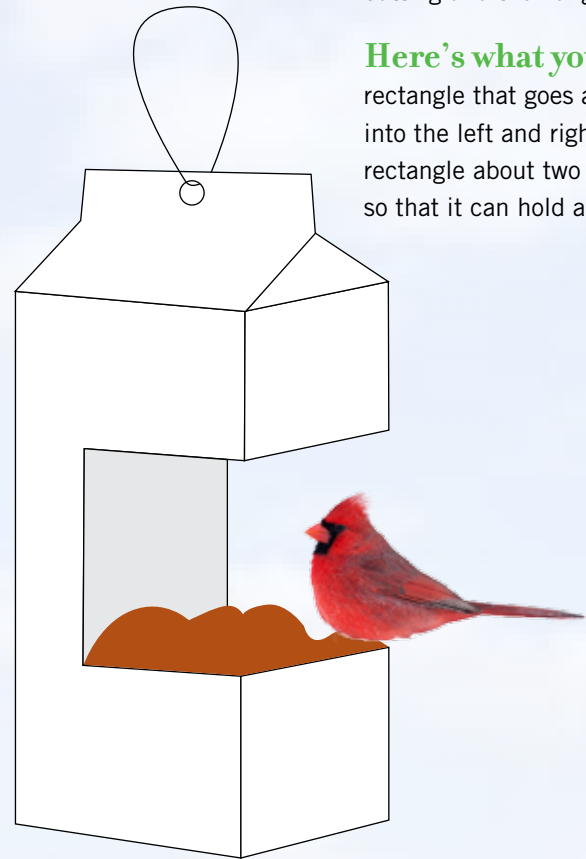


5

Feed the Birds

A lovely part of the Walt Disney movie *Mary Poppins* is the song “Feed the Birds,” in which Julie Andrews sits on the steps of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London singing and selling bags of bread crumbs so that people can “feed the little birds” and “show them you care.” Not only does feeding birds offer them some food in the winter and show that you care about wildlife, it’s also fun, especially when you make your own bird feeder. And you don’t need much more than a milk carton, scissors, and bird seed. Depending on the age of your kids, you may want to do the cutting and the hanging; kids can do the filling and watching.

Here’s what you do: Holding the carton upright, cut a large rectangle that goes across the front of the carton to about half way into the left and right sides of the carton. Make the bottom of the rectangle about two inches higher than the bottom of the carton so that it can hold a fair amount of bird seed. (See image.)



This provides a ledge that birds can perch on while they dip into the bird seed. Now poke or punch a hole at the top of the carton and pass a length of string through it. Tie a knot and let the kids fill the feeder with bird seed. Now find a good tree branch to hang it from. Hang it low enough off the branch so that squirrels don’t reach down and help themselves.

Ask your kids: How many and which kinds of birds come to feed? They can take a photograph of some of the birds or draw pictures of them, then go online or to the library to figure out what kind of birds they are. How long does it take before you need to add more seed? Are the numbers and types of birds different in the spring, summer, fall, and winter?



To do this activity, you will need:

- * Empty quart- or half-gallon-sized cardboard milk carton
- * Scissors
- * String
- * Hole punch or pencil
- * Bird seed



Green Families

Healthy Families

1. The Family Olympics

2. Eat Smart and Stay Active

3. Fabulous Family Fruit Kebabs
with Delicious Dipping Sauce

4. Dance, Dance, Dance

5. Travel Bingo



Healthy Families



43

Making Healthy Lifestyle Choices

The rationale for making healthy choices as a family is obvious: healthy living leads to longer, more productive, and more fulfilling lives. But in today's society, healthy living is often a difficult choice to make. That's because adults and children both succumb too frequently to the lures of television, cars, the Internet, and video games at the expense of fresh air and exercise. Too often, foods are selected for their convenience rather than their nutrition.

As a result, Americans are becoming overweight at an alarming rate. Study after study shows that the dramatic rise in the number of overweight children is one of the most critical health problems in the U.S. Being inactive and overweight as children puts them at greater risk for major chronic diseases that affect the quality and length of their adult lives.

It doesn't have to be that way, and the activities in this section are designed to help families make healthier lifestyle choices and to understand the essential links among physical activity, nutrition, healthy habits, and success in school and work. The great thing about healthy living is that you can start at any time and see the results of your efforts. All members of your family will have more energy and feel better about themselves.

Yes, you will have to model healthy behaviors for your children, but it's not as hard as you think. Take 15 minutes out of your workday to take a walk, use the stairs instead of the elevator, bike to the store instead of driving. Make time for a breakfast of low-sugar cereal with skim milk; eat fruit or carrot sticks instead of candy bars for a snack. If you smoke, stop. If you don't exercise, start. Your children will notice the difference—and so will you.

