



FOR WASHINGTON CHILDREN



Fall/Winter 2014

Strong Families Begin At Home

## Child & Teen Services Newsletter

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## Learn: Hand Clapping Games

A fun way to work on gross motor skills and language skills are clapping games. Children have played clapping games for generations, and there are many different rhymes and songs to use. There has also been a study about how hand-clapping games can improve cognitive and motor skills in children.

All you need to play these games is a partner and you are ready to go (although you can practice against a wall!)

To start, each person faces the other and holds their hands up facing their partner (palms facing towards each other usually). Then while singing the rhyme you clap both hands with your partners hands and then clap your right hand to your partner's right hand and then your left hand to your partner's left hand. On words that repeat, clap both hands with your partner's hands. This is a simple example; these games can get very complex,

enough to hold the interest of older pre-teens even!

For rhymes:  
<http://funclapping.com>

For study:

[http://in.bgu.ac.il/humsos/art/DocLib/Pages/Scientific-Publications-warren/27\\_BrodskySulkin\\_2011.pdf](http://in.bgu.ac.il/humsos/art/DocLib/Pages/Scientific-Publications-warren/27_BrodskySulkin_2011.pdf)

Example:

A sailor went to sea, sea, sea  
To see what he could see, see, see  
But all that he could see, see, see,  
Was the bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea!



# CREATE: Rain Paintings

In the Pacific Northwest we have a lot of rain! The rain can be used to create beautiful rain paintings.

In order to do this, your child can draw a picture with washable markers on a piece of paper. Then, put the picture out in the rain, which will blur the colors together and make a rain painting. You can put it down on the ground (not mud) or if you have a clothesline or somewhere to clip it, that's ideal. Do it during a light drizzle or be brave and try a downpour! Children can keep their picture in the rain for however long they want; it depends how blurry they want it.

You can also use food coloring by putting the paper in the rain and then putting drops of food coloring on the paper, and then waiting to see what happens!

While the children are waiting for the rain to paint their pictures they can use chalk to color on the sidewalk if they want—the rain makes it look different; the depth of color changes significantly when chalk is on a wet surface.

Once they are ready to take the picture out

of the rain, they can see how the water changes the medium. What a great way to incorporate science and art!



# PLAY: Hobbies

What type of “play” encourages children to set goals, make decisions, follow directions, develop perseverance, increase frustration tolerance, increase self-confidence AND is fun? Hobbies!



Babies, toddlers, even preschoolers have a very exploratory type of play. But right around school age, play becomes much more goal-oriented. Six years old is the perfect time to start introducing your child to a

hobby or hobbies.

Most children will need quite a bit of adult guidance and supervision when beginning a hobby, but remember that hobbies are somewhere between work and play. This means that although spending time on a hobby isn't totally “free form”, it shouldn't feel like work either. Time spent on a hobby should be interesting, engaging and fun. It should also be goal oriented and hopefully something that can grow as your child ages and develops more mastery. Hobbies should be a match between your child's interest and

## Hobbies, continued

abilities.

How to get started:

1. Help your child make a list of interests.
2. Start small and slow: even if on paper it seems a perfect match, let your child “test” their hobby for a few weeks before making a time and financial commitment.
3. Supervise, guide, AND give your child space: you can help your child come up with goals and learn new skills, but remember to give your child time to explore and learn on their own.
4. Help your child move it to the next level: if your child is starting to show boredom, it may indicate they are ready to learn and master new skills. A hobby should be something that isn’t easily mastered in it’s entirety; rather, let it be something that can become a

lifelong passion filled with new learning.

5. Know when to move on: sometimes a new hobby just isn’t a good match with your child. Help them know when it’s time to move on and try something new.

Some ideas to try:

Finger knitting

Cooking (little ones can start with sandwich making until they are old enough to use an oven/stove)

Writing and acting out stories

Coin or stamp collecting

Scrap booking

Gardening

Model building

Origami

Music: singing, playing an instrument

Sewing

## RELAX: Sing!

A study by University of Gothenberg (Sweden) indicates that singing may be just as effective as yoga for relaxation benefits.



