

Popsicle Sticks Family Game Time

Use for anytime, especially after dinner, when it's a good idea to turn off the TV and engage your children into whole-body fun!! **Thanks to: @Journeyw_Jenna** on Instagram for the great inspiration!!! Adapt as needed and create more of your own! Replace or alter any of these activities!!

Directions: Have a child choose a colored stick and parents read the activity, using this sheet as reference for more information.

Making the colorful sticks: popsicle sticks work great; the bigger tongue depressors might be better so you can draw a symbol of the activity that allows your child to "read" it.

Paint, color with crayons or markers with activity and # on each. Place in a jar and keep where it is easily accessed (be careful if using a glass jar). Have FUN!!

- 1) Animal Charades: Take turns acting out an animal. For very young children, start with allowing sounds. Practice just acting it out with just movements when ready.
- 2) Happy Clappy! To demonstrate, a parent begins by clapping a simple rhythm. Then, everyone joins in to copy the pattern. Keep it simple and vary it to make it interesting. Example: Clap, Clap, Clap Clap Clap (1, 2, then 3 quick claps).
- 3) Hide the Toy: each child finds a toy to hide. Take turns hiding each toy. Limit to the one room. Everyone closes their eyes while the toys is being hidden. You can evolve this game by older children giving clues: Is it near the window? Is it under or over something? Etc.
- 4) Train game: The child who draws this stick gets to be the engine, then, if another child is present, that child can be the caboose. Parents in the middle. The Engineer gets to decide what the parents have in their "cars": what load is this train carrying? Each parent holds a toy or block or whatever the train is carrying. Then, everyone gets behind the engine, and of you go! If you can do this outside, use chalk to draw the train tracks. Follow the leader! Then, take turns with each position.
- 5) Have a large piece of paper and a pencil or crayon ready. Start with a simple line. Then, each person gets to continue the line, creating a composite drawing of who knows what!! Take several turns drawing to see what it becomes!
- 6) Parent starts with Once Upon a Time....start a story with an animal character. For example: Once upon a time a turtle sat on a log....then, have the children say one thing that the turtle does. Go around a few times to hear the turtle's adventure!! Later, you can have the older child draw a picture of the story.
- 7) Trace hands: paper and drawing tools. Each person gets a turn to have their hands traced. Then have fun coloring! Each time you do this stick, you can encourage children to turn the hand into something different. If it gets too redundant, trace feet, head neck shoulders, etc. or even whole body to decorate!!
- 8) Start with Row Row Row Your Boat, sing together. Then, one parent waits and starts singing while everyone else has started so as to make a "round". Sing favorite songs together, use homemade instruments or keyboard to enhance the fun!! If the concept of a "round" is too complex, just enjoy a family sing along!!
- 9) Bowling: This could be done on a table with smaller objects with older kids. Find soft toys, or clothespins or unbreakable cups and set up a bowling pin area. Then, a soft

round ball is rolled (not thrown unless you are outside) to knock the items over. Take turns and cheer for each other!

- 10) Draw your favorite animal. Share what you love about that animal. Color and keep in a folder of all our favorite animals.
- 11) Using a keyboard, guitar, or just your voice, hum familiar tunes and engage the children in humming along. Go for a walk and hum or hum while you put toys away.
- 12) Play music and one parent stops the music do everyone freezes! Then, when the music is restarted, dancing resumes. Encourage fast, medium, slow music. You don't want it to get too crazy if this is after dinner. Soothing, flowing music works great.
- 13) Pretend to be trapeze artists. Follow an invisible (or chalk outside) line and walk toe to heel, with arms outstretched. Try standing on one foot, and do other movements while always standing on the "line".
- 14) Animal sounds: Take turns making sounds and everyone guesses what it is.
- 15) Find large magazine pictures. Have older children help cut out shapes. Then, everyone gets to reassemble. Keep in envelopes and create a supply of homemade puzzles.
- 16) What's that smell? Find herbs to put in paper bags. Pass around different bags with different aromas. Guess what they are!
- 17) If you're happy...everyone sits in a circle and shares what makes them happy. You can also ask what makes you sad, or angry. Always end on a happy note!
- 18) Put on soft music and draw with your eyes closed to the music. Color and embellish once it's done (very brief, just play the music a few minutes at most).
- 19) Have the children drop the color popsicle sticks back into the jar from standing or even sitting with jar on the floor.
- 20) For a Nature Walk and choose different things to look for each time: colors, shapes, sounds, textures, noises, etc. If indoors, go around your house and look for these specific things and share about them back in the living room.
- 21) Make a Wish: trace and cut out stars for each member of the family. Play "When you wish upon a star" and talk about things you wish for. Write down on the star what your young ones say and if they are old enough, give them crayons or other materials (please don't use glitter, it contains plastic, thanks!) to decorate their wish star. Put a hole in the top and hang the stars from the ceiling or on a "Wish Tree" in the yard. Talk about wishes that are fantasy and wishes that could really come true. And how we can help make our wishes come true!
- 22) Rhyme time: Write down words on cards that rhyme like: book, look; cake, bake; cat, bat; etc. You can put little drawings or pictures of the words on the other side. Then, put one of the two rhyming word cards in a box and take turns drawing out a card. When your child takes a word card, then have the rhyming words to the words in the box spread out so they can find the "match". You can make up silly poems or songs using the rhyming pairs.
- 23) Copy Me: Pretend that there is a mirror between you and your child. They will need to copy everything you do. And vice versa! Use whole body movements and you can include singing "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" song as the children copy you.

Family Game Time Fun!!

Choose a stick!

Read instructions from sheet enclosed for each number.

You don't have to follow the directions exactly; adapt as needed!

Have fun!!

Learn to take turns, listen, move, remember, create, and laugh!!

Love from Nonna!!!!!!