

Parent Connection

First United Methodist Church's
School for Little People

July 2009

The best toys—and teaching materials—are (almost) free

Is your toy budget already spent? Are your children getting bored as summer progresses? Look around. Remember that the best toys are simple. Familiar items, such as cardboard boxes, can stimulate creativity and social skills. Recyclables, such as milk jug lids, can be turned into games. Common household items, such as sand and water, can provide sensory and discovery experiences.

The ABC list below can help you get started.

Before long, you'll have a collection of toys that children will find exciting and that won't cost a cent—well, almost.

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A is for Air. Nothing is freer than the air we breathe. Help children begin to understand respiration—and relaxation—with breathing activities. Use a tape to measure chests full (deep breath in) and empty (blow all the air out). Compare the number of breaths taken while sitting and then after running. Show how to slow respiration and decrease tension with simple, slow yoga-like breathing in and out.

B is for Blocks. Cardboard boxes, milk cartons, and lumber scraps are readily available and invite creative construction. Challenge children to recreate “The house that Jack built.” Compare sizes and weights of different materials and discuss the pros and cons of each as a building material. Collect small samples of building materials—shingles, gutter pieces, bricks, siding, foam insulation board, and ceramic tile—for examination and experimentation.

C is for Color. Crayons, paper, paint, grass, walls, shirts, flowers, vehicles, balls, and ribbons—colors are everywhere. And if there's a lack of color, add some. Paint cardboard tubes, cover boxes with colored paper or adhesive vinyl, frame children's artwork, and laminate collages of nature's grasses, leaves, and flowers.

D is for Dough. Make simple play clay and dough with flour, salt, and water. Show children how to knead, cut, shape, and pinch. Add food coloring or powdered tempera to small batches of dough. Encourage children to mix the batches and discover that red plus yellow plus blue equals brown.

E is for Egg cartons. Use egg cartons for sorting pebbles, shells, nuts and bolts, and paper clips. Invite children to cut and paint egg cartons to make train cars, caterpillars, elf houses, or flowers. Arrange plastic eggs in a color pattern along one side and invite children to reproduce the pattern down the other side. Note: Wash the cartons with soapy water and let dry thoroughly before using.

F is for Finger play. Learn new finger plays, songs, poems, and chants to help children improve language and listening skills. Find new finger plays by searching the Web or browsing the local library's catalog for books and videos.

G is for Garden. Take children on a neighborhood walk to view a flower or vegetable garden. As you cook, save fruit seeds, carrot or turnip tops, and potato “eyes” for children to plant. Invite children to gather acorns and pecans from trees or to collect seeds from grasses and wildflowers. Plant seeds in containers or a corner of the yard and watch them grow.

H is for Hats. Collect and construct—with the children—hats to reinforce dramatic play and conversations about occupations. Talk about why different workers need specific kinds of hats—for protection, style, or identification, for example. Read the classic *Caps for Sale* and challenge children to balance several hats on their heads. Talk about and use sun hats. Designate one day as “Hat Day” and invite everyone to wear a favorite ball cap or hat.

I is for Ink and stamps. Make stamps by cutting shapes from sponges or pieces of cushion foam. Cut and glue strips of rubber bands onto a piece of cardboard, making designs, letters, or numbers. Or wad up a piece of old rag, lunch sack, or plastic bread bag to use as a stamp. Children may also want to make fingerprints and compare them.

J is for Jars. Gather clear plastic jars with lids, freezer containers, and squeeze bottles in a variety of sizes. Invite children

to store collections, sort materials according to attributes, mix liquids, or measure and compare capacities. Pour a cup of sand into large soda bottles. Cover the bottles and arrange them to be knocked down with a ball in a bowling game.

K is for Keys. Give babies keys to jingle on a ring. Encourage preschoolers to pretend to start cars, open door locks, and unlock secret treasure boxes. Help children sort keys by shape, color, size, or function. Play word games and ask, “Who holds the key to my heart?”

