



Family and Consumer Sciences

Family Ties

Summer Activities

SAFE WATER PLAY

Children of all ages enjoy playing in water. If you have a swimming pool in your yard, it is absolutely necessary that adults supervise children in or near the pool. Even small wading pools can be dangerous for small children.

A wading pool with only a small amount of water in it is potentially dangerous. It takes only a few minutes and less than an inch of water for a young child to drown, given the right circumstances.

Small pools and wading pools should always be emptied when not in use.

Larger pools (in-ground and above-ground) should be fenced in and the gate kept locked when the pool is not in use.

Beware of young children playing in buckets of water without adult supervision. It is easy for children to fall into a bucket and drown.

Children can have fun with water play, but adults must be willing to spend the time to insure the safety of children playing in or near water.



WET AND WILD ACTIVITIES

"PAINTING"

Give each child a small bucket or can with water in it and an old paintbrush. Children enjoy "painting" the house, steps, garage, fence, sidewalk, etc. using their own bucket and brush.

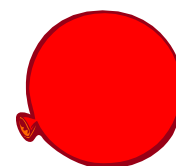


GARDEN SPRINKLER

Instead of playing in a pool, attach the garden hose to a sprinkler. Turn on the water and listen to the squeals of delight as the children run through the spray of water.

BALLOON CATCH

Fill small balloons with water, and use them to play a game of catch with the children.



WATER PLAY ACCESSORIES

Simple household items can make water play a lot of fun. See if you have any of these items for the children to play with:

muffin tins, sieve, measuring spoons, funnels, measuring cups, strainer, empty plastic bottles, sponges, empty squeeze bottles, corks, etc.

WET SAND

Wet some sand in a sandbox. Talk about the differences between the wet and dry sand. Have the children dig rivers, streams, and lakes in the sand, and fill them with water.



PING PONG BOATS

Use clean, empty margarine tubs for boats. Float the boats in a wading pool or dishpan. Have each child take turns trying to toss ping-pong balls into the boats.

SAILBOAT

Need:

clean styrofoam meat tray
crayons
construction paper
stapler
pipe cleaner

To Do:

Have each child use crayons to decorate the styrofoam meat tray. Stick the pipe cleaner through the center of the tray. Secure it by bending the end on the underside of the styrofoam tray. Cut a small diamond shape out of the construction paper. Fold the diamond in half to make a sail. Place the pipe cleaner in the fold of the sail and staple to hold it in place. Take the sailboat outside for a voyage in a wading pool or dishpan.

SINK OR FLOAT

Have each child gather a number of items from around the house (such as a paper clip, sponge, cork, plastic toys, marble, etc.). Take them outside to a wading pool, dishpan, or bucket of water to see which items sink or float.

Try some experiments with the children. Can you make something that sinks, float? Place a sinking object on a floating object. For example, place a marble on a sponge. What object holds the most things and still floats?

BUBBLE BLOWING

Blowing bubbles is a fun outdoor activity for all ages. Children who are 2 -1/2 years old and older can learn to blow bubbles if you show them how.



An easy bubble solution can be made from:

1/2 cup hand dishwashing liquid
5 cups water

A tiny bit of cooking oil added to the soap and water mixture will make the bubbles tough enough to float in the air without breaking easily.

You can buy bubble wands and pipes at a store or try any of these:

plastic berry basket bottoms (dip in bubble solution and wave in the air)

thread spools (dip one end in bubble solution and blow through opposite end)

plastic drinking straw (dip one end in bubble solution and blow through opposite end)

BOBBER

Need:

plastic container with tight fitting lid (such as a pill bottle)
piece of string (approx. 12" long)
glue

To Do:

Remove the lid from the plastic container. Place the end of the string inside the container. Glue the container's lid in place. Let glue dry.

Take the bobber to a wading pool, dishpan, or bucket of water. Place the bobber in the water. Pull the bobber under the water with the string. Let go of the string and watch the bobber BOB!

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Fun and Free Activities for Preschoolers



The long, lazy days of summer are almost here! You may be wondering of ways to keep your young children entertained, occupied and learning. There are lots of activities from which to choose, such as theme parks, the zoo, movies, etc., but some of these may cost more than your spending plan allows. Don't despair; there are lots of ways to beat those summertime blues without spending a dime!

According the Thrive by Five curriculum sponsored by the Credit Union National Association, today's children need to be reminded of fun activities that are free. Ideas of things you can do include playing on a swing, coloring, painting, singing, dressing up, reading, walking the dog, picking flowers, playing a board game or cards, drawing with chalk on the sidewalk or driveway, and making an "obstacle course" with pillows and soft furniture. My son enjoyed making a "fort" by pulling pillows and small furniture together and covering them with an old sheet. You and your child may think of other "free fun" activities.



