

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

PACKET 9





THOUGHT of the WEEK



From Holly Delgado, Early Childhood Specialist at HighScope Educational Research Foundation

"Why do you have to touch everything?" "Please stop licking that!" "Take your fingers out of your nose!" "No! Don't eat that!"

Sound familiar? If so, you are not alone. You are the parent of a young child. But of course, these words resonate with us today on a much different level than they did two months ago...

Across the nation, businesses, parks, restaurants, and other public spaces are slowly beginning to reopen after weeks of closure. However, in spite of this nascent return to normalcy, the threat of COVID-19 has not been fully eliminated yet. People continue to be diagnosed daily and, although numbers have gone down in some places, many scientists and healthcare professionals predict a second wave of the virus in our future. Thus, in order to remain safe, the Center for Disease Control, state governments, and businesses at the local level have begun to put guidelines into place in order to ensure the health and safety of both employees and customers. The use of face masks, social distancing, and more consistent hand washing are all preventative techniques being implemented to reduce viral spread.

As parents, we have a dual responsibility of not only ensuring our own safety, but also that of our children. Young children are naturally curious and learn through hands-on exploration of the world around them. So, this begs the question - how do we encourage our children to avoid germs when they are innately sensory learners? How do we prevent them from having contact with the virus when they want to touch and taste everything? How do we help our children adapt to the new unfamiliar and sometimes scary safety guidelines?

Although we often think about young children as carefree and innocent, we know children can internalize the stress they see exhibited by the adults in their lives. Framing conversations about Coronavirus around the steps you are taking to remain safe, as opposed to how the virus may be harmful, can be very reassuring and help your children feel like they have some control over their own health--and yours! Here are some tips for doing this:

- **Be honest and open in conversations.** Answer questions your children might have about the virus in a positive and reassuring manner. If you don't know how to respond to a particular question, let them know you will find out and follow up with them later. Remind them that although it may be scary, your job is to protect them and keep them safe; and, one of the ways you are doing this is by following guidelines our scientists, doctors, and nurses have given us.
- **Encourage hand washing.** It is difficult to encourage children to keep their hands away from their face and mouth. Establish hand washing routines whenever you return home from public spaces, after the using restroom, after sneezing or coughing, before eating, and any other time you feel it is necessary. Teach your children to scrub soap on all parts of their hands and between their fingers. Singing songs while scrubbing will help children remain engaged in hand washing for 20-30 seconds--a period of time long enough to eliminate the majority of germs per the CDC.
- **Wear masks in public spaces.** Face masks that cover your nose and mouth are recommended for all people over the age of two. However, adjusting to the feeling of wearing a mask can be difficult for young children.
 - Practice wearing a mask in your house before you head into public.
 - Talk with your children about how it feels around their ears and that it might be warm to wear. Assure them this is normal and they will still be able to breathe.
 - Help your child get used to the idea that other people will also be wearing masks by making some for stuffed animals or dolls in your home to wear.
 - Use a simple story to explain the importance of the masks. Use the story to remind your children that the other people wearing masks are doing their part to keep you safe, too, and that we don't need to be scared or anxious when we see people wearing masks in public.
- **Practice social distancing.** The distance of six feet may be too abstract for young children to understand. Instead, let them know that in order to stay safe, they should remain about a couch, car, or bathtub length away from people not in their own family. Let children know they can still smile, wave, and say hello to others who don't live in the same house as them, but, to stay safe, they need to do so from a distance.

Below, you will find additional resources that may be helpful in talking with children about COVID-19. Good luck and stay safe!

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html

www.services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/masks-and-children-during-covid-19/

www.challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/why-cant-i-go-to-school_Story.pdf

www.paautism.org/resource/wearing-mask-social-story/

INFANTS



Art, Music and Movement: **Water droplet art**

We recommend doing this activity outside on a picnic blanket on some grass, but it can be done inside, as well! All you will need is a couple of pieces of paper (can be any color), a crafting paint brush, and a cup of water. This is great for an infant that can sit up. Place the infant on the spread-out picnic blanket, and on the grass directly in front of them, place 1-2 pieces of paper side by side. Firmly plant the cup with an inch or more of water inside, and hand your baby the paint brush. You can show them how they can dip the paintbrush in the water and splash it, or brush it onto the paper. This is a great way to provide your baby with a way to practice holding a paintbrush and to watch with wonder as the water makes different markings on the paper. This is great for a no-mess activity!