L is for Leaves. Sort leaves by color, shape, or texture. Apply paint to a leaf and then press it to paper to make a leaf print. Place a leaf between two pieces of wax paper, cover with a towel, and press with a medium dry iron to seal. Place a leaf under a piece of light-colored construction paper and rub over it with the side of a crayon. Collect dry leaves, seeds, small twigs, and craft items and glue them to paper to make a collage.

M is for Mud. Dress children in old play clothes and invite them outdoors to mix dirt and water. Let them mold and squeeze the mud as they would with play dough. Provide cups, muffin tins, and pie pans for making mud pies and other goodies. Allow children to step with their bare feet into mud and feel it squish between their toes. Use mud to make handprints and footprints.

N is for Numbers. Count, count, count—children, items in a collection, napkins for snack, and blocks in the stack. Sing number rhymes, point out numerals on the class clock, reinforce correspondences by saying “one for each person” many times during the day. Draw numerals in chalk on the floor and call out a number as a temporary group gathering place.

O is for Obstacle course. Gather chairs, rope, pillows, and boxes to challenge children’s agility, balance, and endurance—indoors and out. Mark start and finish lines. Have older children draw a simple map of the yard with symbols for familiar objects and a dotted line with arrows to indicate a route children can follow.

P is for Pictures and photographs. Cut colorful pictures from old magazines. Encourage children to practice scissor skills. Use photos of the children to identify and label belongings.

Q is for Quilt. Hang an old quilt against a fence to make a shaded tent. Challenge children to identify matching fabric patches. Place a quilt on the ground to make a soft, padded surface for babies. Gather fabric scraps and make a quilt of your own.

R is for Rhymes. Smooth transitions, introduce vocabulary, and explore new concepts with rhymes—traditional and made-up—about colors, the weather, clothing, families, and pets. Clap, march, or dance in time to rhymes. Substitute nonsense words in familiar rhymes.

S is for Sewing. Gather fabric scraps, wooden or plastic spools, ribbon, buttons, bias tape, feathers, and thread for collages. Help children practice opening and closing safety pins—with no finger pricks. Introduce simple needle and thread work with yarn and hole-punched cardboard. Sort buttons by color, size, or number of holes.

T is for Tools. Kitchen, carpentry, and gardening tools invite experimentation and discovery. Offer sturdy, well-constructed, and lightweight hammers, pliers, trowels, eggbeaters, sieves, and plastic graters. Hammer golf tees into Styrofoam, beat soapy water into bubble foam, and sift through garden soil to find rocks and worms.

U is for Utensils. Raid the kitchen for measuring spoons and metal or plastic cups, wooden spoons, cookie cutters, and pots with lids. Set up a pretend kitchen, restaurant, or housewares store. Prepare for meals by encouraging children to set their places with a placemat, plate, fork, spoon, napkin, and cup—each in the proper position for easy eating.

V is for Vests. Make simple felt, fleece, or paper vests to spice up dramatic play costumes. Ask for donations and scour thrift stores for men’s and women’s vests in a variety of colors, textures, and styles. A prize goes to the finder of a fringed, tie-dyed leftover from 1968.

W is for Water. Freeze water in ice cube trays and other containers and observe shapes and melting. Add food coloring to water and invite children to mix colors. At the end of hot summer days, turn on a water sprinkler hose for children to play in (while watering the lawn). Invite children to wash dolls and doll clothes, trikes, and wagons.

X is for Xylophone. Investigate sound, pitch, and rhythm by making and listening to music. Rhythm instruments provide opportunities to explore melody, harmony, and tempo. Listen to classical music, folk music, and ethnic music. Invite musicians to share their instruments in a short performance. Invite children to listen to music with their eyes closed and tell how the music makes them feel. Strike a variety of surfaces with a mallet and discuss high- and low-pitched sounds. Listen to a variety of instrumental music and move with the children in response to what you hear.

