

Over 80 Fun Family Activities




The BT Family Activity Book

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The BT Family Activity Book

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Daily Schedule...for summertime and school vacations...

Set up a daily time when your children are to do some reading or math work. I always had my kids spend 15 minutes after breakfast doing 2 - 3 pages in each workbook (one math and one reading) so they would have a little bit of content work and then have the rest of the day to do whatever they wanted to.



This gave them consistency and they knew they would have the rest of the day to play.

Some parents prefer to have their kids do their 15 minutes of workbook work after lunch. It doesn't matter when you do it; the important thing is that you are consistent. For our family it worked best to do it right after breakfast.

After they were finished, or while they were working I would pull one of my kids aside and do the Five Minutes to Better Reading Skills with them so they would have 5 minutes of fluency training to improve their fluency over the summer. Doing this made it so within 20 minutes of breakfast each of my kids had worked for 15 minutes on their own and worked with me for 5 minutes on their reading fluency.



YEAR ROUND ACTIVITY...

TIP: Fluency training is one of the easiest and most important things a parent can do to help their kids improve their reading skills.



Most Ignored and Should Be #1 Priority

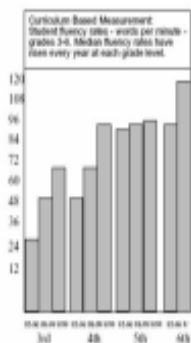
Sally Shawitz, M. D. states in her book *Overcoming Dyslexia*, "I urge parents of dyslexic children [or any child] to make fluency training – repeated oral reading – their number one priority. Because it involves reinforcement rather than teaching a child a new concept, it is ideally suited for the home."

Time Needed to Improve Fluency

Cecil Mercer, a researcher from the University of Florida, published his results from his study *Effects of Fluency Intervention for Middle Schoolers with Specific Learning Disabilities* in (2000) stating daily practice can be for as little as five or six minutes. Substantial gains in reading fluency came from repeated oral reading of various sorts such as letters or words for five or six minutes a day. The key to the success was doing the repeated oral reading over a period of time e.g. six months to twenty-three months.

Five Year Study

And, Debra Wilson from Redding, California states, "We did a five year study using Bonnie Terry's *Five Minutes to Better Reading Skills* and the reading fluency of kids in our school district improved dramatically."



Weekly Schedule

We get together as a family and decide where we want to go for our adventure...sometimes it would be an activity in the yard or around the block. Other times it would be a trip to the park, the pool, a museum, a historic site, or a factory.

On Fridays or over the weekend we'd take off for our adventure.

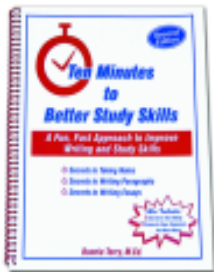


It is important to have your kids be part of the decision making on where you decide to go or what you decide to do. That way everyone got to at one time or another go where they wanted too.



Follow-up activity to get the most out of your fieldtrip:

To help your kids retain the wonderful experiences they are having, it is important to help them to process the activity. An easy way to do that is to have them write simple summary paragraphs about where you went and what they liked or didn't like about the excursion. The fill-in-the-blank graphic organizers in *Ten Minutes to Better Study Skills* are perfect for this.



When a student processes what they have done in a written format, they make multiple connections with the activity and increase their comprehension in multiples of ways. This will also give them an enlarged memory bank of background knowledge to bring to any reading activity they do in the future.

Good readers are those who know a bit about everything, so they will have some background knowledge that they can apply to whatever comes up in a reading text!

Research has established that students' background knowledge plays a critical role in their understanding of the higher-level concepts contained in most content area materials.

Once students learn decoding (sounding out words), they can decode anything. But, in order to understand what they read, they must be able to read fluently and have prior knowledge to attach meaning to what they are reading.



Activities for Weekly Trips

Activities for Weekly Trips

1. The local zoo



2. A pet store

3. The local park/playground & picnic



4. The pool

5. The river



6. The roller rink

7. The movies



8. A historic site: Go on-line and do a search on Google for historic sites in your city, town, county, or in your state and you will find numerous ones that you can visit for no or very low cost.