Children experience:

- “Painting” with water
- Splashing water droplets onto paper
- Creating marks and lines with water
- Watching the water move in different directions



Communication, Language, and Literacy: **Describe the process**

Children experience:

- Communication from a trusted adult
- Interaction with you
- Early listening and communication skills

The practice of describing a process can be easily built into any part of your day. As normal routines take place, like changing your infant’s clothes when they wake up or after a bath, try slowing down and taking some time to describe to your baby what you are doing. For example, as you are changing your baby’s clothes, you might say, “I am unbuttoning your buttons, that’s one snap, two snap, three snap, that’s all the snaps!” Even though your baby cannot talk yet, they are hearing and processing the sounds of words, and their brain is stimulated by this type of communication from you!



Early Math and Discovery: **Ice, ice baby**

This activity is easy to set up, but will need to be prepped one day in advance. Fill up different vessels with water and freeze overnight. A vessel could be a muffin tin, plastic cup(s), and a tray or cookie sheet for a long thin layer of ice. You can also use food coloring to make colored ice! For safety, make sure to use containers that will create ice sculptures that are larger than what your baby can fit in their mouth and can be used for exploration through touch.

Children experience:

- A chilly sensory experience
- A slippery, geometric play area
- Exploring the feeling of ice & the cold

The next day, when your ice is ready, place the cookie sheet or shallow tray of ice on a

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surface where your infant can reach and play. Empty the ice from the cups and place them on top of the sheet of ice. You can take the ice out of the muffin tins, or leave it in place for the baby to touch or place items on top of. If you have toy animals around the house, this can be a fun icy environment for your infant to play with them in! This is another activity that is great for setting up outside on a picnic blanket or on the grass and is also great for siblings in the house, too!



Myself and Others: **Making faces**

Children experience:

- Demonstration of emotions
- Labeling emotions

Demonstrate emotions in a silly way! This is an interaction that will allow for your infant to see facial expressions associated with different emotions. Using paper plates or paper, draw two representations of basic emotions: happy and sad. Hold up one representation at a time for your baby to see. As you hold up each picture, imitate the expression of each emotion. For example, for “sad,” act out some pouting or pretend crying. Being silly right after this will assure your baby that you are not actually sad. Then hold up the “happy”

picture and show them a big smile and a laugh and say “happy!” Depending on how your baby responds to this activity, you can add a wider range of emotions to include anger and fear, as well. You may elicit roars of laughter from your baby as they watch you pretend to act out different emotional expressions!



Physical Development and Healthy Habits: **Push n’ pull**

As your baby sits on the floor, place two baskets (right side-up) on each side of them. If you have a wired basket that your baby can see the balls in, those work great for this! You can also use two shoe-boxes for this activity or something shaped similarly. Place one or two ball-pit balls or tennis balls in each basket. Watch your baby explore this activity. You can even start by showing them as you push and pull the basket, the ball will move. Any activity in which your baby can practice pushing and pulling slightly larger toys like this is wonderful for their strength building!

Children experience:

- Pushing and pull baskets
- Moving the balls inside the baskets

TODDLERS



Art, Music and Movement: **Tubular tree painting**

For this activity, you will need a toilet paper or paper towel tube and some different colored non-toxic paints. To make this a Spring themed activity, you can put out light green paint or pink paint for the blooms on the trees.

Draw a basic trunk shape and branches of a tree on a piece of paper, leaving enough room around the top half of the paper for the leaves to be painted. Set the piece of paper on a tray or paint-proof surface. On the same surface, display the paints in shallow bowls. Then squish the tubes slightly. If you have one paper tube on hand, you can cut it into halves or thirds to provide multiple utensils for painting.