One activity that you can do with your preschooler is to create a "Fun for Free Box".

To make this box you will need (1) plain paper or construction paper, (2) pencils, pens, crayons, or markers, and (3) a small empty box, such as a shoebox. Together, make a list of fun things to do that won't cost any money. Cut a large piece of paper into squares. On one side of one square, write the name of an activity from your list. On the other side of the square, help your child draw the activity. Put each finished note in the box. Keep the activity notes in the box. Add a note with a picture each time your child learns of a new way to have free fun.

As you make the fun box with your child, discuss with him/her that many fun things do not cost money. These free activities can be fun to do alone or with friends and family. Point out, too, that some things that seem free, such as food in the refrigerator or pantry, really cost money. My son and niece used to like "experimenting" with pantry items, such as food coloring. While not nearly as expensive as going to the amusement park, it was not free! Remind you child, too, that love, hugs, and friendship are all free and feel good to give and receive.



Of course, there are some free activities to do outside the home, such as going to the library, the park/playground, and taking a nature walk. The local newspaper also lists special free events.

Save Your Child's Life. . .

Be Aware, Be Informed



There is a game children are playing which takes between 500-1,000 children (typically 9-16 years old) lives every year. The game is called the "Choking Game" and it can be deadly. Adolescents are attracted to this activity because they believe it to be safe, drug-free high.

What is the Choking Game?

The Choking Game achieves a brief high or euphoric state by stopping the flow of oxygen containing blood to the brain. Sometimes children choke each other until the person being choked passes out. The pressure on the arteries is then released and blood flow to the brain resumes causing a "rush" as consciousness returns. There are variations of this activity which involve hyper-ventilating until the participant loses consciousness. There is a lesser chance of death but it is still not safe. Playing this game in any form causes the permanent and cumulative death of large numbers of brain cells. The variation in blood pressure may also cause strokes, seizures, and retinal damage.

The danger becomes even greater when a ligature is used and the activity is performed by a lone child. If the child loses consciousness and there is no one there to IMMEDIATELY release the pressure, he is unable to help himself. The child will suffer brain damage and death certainly after three minutes. Some of those who have died were alone for as little as 15 minutes before someone found them and it was already too late. This activity can claim a child's life the first time it is played.

The most popular lately, is the **Choking game**, **Passout game**, **Space Monkey** and **Black out**. This game is dangerous in groups, but is becoming even *deadlier when played alone*.

How Long Has This Been going On?

This activity has been going on for generations. In almost any group of adults, one can find someone who played this game in some form or another when they were children. The modification that has made it even more dangerous is the use of ligatures and the practice of doing it alone. Make no mistake. It is NEVER safe, but most of the children who get into trouble are alone.

Why Do Kids Do This?

Some do it for the high which can become addictive. Others do it because it's "cool" and risky. Most of the kids who have died from this were not children in trouble. Most were well liked, active, intelligent, stable children who wanted nothing to do with drugs or alcohol. This was an activity they felt was safe. Children have no clue about the physiological principles involved and need to be told by the adults in their lives how dangerous this is. Also, most children have no concept of their own mortality. They truly believe nothing can hurt them.

If I think My child may be doing this, what can I Do?

Supervise the child very closely. Dispose of items that could be employed for this purpose. Warn your child about this activity. They often don't know that this activity can kill them or leave them brain damaged. Alert school officials so that they can monitor your child. Often other students may also be participating. Consider professional counseling and support for your child and your family. Also, consider alerting your child's friends parents.

What Can I Do to Help Stop This?

Talk to the children in your life, parents and everyone you know who works with children. Make sure they understand why it is so dangerous to participate in this activity. I have a hard time calling this a game. But that's what the kids call it. Even if they survive, people who participate are killing brain cells each time they do this. The damage done is permanent and cumulative. In addition, a child choking another child who is injured or dies, may be indicted and prosecuted for his part in the death or injury. Insist that the school districts in your area provide education about this activity as a part of the risky behavior curriculum (drugs and alcohol, etc.). Doing so insures that all children are warned of the

dangers of this activity. This should start as early as elementary school as older children seem to pass this activity to younger ones.

The Single Best Weapon Against This Activity is Information:

Most children have no clue how dangerous this activity is. Most parents have no clue that kids are doing this until someone in their lives dies or is damaged by it. Schools seem oblivious to it though it has been reported numerous times that this activity often takes place at school. Medical examiners and police continue to classify these deaths as suicide by hanging when there is no evidence that the child intended to take his life. The only way to stop the deaths from this activity is to publicize, especially in the schools, the danger of this activity as we do with the use of drugs and alcohol

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More Stats of The Choking Game

In a 2006 poll of 500 6th-12th graders:

53% of the boys admitted playing "The Choking Game".