9. City parks

10. County parks

Activities for Weekly Trips

11. State parks
12. Hike: Go on-line and do a search on Google for places to hike in your city, town, county, or in your state and you will find numerous ones that you can visit for no or very low cost.
13. Visit a local factory - arrange with the manager or human services for a tour of their office or factory:
 - ☐ Computer manufactures such as Hewlett Packard and Intel



- ☐ Bakeries
- ☐ Your local nursery
- ☐ McDonalds or Burger King
- ☐ Potato chip factory



- ☐ Jelly Bean factory
- ☐ Television stations



- ☐ Radio stations
- ☐ Local newspaper office

Activities for Weekly Trips

14. Attend local government meetings: city council meetings



15. Visit the state capital



16. A family bike hike



17. A Local concert

18. Day trips: You can find a wide range of day trips by contacting your local visitor's bureau or chamber of commerce. You will be surprised at how many places they know about that you can go to.

Activities for Weekly Trips

19. Visit botanical gardens



20. Visit the county fair or state fair



21. An art gallery

22. An antique shop

23. The library



24. Local book store

25. Herb farm





Activities for Nature Adventures

Activities for Nature Adventures

Over the years I've done a variety of nature activities with my Girl Scout troop, the Girl Scout day camps I've directed, the Cub Scouts, and Boy Scouts I've worked with. Here are a variety of activities. I also came across a deck of cards with activities that were similar to ones I've done over the years, so I've included where you can find the cards at the end of this section.



1. Finding Sounds

Do this activity in your yard or out in nature. In fact, you might do it both places and compare the differences.

With your eyes closed for a few minutes, sit or stand as quietly as possible and listen to the sounds around you.

Can you hear the wind? The rustling leaves of the tree? Any birds or bugs?

How many different sounds do you hear? Make a list of them.

Can you imitate any of the sounds you hear?

2. Notice Your Surroundings

Go to an outdoor spot in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the evening. Notice everything you can about the surroundings. What is the same, what has changed? Make a list each time and compare them.



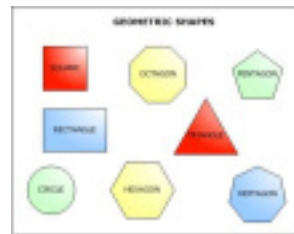
3. Nature Rubbings

Take several sheets of paper and some crayons. Do nature rubbings...
Rub the bark of trees, the sidewalk, or a bench. See how many different textures you can do rubbings of.



4. Shape Hike

See how many geometric shapes you can find while outside.
How many triangle shapes, diamond shapes, square shapes, circle shapes, sphere shapes?



Make a list.

After making the list, see how many of them are pointy? How many of them are soft?

6. Go on a scavenger hike

You can even do this at a mall - where you go ahead of time to write down the list of things the kids need to find - and then they need to write down where that particular item was e.g. a particular sign on a shop window.

Activities for Nature Adventures

7. Leaf rubbings

Collect leaves of different sizes and shapes; place them under a sheet of paper and do crayon rubbings of them.



8. Incher Hike

Go on a hike in your yard or around the block and see how many things you can find that are an inch long, 6 inches long, and a foot long. Compare your lists. What was the most unusual thing you found? The most colorful?



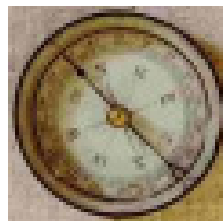
9. Color Hike

Go on a hike and write down all of the things you see that are different colors. How many colors did you see?



10. Compass hike

Learn how to use a compass and go on a simple compass hike. Then make it more difficult



Activities for Nature Adventures



11. Treasure hunt

Set up a treasure hunt and set the kids off for a treasure hunt in the yard, on your street, or at the park.