Once the area is ready, show your toddler how to dip one end of the paper towel tube into the paint, and then press it on the paper like a stamp. You can guide them to paint stamp the leaves onto the tree. If they happen to create more than leaves, that's wonderful, too! Hang the painting to dry once they are finished!

Children experience:

- Painting using paper tubes
- Stamping the tubes
- Shape imprints
- Various colors and textures of paint



Communication, Language, and Literacy: **Ring, ring!**

Children experience:

- Communication via a DIY telephone
- Exploration of different sounds travelling in different ways
- A fun way to learn about communication via a telephone

Create your own telephones using paper cups and yarn! This is a classic activity that can be enjoyed together while helping to build early communication skills for your little one. For this activity, you will need two paper cups, a piece of yarn at least three feet in length, a toothpick or sharpened pencil, and a scissor.

1. Take the paper cups, and in the bottom of each one, poke a hole in the middle using your toothpick or sharpened pencil.
2. Cut the yarn to be at least three feet in length and lace it through the holes in the bottom of each cup, tying a loop with a knot so that the yarn does not slip through.
3. Give one cup to your toddler to hold, and you can hold the other. Spread out a little bit, and make sure the yarn doesn't touch anything!
4. Then take turns with your little one! While one of you talks into a cup on one end of the yarn, the other can hold the cup to their ear. You can say "Ring, ring! Pick up the phone!" to your toddler, and see what they say back to you!



Early Math and Discovery: **Ramps!**

Ramps are a fantastic, open-ended toy, great for any age group! If your toddler has siblings, this can also be fun for them. You can get as creative as you want with this dynamic activity, and add in other materials based on what you have available to you in your

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home. For this example, we will provide steps for creating a basic ramp. All you need is a long piece of cardboard, some tape, and some objects to roll down the ramp like balls and toy cars!

Utilizing cardboard from a large box is a great option for creating a ramp for your toddler. You can also tape two pieces of cardboard together to increase the length of the ramp. Securely tape one end of the cardboard ramp to a chair, couch or other elevated object that your child will be able to reach the top of. You can provide them with a basket of one or more toys that can roll (and even some that cannot roll, so they can explore that possibility, as well!) as they stand at the top of the ramp. Sit at the bottom of the ramp and roll or pass the toys back to them, or place a basket at the bottom to catch the toys. This is a great way for toddlers to explore early gravity and momentum through rolling, and even early development of mathematical understanding. Consider leaving the ramp as a permanent fixture in your home for your toddler to visit time and time again!

Children experience:

- Early exploration of gravity and momentum



Myself and Others: **Self portrait drawing**

Children experience:

- Mirrored exploration of their own image
- Matching colors and shapes to paper of what they see in the mirror

For this activity, it's helpful to have a mirror that your child can look at while they draw and also to have multicultural colors of crayons or markers! This activity is especially great for older toddlers between 2 and 2.9 years of age. To set up a table space for them to draw, prop a small mirror up against a wall and place a piece of paper on the table in front of the mirror. Finally, set out the multicultural color set of crayons or markers. You can prompt your child to try to draw a picture of themselves by saying something like "Who's that in the mirror? Can you draw a picture of who you see there? I see a nose! I see eyes! Where do those go?"

See what kind of shapes and colors they use to draw! This can be a really fun way to see where your child is in their development in addition to witnessing them explore their reflection and image. In addition to being a reflective activity of themselves and their features, this is also a great way for them to practice hand-eye coordination skills and develop fine motor muscles.



Physical Development and Healthy Habits: **Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes**

Stand facing your toddler and sing "Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes" with them! This classic kids song is a fantastic way to help develop basic physical development skills with your toddler, including hand-eye coordination and an early understanding of the different parts of their body. As you sing, tap each part of your body that is mentioned in the song. As a fun addition, try speeding up and slowing down the pace at which you sing the song to elicit some giggles!

Children experience:

- Physical movement and coordination
- Knowledge of their body in physical space

PRESCHOOL



Art, Music and Movement: **Family Drawings**

Tell your child that today they are going to draw their families. Say, for example, “There are four people in our family, and I can draw them from the smallest to the biggest. I wonder how you’ll draw our family.”