Singing, just like yoga, involves, deep controlled breathing. Singing has also been shown to release endorphins, one of the “feel good” hormones produced by the brain. In addition, singing (like yoga) helps focus on posture, confidence, and while actively engaged in song, a “break” from worrying/negative thoughts. Of course, singing doesn’t have the same physical benefits of yoga, but in terms of stress reduction, it’s a great tool to add to your stress management toolbox.

Choir singing has been shown to produce the most dramatic results. Synchronized

breathing along with a sense of community belonging contributes to these positive outcomes. Canterbury Christ Church University did a relatively large study that showed these benefits among choir members. <http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/Research/Centres/SDHR/Documents/ChoralSingingSummary.pdf> A smaller study, done by the University of Turkey, showed that, “Singing in a choir was found to have a positive impact on psychological indicators of affect and anxiety”. (Psychology of Music April 8, 2013)

Don’t belong to a choir? Not to worry. You can still get benefit, even if you are a shower singer. But if you’d like to join a choir, here is a list of choirs in the Puget Sound area: <http://www.openharmony.org/casa/choral.html> And from the same website, a list of outside Puget Sound choirs: <http://www.openharmony.org/casa/choral/washingtonstate.html>

# MOVE: Hopscotch

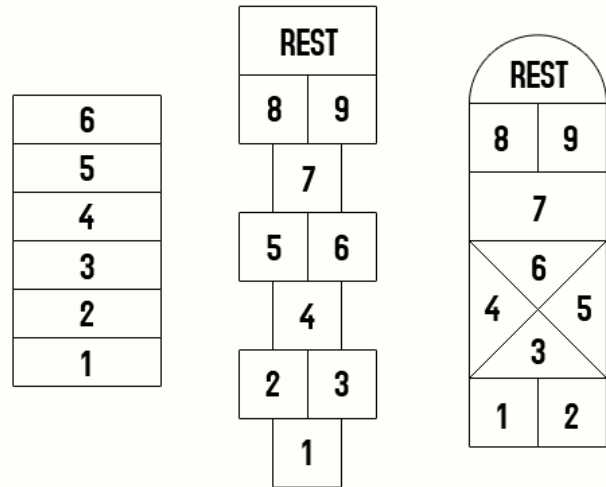
Being and staying active in the winter is important for families. Being active can improve our moods, reduce our stress, and help us to have better health in general.



Hopscotch is a fun and active game for kids to play. You can certainly play the game outside by drawing the squares/diagram with chalk. But you can also play indoors by using painter’s tape or masking tape on the floor.

Start by making the hopscotch squares in a line, first one square and then two squares, one set on top of the other; you can make 8-12 for a standard game. Numbering the squares can make the game a fun way learn the numbers (especially if the children write them in the squares themselves!) Once the squares are made, kids hop on one foot in

the single squares and both feet in the double (one in each). This is great for practicing coordination AND keeping active in the winter.



Diagrams above show different ways of drawing the squares, for different skill levels.

# Parent Trust Reads: Book Review

***The Fall of Freddie the Leaf***  
**By Leo Buscaglia**  
**Ages: 4 and up**

This book explains the life cycle through the life of a leaf named Freddie.

Through the seasons, Freddie talks with his friend Daniel about what happens to them when fall and winter come.



This book uses simple language to talk about the life cycle and to discuss death. The story may be

a good way to start talking to children about the life cycle and may be helpful to read if a family member or pet has passed away or is ill and close to dying.

Freddie the leaf asks a lot of questions about what is death and his friend Daniel answers him in a calm and understanding way. Also, this can be a lovely story to read just to learn about the seasons in nature as well as the seasons of life. For more book reviews, visit: [parenttrust.org/parent-trust-reads](http://parenttrust.org/parent-trust-reads)

If you have any comments, or suggestions for future articles, please contact:  
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FAMILY HELP LINE  
1-800-932-HOPE (4673)

Parent Trust's statewide, toll-free phone number provides callers with a greater understanding and awareness of child development, guidance and resources.



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