

Tricks of the Trade

Outdoor Summer Fun!

Tricks of the Trade is a monthly column that incorporates activities, nutrition and quick boredom busters to make your life at home a little easier. We will leverage items you have on-hand or low-cost items to keep the kiddos busy learning while having fun and staying healthy. Each month will feature a different theme.

Activities: Outdoor backyard games - remember these?

Mother, May I? A fun and surprisingly easy way remind little ones about polite requests and saying please and thank you. A new twist to this classic game of polite requests, with this quick-on-your-feet variation. Players line up 30 feet from the designated "Mother", who then tells one player at a time to take a certain number of steps forward or back. For example, he might say, "Mother, may I take twisting tornado steps?" Mother says yes or specifies other steps. For example, "No, but you may take baby bunny hops!" If a player forgets to ask with "Mother may I?" he must return to the starting line. Reward any bonus steps for please and thank you's uttered! The first player to reach the Mother becomes the new Mother.

Red Light, Green Light A game that re-enforces honesty! Choose one person to be the "Stoplight." All the other players are "Cars." Mark a starting line. Have the Stoplight stand opposite the starting line a distance away. Closer for younger kids and farther for older kids or to make the game last longer. Begin the game when the Stoplight turns around, facing away from the starting line, and calls, "Green light!" This means all cars can go, moving at a walk toward the Stoplight in order to tag it. Run when the Stoplight, still facing away from the starting line, calls "Yellow light!" Stop fast when the Stoplight calls "Red light!" and whirls around, trying to catch Cars in the act of moving. Lose your turn and sit out if the Stoplight says, "I saw you move!" This aspect of the game requires honesty by both players, which is reinforced by the other Cars watching. Win if you tag the Stoplight first. Then you get to be Stoplight for the next game. The Stoplight wins if it gets all the Cars out before they can tag it.

Duck, Duck, Goose Sit in a circle; all players should be facing inwards. A person is chosen to be "It." Walk around the outside of circle, tapping each person that you pass lightly on the head. As you tap each person, say the word "Duck." Those that are designated as Ducks remain seated. Decide on the person that you want to be "Goose." This person must chase you, so you want to pick someone you think you can outrun. When you reach the intended

Welcome to the lazy days of summer! This month we are focusing on outdoor play to further develop social and gross motor skills. The outdoor games will re-enforce the usual turn-taking and good sportsmanship skills, and some will take it one step even further by re-enforcing common manners and honesty. Learning through play!

Goose, as you tap him on the head, say "Goose" instead of "Duck." The Goose must jump up and chase you around the circle. If you reach the Goose's former seat and sit down before he can tag you, the Goose becomes It. If the Goose touches you before you can get back to the empty seat, you have to sit in the middle of the circle. Remain in the center of the circle until someone else is tagged out. That person then takes your place in the middle, and you go to his old seat. You have now successfully played a game of Duck Duck Goose.

Musical Beach Towels (instead of chairs) Great for all ages! This is an easy one to remember...play your child's favorite music. Turn off and scramble to an open towel. A great pick up game at a beach, park or in your yard!

Obstacle Course Create an obstacle course that is sure to delight your kids! Obstacle builders could be lawn furniture, a hose, string or rope, sprinkler, balls, water balloons, jump rope. Add movements like jumping, rolling etc. Here are some suggestions:

- Walking or hopping along a winding a garden hose
- Crawling under lawn chairs
- Balancing along a string
- Walking with a ball between your knees
- Add an oscillating sprinkler to any of the above!

Water Games - no beach required

- Fill spray bottles with water... chase and spray!
- Older Kids? A good old fashion water balloon toss is always fun! Have adventurous kids and want to take it a step further? Hide filled water balloons and have a "treasure hunt/water balloon chase. (Just be sure to pick up the broken balloon pieces due to choking risk)
- Little ones? A water table is always a hit and a great sensory & water discovery opportunity! Round up cups, colanders, watering cans, old dish soap bottles, etc. If a water table isn't handy use a large bucket or kid-sized pool of water.

- **Bug hunt** Use a magnifying glass to search for bugs.
- **Paint with Water** Supply your child with a clean paint brush and bucket of water. Let them paint the house, walkway, bikes, fence, toys, etc.