Y is for Yard. Lay an old plastic shower curtain on the grass and invite children to finger paint and do other messy art activities. Read a story under a shade tree or tent. Have a picnic outdoors. Take children on a pretend camping trip by setting up a tent with bedrolls. Encourage children to lie on their backs on a quilt on the grass and identify shapes in the clouds. Lay out a hopscotch or shuffleboard course and teach children to play.

Z is for Zipper. Cut out short zippers from an assortment of small pants, jackets, and skirts. For each zipper, staple the sides onto a sturdy piece of cardboard, or sew the sides onto a piece of fabric. Encourage children to practice zipping to enhance fine-motor skills. Use zipper-type plastic bags to carry snack on a field trip or collect treasures on a nature walk. Make it into a bean bag by filling it with packing peanuts.

Answers to the Most asked Questions!

Some of you wonderful parents have come to us with questions about how to make schedule changes for vacations and the Fall school term. Hope this information is helpful!!

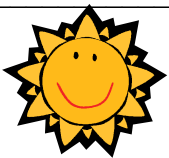
If you need to make a **schedule change** talk to Faye, Kim, or Vicki and we can fill out a schedule change form for you. Your requested change (provided we can accommodate it) will go into effect the following week or later, as you need. ***We are sorry, but we cannot make schedule changes in the middle of an already scheduled week.***

If you are going on vacation, just fill out a vacation notice form at least one week in advance. Remember if you are gone 3 weeks or more we can reduce your weekly payments by half, otherwise payments will remain the same.

For those enrolled in the Fall Preschool program:

Health forms and current shot records must be sent to the school office **no later than July 31, 2009.**

September and May tuition will be due at Parent's Night, August 27 or by August 31. Some of our families like to get a head start by making payments during the summer. We can do that for you in the office.



Park Play, a Note to Parents,

As we move into the warmer months of summer, we will be moving our park time into the morning part of our day.

We want to make sure that your child has a safe and enjoyable time during our park adventures!!

If you will be arriving after 8:45:

- *Your sign-in and sign-out sheets will be in the park with your child's class if they have already gone out*

- *You can drop off lunches, bags, etc. in your child's classroom or cubby.*
- *Please make sure that breakfast has been eaten and that insect repellent and sunscreen have been applied at home. (We wouldn't want to miss anyone as parents are dropping off.) We will reapply in the afternoon, if we go out.*
- *Also, if your child is potty trained, please have them potty before dropping them off to us in the park.*

If you will please help us out in these small ways, your child will be able to have a happy and swift start to their day with us!!



All SLP programs will be closed on Friday, July 3. We will reopen on Monday, July 6.

Our 2009-2010 Calendar for the upcoming school year is available!! Plan ahead for the holidays and special events!!

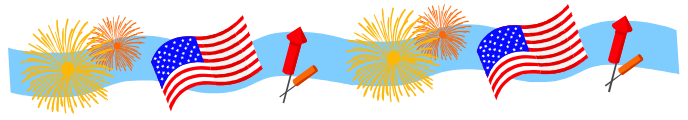


Vacation Bible School

July 13-17, 2009

All children in our summer program who are 4 or 5 years old or who will be attending 4 year old pre-school in the fall will be attending FUMC's Vacation Bible School. Feel free to invite friends also. VBS begins at 9:00 and ends at 12:00. There is a program at 11:30 on Friday for parents and family of those attending VBS. Pizza and desert will be provided.

If your child is attending SLP's summer program he or she will already be registered for VBS but if you are planning on bringing friends, they must register at the FUMC web site, www.fumcwf.org.



July Snacks

Juice, Cereal with milk, Pop Tarts, and Cereal Bars are always available for our Early Birds who drop off before 8:15. You may also choose to allow your child to bring breakfast from home.

All morning snacks are served with water all afternoon snacks with milk or juice.