12. Knots

Learn how to tie different types of knots:

Square knots



Bowline knots



Half Hitches

Clove Hitch

Sheepshank



Do macrame projects with knots or make a knot ladder

For additional nature activities: 52 Nature Activities by Lynn Gordon Go to: www.chroniclebooks.com

Additional Outdoor Activities

13. Play badminton



14.



Play croquet

15. Play horseshoes



Additional Outdoor Activities

16. Play wall ball



Wall Ball

When I was a kid I played this all the time. Then, when I had kids, we played this.

Materials

- * Tennis ball or large bounce ball
- * Wall

Directions

This is a game for one or two players. The idea is to throw and catch the ball against the wall according to a sequence of tasks. When you miss, you lose your turn and have to start all over the next time.

Here are some tasks:

- * Meensies: Throw the ball and catch it before it bounces—10 times
- * Onesies: Throw the ball and catch it after one bounce—9 times
- * Clapsies: Throw the ball and clap hands before you catch it—8 times
- * Kneesies: Throw the ball and touch your knees before catching it—7 times
- * Twosies: Throw the ball and catch it after two bounces—6 times
- * Under the knee: Lift your leg and throw the ball under the knee before catching it—5 times
- * Highsies: Throw the ball as high as you can before catching it—4 times
- * Touch the ground: Throw the ball and catch it after touching the ground—2 times
- * Turn around: Throw the ball and catch it after turning completely around—1 time

Note: After going through the sequence without missing, go through again using the right hand only, then with the left hand only.



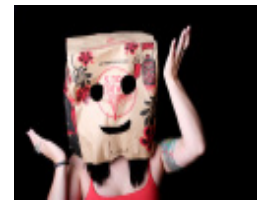
Activities to Do at Home

Activities to Do at Home

1. Make paper-bag puppets & put on a puppet show
Make them characters from your favorite nursery rhyme or book
Use lunch-size bags, crayons, markers, buttons, yarn, & glue



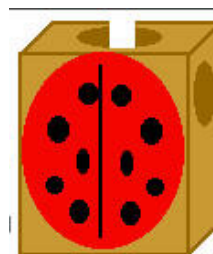
2. Make grocery sack 'puppet' heads you can wear & put on a play or a skit with them - cut holes for eyes & slits for arm holes.



e.g.: You can make a cute ladybug costume from a large paper grocery bag.
You can also make antennae by wrapping two pipe cleaners onto a plastic headband.

Supplies needed:

- * 1 large paper grocery bag
- * Scissors
- * Red tempera paint
- * Black marker or black tempera paint



1. Cut a large paper grocery bag open along the seam (this will be the back of the costume). Then cut a neck hole in what was the bottom of the bag.
2. Cut an arm hole on each side of the bag.
3. Paint a large red circle (using red tempera paint) on the front on the bag. Let the paint dry.
4. Draw or paint a black line down the center of the circle and draw black spots on both sides. To make cute antennae, wrap two pipe cleaners on a plastic headband. Make loops at the top.

Activities to Do at Home

3. Make sock puppets, use old socks, felt pieces for tongue, buttons for eyes, cut the plastic rings that hold soda cans together for 'glasses', cotton balls, etc. Put together a skit or play with several puppets.



4. Do Draw & Tell Stories
Go on-line and do a search on Google for Draw and Tell Stories or go to your local library for them.

5. Bake cookies, pastries, or cakes together (Use fractions while you bake.)

6. Cooking lessons, learn how to follow a recipe in a book.



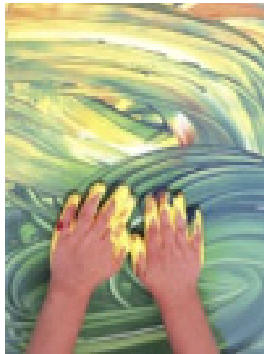
7. Set up an obstacle course in your garage or a room in your house

Activities to Do at Home

8. Play musical chairs



9. Draw or paint (water color or poster paint)



10. Finger paint



11. Do soap carvings - ivory soap is good for this

12. Build a model car or airplane



Activities to Do at Home

13. Paper bag stories: Place 5 - 6 different unconnected objects in a bag and then have the kids make up a story using each of the items in it. e.g.: hot water bottle, scarf, string, can, boot, etc.