On your piece of paper, draw your family, using several details to make them distinct. You might include notable attributes like hair, glasses, favorite outfits, etc. You can order them from smallest to biggest, or choose another organizing principle, like the person who likes pizza the most to the person who likes pizza that least.

As your child works on their drawing, encourage them to think about what details they are going to include. Make sure to comment on your child’s drawings. Ask them to describe the increasing or decreasing characteristics they draw (e.g., age, size, hair length). Comment on whether something gets bigger (or older or longer) or smaller (or younger or shorter).

You can also use ordinal number words to describe what and how your child draws. For example: “You drew your baby brother **first** because he is the youngest and your grandpa **last** because he’s the oldest.” Also, pay attention to any thoughts your child has about their drawing. They may offer thoughts beyond the immediate activity, like, “Fish don’t count because they can’t walk.” Ask follow up questions like, “Well, if you want to include your fish, where would he go in the drawing?”

Midway through the activity, say, “I can draw my family in a different way.” Choose another rule, and then draw and describe your drawing, for example: “I like ice cream the most so I go first. Your mom only likes ice cream a little, so she’s last. And you and your sister like it just sometimes, so you’re in the middle of the row. Ask, “Can you draw our family in a different way too?”

If your child is interested, help them label their drawings. Encourage them to name each figure and describe how they vary along the attribute they are representing.

When you are finished, with your child sort and put away the materials. If your child wants to continue working on their drawing the next day, make a “work in progress” sign and find a safe place to store their work.



Communication, Language, and Literacy: **Mime the Rhyme**

In this activity your child will fill in the last word of a couplet (a two-line poem) and then act out the rhyme using pantomime (body gestures and facial expressions).

To start, give your child the first line, and the beginning of the second line, and have them add the final word or phrase. For example, say “As I was walking down the road, I saw a giant carrying a ____.” Or “Yesterday I went to the fair, where I saw a ____.” After each couplet, encourage your child to act out the idea in pantomime; that is, by using body movements and gestures only — no words or sounds.

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Children experience:

- Pretend play
- Phonological (distribution and patterning of speech sounds in a language and pronunciation) awareness
- Making up stories

Continue to recite rhymes for children to fill in and mime. If they suggest ideas – for example, by saying something like “Do one about the circus” – turn them into couplets with the last word or phrase missing: “The circus clown said boo, and I went ____.” Once they’re comfortable with the activity, encourage your child to add their own ideas. Then, if they are ready, have them come up with some couplets for you! Even if they don’t get it exactly right, play along and encourage them to keep trying.

You can enrich this activity further by introducing new vocabulary words for whole body movements (somersaulting), gestures (flailing), and facial expressions (grimace).



Math, Science, and Technology: **Let Them Go! Freeing the Frozen Toys**

This is a great activity for children to engage in in the kitchen while you are in there eating or preparing a meal. To prepare the experiment, fill a container (could be a pot or small bucket) with water, drop in animals (or other small items), and freeze until solid.

Show your child the container of ice with the items frozen in it. Say, “Here are some toys that are trapped in ice. What are your ideas to free them?” Acknowledge all of your child’s ideas. Now introduce the tools for the activity on a tray. Any of these will work, and can be substituted with other items you have at home:

- Eyedroppers
- Screwdrivers
- A bowl of warm water
- Spoons

Children experience:

- Creative problem solving
- Using different tools
- Learning about ice and water

You will also want to give your child a pair of goggles, and talk with them about why they need to wear the goggles when using the tools you distributed. If you don’t happen to have goggles at home, glasses or sunglasses will work! Ask your child to put on their goggles and to leave them on during the activity.

Once everything is ready say, “I wonder how you will use the tools to free the animals.” Watch how your child uses materials and encourage them to communicate what they are doing and thinking as they use the materials. Ask children to explain their thinking (e.g., Why do you think this tool will work better?), and why a tool they chose did or did not work. As the activity progresses, when your child encounters problems with materials, ask them to consider what tools may be helpful to solve the problem.

Once your child has freed the toys, encourage them to help clean up water spills using cloths and paper towels. As you transition out of the activity, you can extend learning by referring to everyday items such as tongs, butter knives, scissors, and tape as tools that help us solve problems.