Morning

Afternoon

July 1 Pudding
2 Goldfish
3 *All Programs closed for July 4th*

Cereal Bars
Fruit snacks

July 6 Granola Bars
7 Chex Mix
8 Animal crackers
9 Yogurt
10 Popcorn

Applesauce
Poptarts
Cereal Bars
Pretzels
Ice Cream

July 13 Chex Mix
14 Cheese Crackers
15 Graham Crackers
16 Pop-Tarts
17 Popcorn

Pudding
Grapes
Yogurt
Goldfish
Ice Cream

July 20 Goldfish
21 String cheese & crackers
22 Yogurt
23 Cereal Bars
24 Popcorn

Granola Bars
Bananas
Pretzels
Applesauce
Ice Cream

July 27 Pretzels
28 Pudding
29 Poptarts
30 Cheese sticks and crackers
31 Popcorn

Cereal Bars
Granola Bars
Fruit snacks
Goldfish
Ice Cream

Please join us

On July 2nd

For a Parade to Celebrate the 4th of July

The parade will begin at
10:30 and will be followed by
Hot Dogs in the park
for all 3's and 4's and their
families.

The younger children and
babies will return to their
classrooms and regular daily
schedule but their Mom's
and Dad's will be welcome to
join us for a hot dog or two.



July Calendar

July 1 Chalk in the big park
Making rock shakers in the toddler park

July 2 **Fourth of July Parade 10:30 all classrooms will participate! Come and join the fun!!**
Hot Dogs in the park for 3's and 4's and their families!
The younger children will resume their normal day, but Moms and Dads will be welcome to come have a hot dog with us in the park.

Water Day for 3's and 4's in the park in the afternoon from 3:30-close. Send a swimsuit, a towel, water shoes (not flip flops but something that can get wet.) We will dress them and apply sunscreen. Afternoon pick up will be in the park!

July 3 School for Little People will be closed!!

July 6 Fence Painting in the big park
Frisbees in the toddler park

Tape roadways in Rec Lobby

July 7 Water center open in the big park
Fence Painting in the toddler park

Tape Roadways in Rec Lobby

July 8 Bubbles in the big park
Bubbles in the Toddler park

Movie Day in Rec Lobby

July 9 Parachute Play in the big park
Parachute Play in the toddler park

Active games in Rec Lobby

July 10 Water center open in the big park
Dinos in the sand in the toddler park

Active games in Rec Lobby

July 13-17 **July 13-17 is VBS Week at the church, no special park activities this week.**
No special Rec Lobby activities this week.

July 20 Hill sliding in the big park
Balls in the toddler park

Water tables in Rec Lobby

July 21 Water center open in the big park
Sand Molding in the toddler park

Water tables in Rec Lobby

July 22 **Water Day for 3's and 4's** in the park in the morning from 9:30-11:00. Send your 3 or 4 year old child to school in a swimsuit, send a towel, water shoes (not flip flops but something that can get wet.) and apply sunscreen and insect repellent before drop off.

Water Day for Explorers and 2's in the park in the afternoon from 3:30-close. Send a swimsuit, a towel, water shoes (not flip flops but something that can get wet.) We will dress them and apply sunscreen. Afternoon pick up will be in the park!

July 23 Vehicles in the sand in the big park
Vehicles in the sand in the toddler park

Active games in Rec Lobby

July 24 Water Center on in the big park
Streamers in the toddler park

Active games in Rec Lobby

July 27 Treasures in the sand in the big park
Tents in the toddler park

Car races & Highway Sets in Rec lobby

July 28 Water center on in the big park
Bubbles in the toddler park

Car Races & Highway Sets in Rec Lobby

July 29 Hat Making in the big park
Fence Easels in the toddler park

Car races and highway sets in Rec Lobby

July 30 Frisbees in the big park
Frisbees in the toddler park

Active games in Rec Lobby

July 31 Water center on in the big park
Dinos in the sand in the toddler park

Active Games in Rec Lobby