Remember, it can be as easy as brushing teeth as a family, and as delicious as cooking a nutritious meal together. You don't need to join a gym or invest in exercise equipment. You just have to make thoughtful choices about what you eat and how you live. So let your first healthy choice be turning the page and checking out the fun, high-energy activities we've developed for you and your family.



1

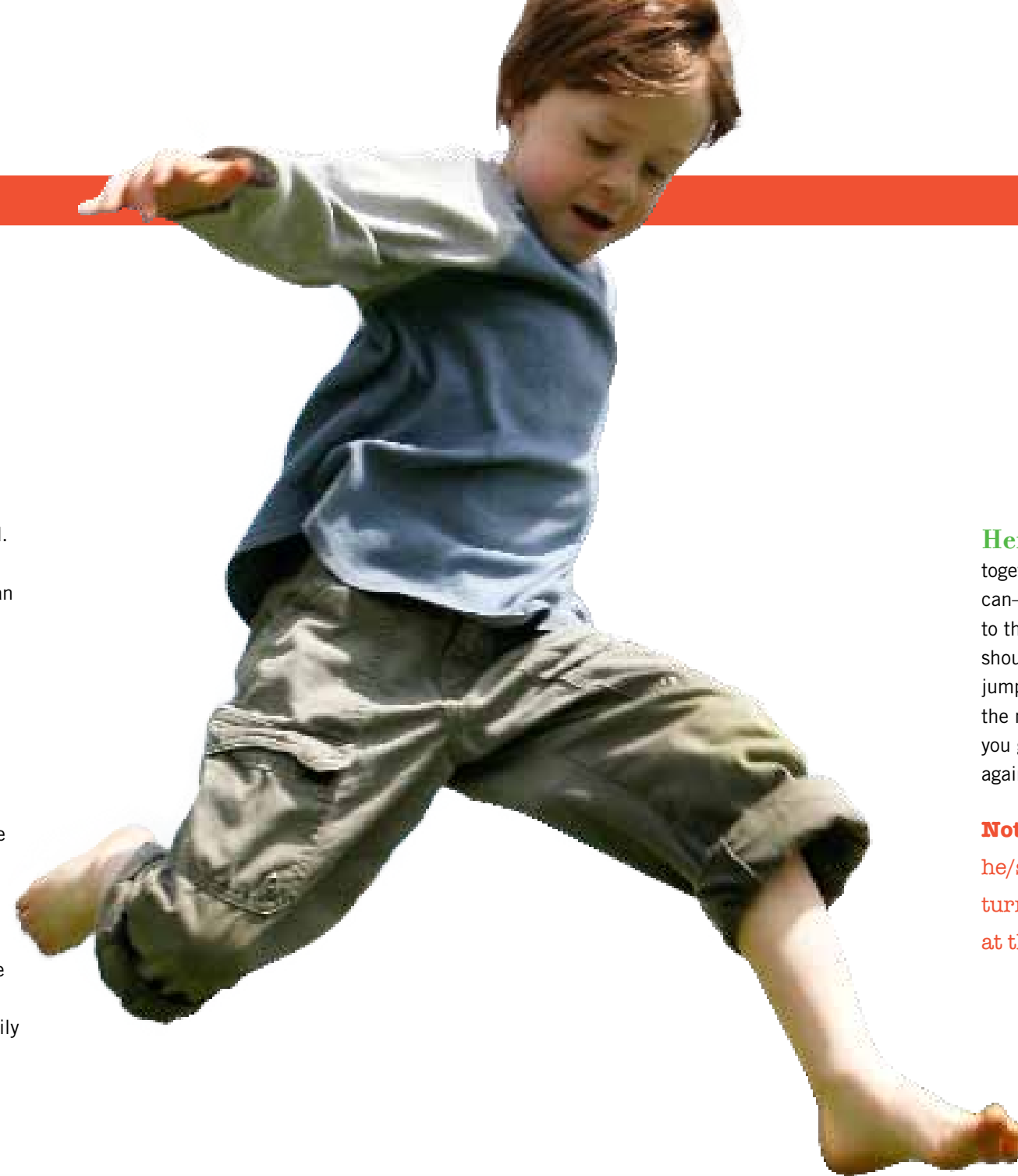
The Family Olympics

In this activity, the family participates in athletic games that are age-appropriate for each child. Games can include a relay race, a competition to see who can throw or kick a ball the farthest, and an egg race where each person has to get from the starting line to the finish line carrying an egg on a spoon—without dropping the egg!

