

April 20, 2020

Dear StrongStart Families

We celebrate Earth Day on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. As we reflect on how our world has changed during this time of COVID-19, one big positive is that our planet is able to clear pollution from its atmosphere: people in some cities are seeing a blue sky for the first time in their lives; the hole in the ozone layer is shrinking; and waterways are becoming clear. We need to celebrate this change and reflect on the impact we humans have on our planet Earth.

This week we as StrongStart Facilitators decided to present activities based around Earth Day and connecting to our planet. As always, we ask that you continue to practice Social Distancing and continued Social Isolation. The better we practice these initiatives; the sooner schools will open, and we can resume socializing with our friends and family!

I hope you enjoy the activities in this week's Newsletter.

Virtual Hugs and Distant Toe Taps!

Ms. Marian, Ms. Irina, Ms. Laura

### Here are some fun links!

- Mother Earth Environmental with lyrics  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l\\_A3FMf3\\_Qw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_A3FMf3_Qw)
- What a Wonderful World, Playing For change, Song Around the World  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddLd0QRf7Vg>
- Earthy Brown Wiggly Worm  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-rg7Elt1x4>



## SINK AND FLOAT WATER PLAY WITH NATURAL MATERIALS

- Water play is a perfect outdoor activity for toddlers on warm spring days. Add materials gathered in nature to a simple sink or float activity.
- Water play is easy to provide with just a small tub of water and items to add to the water. Place the natural materials you collected to one side of the tub.
- Provide different textures, colors, and sizes in your supply of materials. Include leaves, flowers, twigs, stones, or other items you find in nature.
- Place items one at a time in the water and observe whether each item sinks or floats.
- *What will happen if we put a twig or rock on the leaf?*
- *How many twigs are floating in the water?*
- *Your green leaf looks like a boat.*
- Along with sink and float there are lots of other ways to play in the water tub.
- Drop materials into the water from above the tub to see if they make a splash.
- Swirl the water with your hands to see which materials move around.
- Sort the materials according to which ones sink or float, as well as by size, from smallest to biggest.



### **Extension for babies:**

Keep accessories simple. I like to add two or three small containers that are easy to hold, a spoon or small ladle and a few smooth, flat river stones. Make sure you choose larger stones that do not constitute a choking hazard. If you do not have any suitable stones, a few plastic blocks or shapes will work as a substitute.



## **PAPER (lunch) BAG ACTIVITIES**

Paper Lunch bags are inexpensive and can be used in a variety of ways for crafts and learning activities. Children love to create and make things, and this is a perfect way to make play creative and purposeful.

### **1.Paper Bag Pom-Poms**



Cut strips from the top of bags to the flap.

Roll up the bottom and wrap a rubber band around to make a handle.

Use for singing alphabet songs, repeating patterns, cheering words, etc.

### **2.Touch and Tell**



Hide objects in the bag.

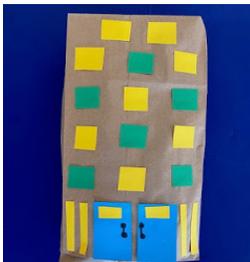
Children close eyes, touch, and guess what it is.

### **3.Paper Bag Buildings and Houses**



To make a house, decorate the bottom of the bag with markers and construction paper.

Stuff with newspaper and fold down the top. Staple on a roof.



To make a building turn a lunch bag upside down and decorate with construction paper and markers.

Take a second bag and stuff with newspaper. Insert the decorated bag over this to make a stand-up building.

\*Create a village with masking tape for a road, toy cars, action figures, etc.

## Telephone Tin Cans

### Materials Needed

- 2 Tin Cans or Plastic Cups that are of equal size.

If using tin cans, ensure they are cleaned and there are no sharp edges

- Long length of String



### Directions

Punch a small hole in the bottom of each with a nail

Knot one end of the string and feed it through the hole of the can. Make sure the string cannot pass through the hole.

Feed the string through other can/cup and knot the string.

Pull the string tight while one person speaks into the can/cup, the other puts their can/cup to their ear. Have a conversation.

Try touching the string while someone is talking and see if you can feel the vibrations

**Extension:** Tie a fork and spoon to a piece of string. Hold the other end of the string to one ear; cover up the other ear. You can feel the sound the jangling utensils. The sounds travel up the string

## A SPRING PENCIL TALK STORY

### A SPRING WALK

*Let's put a green dot at the top of the page to show us where to start. And let's put a red dot down here at the bottom to show where our story will stop. Pick up your pencil and let's use it to tell a story.*

*It's a beautiful spring day, so let's go for a walk. The grass is growing nice and tall. The sun is shining in the sky.*