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Myself and Others: **Who's Wearing What?**

Children experience:

- Noticing similarities and differences
- Making visual representations of data
- Drawing conclusions from data

This is a great activity to do with groups of people. So this might be fun to do on a video call with family or friends, over the phone during calls throughout the day, or if you are meeting up with others in a safe, socially distanced way.

Say something like, "I'm wearing black shoes today. What color are your shoes?" Let the child share his or her shoe color. Now label a piece of chart paper at the top with a picture and the word shoe. Divide it into columns corresponding to your shoe colors (e.g., black, brown, red, and two-color). Encourage your child to

help decide the number and labels of the columns.

Make a tally mark in the appropriate column for your shoe color, and ask your child to make a tally mark in the appropriate column. Once your child gets what you're doing, expand the question to others in your home, or watching people out your window, or asking on video or phone calls. Make tally marks in the appropriate columns, and add additional columns if necessary.

Ask, "What's the most popular shoe color? How do you know?" Talk to your child about their answers, referring to the chart and the number of tally marks in each column.

Then ask, "What other things are we wearing besides our shoes that we can look at and count?" Get your child's input, and accept their ideas on how to name and label each chart (e.g., sock colors, shirts with different sleeve lengths). They may suggest things other than clothing, such as hair style. Encourage or help them to make tally marks.

In future iterations once your child understands categorizing and tallying by one attribute, repeat these activities with paired attributes (e.g., children wearing t-shirts and sandals, children with brown hair and green eyes).



Physical Development and Healthy Habits: **How Many Steps, Mr. Fox?**

Gather as many family members as you can (inside or outside), and introduce the game of Mr. Fox:

One person is the fox who stands on one side of an area, while the others stand on the opposite side. Explain that the fox will shout out numbers to tell everyone else how many steps to take across the area.

Children experience:

- Numbers and counting
- Gross motor development
- Moving in a coordinated way to instructions

Help your child move to one end of the area, and then stand on the opposite side as the first fox.

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Ask your child to call out, "How many steps, Mr. Fox?" As the fox, say, "Take three steps," and count with your child as they move. Vary the way children move to include baby steps, sideways steps, jumps, and other movement ideas your child suggests.

If your child is having trouble with the activity, say, "Sometimes it helps me count if I move slowly." With children, move slow enough to count each step with one-to-one correspondence.

Continue playing until your child gets close to you, and say, "It's time to run back home." Now choose a different fox, and play again. Tell the fox to call out numbers between 1–5. Repeat until everyone who wants has had a chance to be the fox. As your child gets more comfortable with the activity, ask them to guess how many more steps they can take before they reach the fox.

When you're not the fox, you can make a mistake (take one step too few or too many) and see if children catch the mistake. If not, say, "I think I goofed up. Help me count out the right number of steps." When you've finished, have the fox direct everyone to the next part of the day!

MORE RESOURCES



Take a Field Trip to Chicago to See Some Art!

The Art Institute of Chicago has created a free virtual tour! "Walk" around to look at some beautiful paintings, and make sure to choose your favorite:

https://artsandculture.google.com/streetview/the-art-institute-of-chicago/fwE_H6dfZC3ZwQ?sv_lng=-87.6230308&sv_lat=41.8795777&sv_h=253.97100902974273&sv_p=0.41371500593997723&sv_pid=1RCpkhduXZx-6414YhT7NQ&sv_z=0.7202868530195758



Get Dancing

Dance Along Together is presenting free online classes in a variety of different techniques from all over the world! Pick a fun one with your little one and get moving together:

<https://dancingalonetogether.org/>



Relax...with Jellyfish!

The Monterey Bay Aquarium is offering a guided meditation--with their beautiful jellyfish! Perfect for when it's time to start calming down for nap or sleep:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=5J2llsogT5Q&feature=emb_title



Make Some Discoveries

The California ScienCenter team have put together Stuck at Home Science--some great activities for your young Einsteins and Curies:

<https://californiasciencecenter.org/stuck-at-home-science>