There can be indoor games and outdoor games. In the winter, you can have a sledding race or a competition to see who can build the funniest looking snowman. Of course, who wins individual events isn't as important as the fact that everyone is being active and trying their best. Grown-ups can give all kinds of awards: first-place ribbons, prizes for best effort, and an award for good sportsmanship.

If someone in the family is unable to do a physical event, you can have other competitions, like best joke, funniest face, or a good old-fashioned staring contest, where two people stare into each other's eyes to see who can go the longest without laughing.

Here's one example of an Olympic event you can do: the progressive long jump. Each family takes turns performing a standing long jump—you stand on a line and jump forward, and a line is drawn where your heels land—with each family member starting where the previous family member landed. In this way, you move forward progressively, with each person helping the family reach the finish line in as few jumps as possible.



Here's what you do: One family member stands at the starting line, with both feet together. The tips of both feet must be behind the line. The person jumps as far as he or she can—but don't fall backwards. The distance is marked at the part of the body that is closest to the starting line, so try to either land squarely on your feet, or fall forward. Ideally, the jumps should be marked at the jumper's heels—that becomes the new starting line for the next jumper. Once the first jumper's jump has been marked, the next family member stands behind the new line and jumps. The next family member starts at the previous jumper's mark, and you go on and on until you've reached the finish line. Count how many jumps it took, then try again another day to see if you can do better!

Note: If a family member is too young, old, or physically challenged to jump, he/she can still participate. Simply add the person's height at that person's turn, or the length of a person's wheelchair. Everyone helps the family win at this game.



Healthy Families

To do this activity, you will need:

- * **Something to mark the starting line, finish line, and the individual jumps, like sidewalk chalk or small sticks**
- * **Space in which to jump**





2 Eat Smart and Stay Active

It's a fact: to be healthy you need to make good food choices and lead an active life. Being a couch potato and eating junk food is a recipe for a health disaster. Candy and junk food are full of “empty calories” that don't give you the vitamins and protein you need to be healthy and your kids need for their growth and development.

The USDA Food Pyramid was designed to promote healthy nutrition in children over two years of age and is a good general guide to daily food choices. When making meal and snack choices, consult the Pyramid to make sure your kids are getting most of their nutrition from the most nutritious sources. www.mypyramid.gov



According to the National Association for Sports and Physical Education (NASPE), everyday preschoolers should:

- * Accumulate at least 60 minutes of physical activity that's structured (meaning it's organized by you or another adult)
- * Engage in at least one hour—and up to several hours—of free play
- * Not be inactive for more than one hour at a time, unless they are sleeping

Furthermore, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the 1993 International Consensus Conference on Physical Activity Guidelines for Adolescents agreed that:

- * All adolescents should be physically active daily, or nearly every day, as part of play, games, sports, work, transportation, recreation, physical education, or planned exercise in the context of family, school, and community activities
- * Adolescents should engage in three or more sessions per week of activities that last 20 minutes or more at a time and that require moderate to vigorous levels of exertion

Whatever the age of the child, having the grown-ups be good, active role models is very important. By the way, adults need at least 30 minutes of exercise a day, too! The family that plays together grows up healthy together.





3

Fabulous Family Fruit Kebabs and Delicious Dipping Sauce



Everybody loves dessert, but so many desserts are full of stuff your family's bodies don't need. An occasional treat is nice (especially if it's "Ice Cream in a Bag" on page 20), but if you really want something sweet and refreshing, your best bet is always fresh fruit. For some people, fresh fruit doesn't sound as exciting as a cake or an ice cream cone. But with this activity, you'll experiment and create your very own amazing dessert that tastes just as good as the sugar-filled stuff... and everyone will be able to eat as much of it as they want, again and again.

No cooking is required, but cutting and a blender are, so the grown-ups can do those activities while the kids create the skewers in whatever patterns they like. Sweet, delicious, and nutritious, this recipe is sure to become a family favorite!

Here's what you do: Make your own recipe for dipping sauce by trying out different amounts of honey, cinnamon, bananas, and yogurt. Combine the ingredients in the blender until smooth. Pour into a small bowl. Carefully thread pieces of fruit on skewers, and lay them on a plate. Grab a skewer, dip the fruit in the dipping sauce, and enjoy! After trying out a recipe, what would you change? Would you use more or less honey? How about the cinnamon? Or the bananas? What other ingredients might you try? Experiment a few times until you have your family's very own top secret (and delicious!) recipe. Keep notes on how much of each ingredient you used so that you can make your favorite dipping sauce again.