Of those who admitted playing:

86% admitted to playing 2x/week

64% admitted to playing alone

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75% of children know about the game - these children were NOT aware of the risks.

25% of the parents knew about the game and it's risk.

87% of fatal cases involved a long participant

70% of Accidental Asphyxia cases occurred in the child's bedroom.

In 60% of cases, parents or other caregivers were home at the time.

Reference:

<http://www.chokinggameinformation.com/>
<http://stop-the-choking-game.com>

Choking Game Warning Signs

- T** Any suspicious mark on the side of the neck, sometimes hidden by means of a turtleneck, a scarf or a permanently turned- up collar.
- T** Changes in personality, such as overly aggressive or agitated.
- T** Any kind of strap, a rope or a belt lying about near the child without any reason - questions about such objects are often eluded.
- T** Headaches, sometimes excruciatingly bad ones, loss of concentration, a flushed face.
- T** Bloodshot eyes or any other noticeable signs of stress on the eyes.
- T** A thud in the bedroom or against a wall - meaning a fall in cases of solitary practices.
- T** Any questions about the effects, sensations or dangers of stragulation.

The Choking Game aliases:

- , Blackout
- , Fainting Game
- , Space monkey
- , Dream Game
- , Suffocation Roulette,
- , Pass-out Game
- , Flat liner
- , California choke
- , Space Cowboy
- , Airplaning
- , Purple Dragon
- , and many more

Reference:

<http://stop-the-choking-game.com>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choking_game

Celebrating Fathers



Father's Day, the third Sunday in June, has been an official holiday since 1966, but it has been celebrated for many years prior to its becoming official. Though we recognize the importance of fathers on that special day each year, society has placed fathers in a secondary role when it comes to parenting. Researchers are beginning to understand that fathers have a very significant role in parenting, and that the absence of fathers in children's lives is associated with poor outcomes for children.

Here are some statistics about children and their fathers that are provided by the National Fatherhood Initiative:

- Children raised in homes without fathers are five times as likely to live in poverty as children in two-parent families.
- Unmarried mothers are less likely than married mothers to obtain prenatal care and are more likely to have low birth-weight babies.
- In a study of nearly 3,000 mothers, unmarried mothers were twice as likely as married mothers to have experienced depression in the previous year. They also reported less access to social supports.
- Children who are raised in homes without fathers have a significantly higher chance of being incarcerated than those who live in two-parent families.
- In a study of nearly 14,000 women in prison, researchers found that more than half grew up without their fathers.
- Being raised by a single mother raises the risk of teen pregnancy, marrying with less than a high school degree, and forming a marriage where both partners have less than a high school degree.
- Children from single-parent families overall have a 120% greater risk of physical and sexual abuse when compared with children who live with both biological parents.
- When children are close to their fathers, they are less likely to be involved with alcohol, cigarettes, and hard drugs. Children in two-parent homes are more likely to report being close to their fathers than are children in single-parent families.
- Father's, not mother's, total and percentage of body fat is the best predictor of changes in daughter's total and percentage body fat. Obese children are more likely to live in father-absent homes than are non-obese children.
- Father involvement in schools is associated with a higher likelihood of students getting grades of mostly A's. This is true for children living with their father and mother, with mother and stepfather, or with their father heading a single-parent household.
- Children in single-parent families spend less time engaged in activities with both their fathers and their mothers than do children in two-parent families.

This Father's Day, remember that fathers are not secondary parents. They are key players in their children's physical, mental, social, and emotional development. Encourage the fathers you know by recognizing their importance to their children. Though fathers and mothers parent in different ways, the contributions of both are critical to healthy child development.

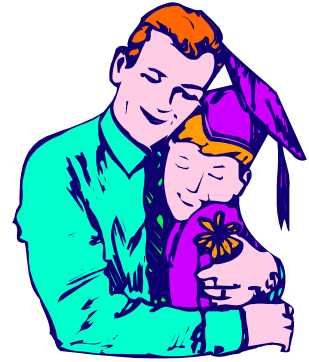
For more information and resources about fathers, check out the National Fatherhood Initiative Website at <http://www.fatherhood.org> . Also, check out the fathering resources at CYFERNet at http://cyfernet.ces.ncsu.edu/cyfres/browse_3.php.

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Are You a Helicopter Parent?

The transition from high school student to college student can be a challenge for young adults. Sometimes, it can be even more difficult for the parents, especially when parents are over-involved with their children.

Experts have coined a new term for these over-involved parents—“helicopter parents.” These parents hover constantly around their children, ready at any moment to swoop in and rescue them from the difficulties in life. As you prepare to send your young adult off to college, you may need to consider whether you have fallen into the “helicopter parent” trap.