*The clouds are rolling around.*

*The insects buzz up and down.*

*The little rabbits hop around.*

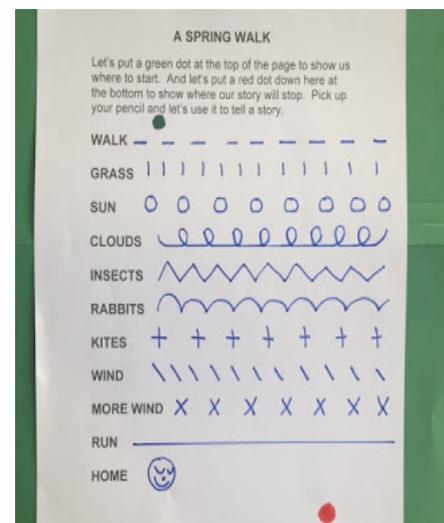
*The kites are flying in the air.*

*All of a sudden, the wind starts to blow.*

*The wind is blowing in every direction.*

*Better run home as fast as we can!*

*Home at last!*



## Nature Mud Pie Activity

*Mud play can include creating shapes and objects. Find objects to decorate the mud pies such as sticks, stones, pinecones, leaves. Thin runny mud can be used as paint with sticks as paint brushes. Use old pots and pans, big metal spoons, wooden spoons and kitchen gadgets to create natures "MUD PIE"*

**Ingredients:** Soil, Water

Other additions can include; sawdust, eggshell, crushed leaves, sand, vegetable or fruit peels

## BAKING

### Mississippi Mud Pie Cookies

#### Ingredients

- 1 ¾ Cups Flour
- 1 ¼ Cups unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 Teaspoons Baking Powder
- ¾ Teaspoon salt
- ½ Cup Unsalted Butter
- ½ Cup Unsweetened Applesauce
- 1 Cup White Sugar
- ¾ Cups Brown Sugar
- 2 Eggs
- 2 Teaspoons Vanilla Extract
- 1 Cup Dark Chocolate Chips
- 1 Cup Mini Marshmallows (I cut up large marshmallows into small pieces)
- 1 Cup pecan halves roughly chopped (my family has a nut allergy, so I don't add the pecans)

#### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Set aside
2. In a bowl, sift together the flour, cocoa, baking soda and salt. Set aside
3. In a larger bowl, cream together butter and sugars, add applesauce and beat until fluffy
4. Add eggs and vanilla, beat until fluffy
5. Add the flour mixture and stir until it is combined. Don't over beat!
6. Using a spatula, fold in chocolate chips, marshmallows and pecans. Stir until combined
7. Cover cookie dough and place in fridge for one hour \*\*\*\*\*I put the dough on the cookie sheet and bake without putting it into the fridge. A bit sticky but still okay\*\*\*
8. Form dough balls and place them on the cookie sheet 3 inches apart
9. Bake for about 12 minutes or until puffed and slightly cracked
10. Transfer on to a wire rack and let cool -- Form the Speckled Palate.



## **Mud Pile Cookies**

### **Ingredients**

2 Cups White Sugar

½ Cup Butter

½ Cup Unsweetened Cocoa

½ Cup Milk

1 teaspoon Vanilla

3 Cups Rolled Oats

1 Cup Coconut



### **Directions**

Cover cookie sheet with parchment paper. Set aside

In a large Pot, add sugar, butter, cocoa, milk and vanilla, Place on stove and bring to a boil. Boil for 5 minutes stirring constantly.

Remove from heat and add rolled oats and coconut

With spoon scoop and drop cookies on cookie sheet

Refrigerate until se

### **Baby Games:**

#### **Sticky note peek-a-boo**

Print off some pictures of family members and put a sticky note over the top. Then encourage baby to play "peek-a-boo" with the relatives!



#### **Kitchen rock band**

Let baby safely explore your kitchen by setting some different utensils and bowls on the floor to explore. My little guy loves measuring spoons, spatulas and plastic bowls.



## Family Fitness

### With infants (Newborn +)

Your baby is likely fascinated by every move you make, so go ahead and make those moves count! It's easy to include your baby in your workout by simply laying down a blanket and letting him play alongside you. You can exercise on your treadmill or stationary bike or sweat along to an online cardio class.



If your baby isn't happy, try using a baby carrier to take him along as you gently exercise. "Use their weight as a little 'extra' as you walk, squat, or use dumbbells," says Zinn. Or try using a jogging stroller to bring your baby for a ride as you speed-walk or jog.

### With toddlers (18 months – 3 years old)

As your baby starts moving around on her own two legs, it's likely that she will never again want to stand still. This can make it more challenging to get in your workout, but as Zinn says, "if you can't beat them, join 'em." Take advantage of your toddler's desire to run, climb, roll and dance by doing it all right alongside her. Zinn suggests looking for ways to pop some exercise into your day. "I'm a big fan of nightly dance parties," she says. So pick a fun tune and show your toddler your moves. It's great family bonding and the perfect end-of-day exercise for everyone. Another tip: Try breaking your workouts into smaller 5- to 10-minute segments, and don't be surprised if your tot gets down on the floor to exercise right next to you.



### With older kids (3 years +)

Make fitness a fun family activity and your kids will look forward to those workouts.

As your kids get a little older, they will start to understand what a workout is and why you're doing it. So, now's the perfect time to instill some good habits by making exercise a fun part of your family activities. Ask them to go for a hike with you, take a long walk or go for a bike ride. If they're interested in lifting weights, teach them how to do it safely. Keep it easy and fun and at their level. "Fitness activities can very much become family activities and there's no better way to teach than to do," says Zinn.



Don't forget to WASH (and your child's) HANDS OFTEN! Ms Marian, Ms Irina and Ms Laura