Quick Boredom Busters

- Dig for treasures/hidden items in your sandbox
- Treasure hunt in your yard
- Camp out
- Skip stones
- Fly a kite
- Draw a road with buildings and signs on your driveway. Then go for a bike ride on your own "road". Add buildings, people, animals, etc.

Tricks of the Trade

Giggles and Nibbles Here are some fun summer recipes!

Fishing for Snacks

Ingredients: Fish crackers, Carrot sticks, Celery sticks, Cream cheese, String and Dixie cups.

Soften the cream cheese, whip up and put into a bowl. Set a dixie cup for each child with fish crackers in it. Tie a piece of string to one end of the carrot or celery sticks. Then dip one end of the veggie stick into cream cheese. Have the child stand over the dixie cups and go Fishing for Snacks! Remove from string and eat!! The cream cheese makes the crackers stick to the veggie stick. Kids love to see how many fish they can catch at once!

Pretzel Sparklers

Ingredients: Pretzel Rods, White chocolate (melted), Sprinkles (red, white and blue) or star.

Melt the white chocolate. Dip the pretzel rod halfway into the melted chocolate then sprinkle the sprinkles over the wet chocolate. Lay on waxed paper or place in a cup to dry.

Fruit Sparklers

Ingredients: 24 large blueberries, 24 strawberries, 3 bananas (cut into 8 pieces each), 24 cherries, 24 large marshmallows, 8 wooden skewers, 8 each red, white, and blue ribbons (1-foot lengths)

Skewer fruit and marshmallows on wooden skewers in a red, white and blue pattern, using four of each item on a skewer. Tie red, white, and blue ribbons to the bottom of the skewer.

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Confetti Yogurt Pops (Parenting magazine)

Ingredients: 2 cups low-fat vanilla yogurt, 1 cup chopped berries, Pretzel rods

Stir together yogurt and berries. Spoon into ice-pop molds. Cover with foil. Use a sharp knife to cut a small hole in foil and insert the cut side of a half of a pretzel rod. Freeze until firm and remove foil and mold when ready to serve.

Watermelon Swizzle Sticks

Slice a whole seedless watermelon into half rounds and punch out star shapes with cookie cutters. Thread stars onto bamboo skewers and freeze on parchment paper lined cookie sheets until frozen.

Fruit and Cheese Kabobs

Use assorted cookie cutters to cut shapes out of cantaloupe, watermelon, and honeydew. Circles, stars, and hearts are some examples. Use the cookie cutters to cut out shapes of reduced fat hard cheese. Thread fruit and cheese on small skewers, alternating with blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries.

Parks and Bike Paths

In addition to this list, please check out the MOMS Club® website for other outdoor activity suggestions at www.northhattleboroughmoms.org Happy exploring!

Parks

Bird Park Walpole, MA

Stroller friendly walking trails. Also has a big field for kids/pets to run. One tennis court is now a toddlers dream with many ride-on toys. Both the playground and tennis courts are fenced in. www.thetrustees.org

Borderland State Park Easton, MA

Lots of stroller friendly trails to walk on. Some open fields for the kids to run. Great place for a picnic. Fishing and canoeing are allowed. www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/borderland/recreation.htm

Deerfield Park Smithfield RI

Some walking trails, playgrounds, sports fields. www.smithfieldri.com/deerfield.htm

Blue Hills Reservation Milton, MA

Playground, swimming, fishing, hiking, museum with live animals. www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/metroboston/blue.htm

Lincoln Woods State Park Lincoln, RI

Great place to walk or run around the lake. Swimming and fishing also allowed. www.riparks.com/lincoln.htm

Colt State Park Bristol, RI

Biking, picnics, fishing. There is a playground as well. www.riparks.com/colt.htm

Bike Paths

Blackstone River Bikeway www.blackstoneriverbikeway.com

East Bay Bike Path www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/southeast/ccrt.htm

Cape Cod Rail Trail www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/southeast/ccrt.htm

Cape Cod Canal Trail www.capecodbikeguide.com/canal.asp

Books to Read

Beach Bugs David A Carter
Good Night Beach (Good Night Our World series) Adam Gamble
The Little Fish That Got Away Bernadine Cook