To make this recipe,
you will need:

For the Kebabs

- * **Start with a large bowl of fruit—any combination of berries, grapes, and larger fruit like melons, apples, pears, or citrus fruits cut into bite-sized chunks**
- * **Skewers, chopsticks, or toothpicks**

**For the Dipping Sauce,
here are some ingredients
you might try:**

- * **Low-fat yogurt, plain or fruit flavored**
- * **Ripe bananas**
- * **Honey**
- * **Ground cinnamon**
- * **Blender**



4

Dance, Dance, Dance

Everywhere in the world, people dance—as an art form, as part of celebrations and rituals, as a way to communicate, and for fun and exercise. Professional dancers use their bodies to portray characters and tell stories, similar to what an actor does—but without words. The design and execution of the dance is called choreography. In this activity, family members can make up their own dances while teaching each other dances they know.

Chances are, the members of your family know some dances that the children have never seen before, from the Charleston to the Tango to the Hustle and the Macarena. And the kids may just know some of the "crazy" dances their parents have seen on television. This is a great opportunity for family members to dance in each other's shoes for a while!

First, ask the kids to show what dances they know. Try to learn their steps, or, if they are just making up their own dance, try to join in. Encourage them to keep dancing—it's great exercise and a fun, safe way for them to get their energy out. Before they get too tired, stop and demonstrate some dances you know, maybe from your own childhood. When you're done dancing, you might want to talk about how dancing and music go hand-in-hand. Would people ever dance really fast and crazy to slow, serious music? How about fast, upbeat music? What kind of dancing does that music make you want to do?

Finally, get the family together to make up a brand new dance that no one has ever danced before. Select some favorite music and choreograph a dance to go with it. You might write out the moves and practice it until everyone knows how to do it. Think about arm and hand movements, as well as where you put your feet. Incorporate jumping, spinning, clapping, and other ways to move your body. And remember, dancing is a way to tell a story, so think about what your movements might mean to someone watching. Above all, have fun!



To do this activity,
you will need:

- * **Music**
- * **Space to dance**





5 Travel Bingo

In this activity, you get out and go! You can walk around your neighborhood, take a hike in the woods, stroll along a shoreline, explore a local park, or just stop off in a new town and look around. Moving around in the fresh air is one of the healthiest things you can do and it's so much more fun when you can do it together as a family. What makes this activity even more interesting is that each member will predict what kinds of things you'll all see while you're out in the form of a "bingo" card that you fill out on your walk. The first one to fill their card wins—but everyone wins when you share this experience together.

Here's what you do: Before you head out on your adventure, create grids on everyone's sheet of paper, and have everyone fill the boxes of the grid with the many things they think they'll see on your walk. It could be a tree, a raccoon, a boulder, a Stop sign, a blue jay, a baby stroller, an ice cream truck, a Christmas tree, a motorcycle, a kayak, a swing set... whatever anyone thinks they'll see on the walk, write it down in a square. Encourage your kids to use words or drawings. Then, go out on your adventure and make sure everyone keeps track of what they see and what's on their bingo card. The first person to find all of their objects in one of their rows or columns is the winner. After that, see if anyone can find every item on their card!



If you thought you'd see a bird and you do, check it off—but also keep count of how many birds you see, what colors they are, whether they're in the air, on a telephone wire, in a tree, or on the ground. How many birds or others animals do you think you'll see? Try to be specific with your choices. Instead of just writing "car," for example, write down "red car" or "red VW Beetle." This game is also fun on long road trips, so next time you're driving somewhere, pack the Travel Bingo, too!

To do this activity, you will need:

- * **A destination**
- * **1 sheet of paper for each person, with a 4x4 grid of squares drawn on it (this provides space for 16 items to see)**
- * **Pen or pencil**





Conclusion: Ready, Set, GO!

The activities in *Boston Children's Museum: Home Edition* were designed and selected to bring families closer together, stimulate your thinking, and broaden your awareness of the world around us and how we can best take care of ourselves. With this book, you have a resource that can guide you in being creative, curious, global, green, and healthy.

The idea of this book was not to replicate the experiences of the actual Boston Children's Museum, but to draw inspiration from the museum's mission and its remarkable ability to blend fun and learning in each memorable visit. Just as the museum offers wonderful activities all four seasons, on days that are rainy or sunny, snowy, or windy, whether your child is a toddler or a student, no matter your background or abilities, this book will hopefully be a year-round companion you turn to whenever the family is together and ready for an adventure.

As you do these activities, let the kids take the lead, following what interests them and experimenting with each activity. Nurture their curiosity and help them stretch their imaginations. And talk, talk, talk! Ask follow-up questions to see what family members think about what they observed and did. This will build language skills and self-confidence, help them learn more, and enable them to have great fun as well.

You can learn more about the Boston Children's Museum at <http://www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org>. We look forward to seeing you there and hope that you enjoy this book for years to come.



Curiosity and imagination at play.

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