Here are some of the signs that you may be a helicopter parent:

- **You talk with your child multiple times each day** via cell phone, instant messaging, e-mail, etc. Though being close is a good thing, if you call every morning to wake your child or your child calls you about every little problem, he or she is not learning to handle problems independently.
- **You contact teachers, administrators, or others to intervene on your child's behalf.** Your child cannot learn the skills to make wise decisions or to work with others if you are constantly intervening.
- **You make schooling decisions for your child.** If you choose or schedule your child's classes, select his or her major, or make decisions about his or her future career, you may be living your life through your child. If you do major editing or write papers for your child, you are not teaching him or her to think independently. Offering advice is okay, but you should leave the final decisions to your child.
- **You feel like a failure if your child makes a bad grade or a poor decision.** This means your own self-worth is measured in your child. This is a huge burden for your child to bear.

If you think you might be a helicopter parent, here are some things you can do to start to let go:

- **Instead of calling your child, let your child call you.** Listen sympathetically to problems he or she may share. However, don't take on those problems yourself. For example, if your child has a flat tire, suggest he or she look for a nearby tire shop in the phone book. Avoid the temptation to make the call yourself, and don't drive to the campus to change the tire.
- **Stay out of your child's individual conflicts.** Encourage your child to speak for him or herself.
- **Let your child take responsibility for personal finances.** You may offer advice, as would a coach, but let your child experience the struggles of dealing with a budget and balancing a checkbook.
- **Be helpful, not hovering.** There are times when you will need to step in—your child has had a traumatic experience or you see disturbing changes in physical health, personality, or behaviors. However, in most instances, it is best to let your child learn by doing.
- **Find something that you enjoy doing.** Get involved in a community program, learn a new skill, or take a class yourself. You might be surprised at how your anxiety about your child will decrease as you develop other interests.

For more information on this topic, conduct an Internet search using the term “Helicopter Parents.”

Keep Reading Through the Summer



Keep your children reading throughout the summer with these handy timesaving tips. Keep their brains burning and their imagination's soaring.

Tip 1: Be a reading role model.

Don't just tell your child to read - let him see you reading! This will encourage him to read for himself or have you read to him.

Tip 2: Get your child a magazine subscription to a hobby that she loves (even comic books).

When a child receives a magazine in the mail with her name on the address label, this turns an ordinary magazine into something special. If the magazine is about something your child loves (soccer, baseball, sports, Superman, Pokemon, etc.) she is excited about reading it and usually can't wait.

Tip 3: If your child sees a movie that he really likes, go to the bookstore and find a book about it.

Every bookstore carries movie tie-ins. These are books that are written based on a children's movie. Usually the movie is just released or an old favorite. Every Disney movie has book tie-ins. There are also Scooby-Doo books, Star Wars (old and new), Rugrats, and many other movie books.

Tip 4: Entice your child with a riddle or joke book.

Some children will adamantly refuse to show any interest in books regardless of what the book is about. Find a joke or riddle book and have it handy in the car. When driving to errands, pull the book out and ask your child to ask you some riddles or tell you some jokes. This will get him going.

Tip 5: Read recipes or directions on a project.

Pull out some cookbooks or go to the craft store and buy a project to build together. Have your child read the recipe to bake the food or read the directions to build the project. If she can't read the recipe or directions (or won't read them in some cases), then the food or project doesn't get completed.

Tip 6: Household reading

Have everyone in the house read or look at a book or magazine for a short period of time at least once a day. If schedules don't permit this, try to make this a regular practice at least four times a week.

Tip 7: Don't use reading as a punishment.

Whatever you do as a parent, don't use reading as a punishment. Make sure that reading is considered a pleasure. Reading is FUN. Don't say, "Go to your room and read! No more TV!" Also, don't say, "since you misbehaved you can't read tonight".

Tip 8: Ask your child to help you find out about something you need to know, like a vacation site or consumer information.

If a child has a vital interest in finding out where he's going for vacation (and what there is to do there), he will become private investigators in finding information. Find something that you're going to buy, go visit, thinking of doing this summer and have your child find information about it.

Tip 9: Write a book together.

During the summer, write a book together with your child. Have your child write a sentence or two at the end of each day. By the end of the summer, the book will be finished. Use a spiral bound notebook, or separate pages to put together when the book is finished. At the end of the summer, present the book to the whole family and read it together.

Tip 10: Read everywhere

Everywhere you go, read aloud with your child. In the grocery store, read signs. Traveling on long trips or short ones, read road signs, magazines, newspaper stories - all sorts of things.

To keep your children reading throughout the summer, keep print materials scattered all over the house. Suggest your child read something aloud to you while you fix dinner or fold clothes. Never force him to read. Visit the library, listen to storytellers, let him see you reading, read aloud funny things to them. Try to keep him interested in reading and he will retain more knowledge through the summer. If you make something fun, children will want to do it more and more. Make reading fun. Discover for yourself the joy of reading a good book. Find the time!

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