14. Paper bag skits: Place 5 - 6 different objects in a bag and then have the kids make up a skit using each of the items in it. e.g.: hat, ball, clip, envelope, toy, etc.



15. Play Simon Says or Mother May I

16. Dress up and act as your favorite character in a book you are reading for the day



Activities to Do at Home

17. Have a backwards day where you eat dinner in the morning and breakfast in the evening.
18. Make homemade instruments - use cans or boxes with strings, rubber or leather, etc to make them.

Maracas: plastic eggs filled with rice or popcorn kernels - glue them shut with a hot glue gun



Cymbals: Make cymbals out of old tin foil pans. Attach a string for a handle.

Sand Blocks:

Materials:

pieces of wood (1X4 cut into 4" lengths)

felt rectangles cut to fit blocks of wood

medium grit sandpaper cut same size as felt pieces

white or other glue

Polyurethane and brush to seal wood



Rhythm Sticks: Two wooden dowels should be given to each interested child. The sticks can be decorated with paint or markers.

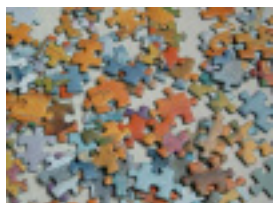


Kazoos: Make Kazoos with empty paper towel rolls and waxed paper. The children can decorate the outside of the kazoos with markers. Place a piece of waxed paper over one end of the roll and secure it with a rubber band. Poke 2 or 3 small holes into the waxed paper allowing sound to be produced.



Activities to Do at Home

19. Do a Jigsaw Puzzle as a family



20. Build a blanket fort



21. Have a movie/video day



Activities to Do at Home

22. Play charades



23. Read together



24. Play board games - turn your game night into a game day.



25. Look at family photo albums, put current photos into a photo album





Recommended Games for Game Night

Recommended Games for Game Night

1. The Sentence Zone: Learn English Grammar while having fun. (age 6 - adult)



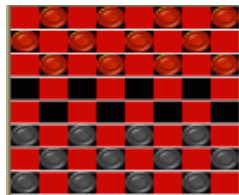
2. The Comprehension Zone: Rocket Rap:
Improve reading & listening comprehension while having fun. (age 7 - adult)



3. The Math Zone: Improve calculation accuracy while having fun. (age 7 - adult)



4. Checkers (age 6 - adult)



5. Chess (age 8 - adult)



Recommended Games for Game Night

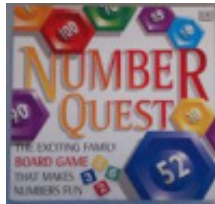
6. Uno (age 7 - adult)



7. Rummy Cube (age 8 - adult)



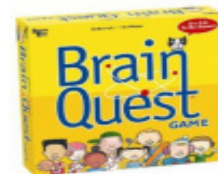
8. Number Quest (age 7 - adult)



9. Equate: Learn about equations while having fun (age 8 - adult)



10. Brain Quest: Learn factual knowledge while having fun. (age 7 - adult)



Recommended Games for Game Night

11. Monopoly (age 8 - adult)



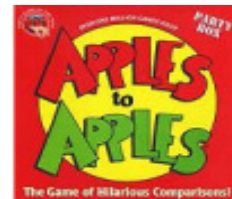
12. Quiddler (age 8 - adult)



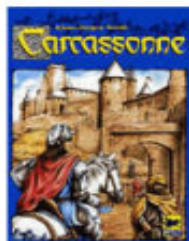
13. Set (age 6 - adult)



13. Apples to Apples (age 7 - adult) (There are several versions of the game.)



14. Carcassonne (age 10 - adult)



15. Settlers of Catan (age 8 - adult)



Recommended Games for Game Night

16. Dominoes (age 7 - adult)



17. Chinese Checkers (age 7 - adult)



18. Scrabble (age 8 - adult)



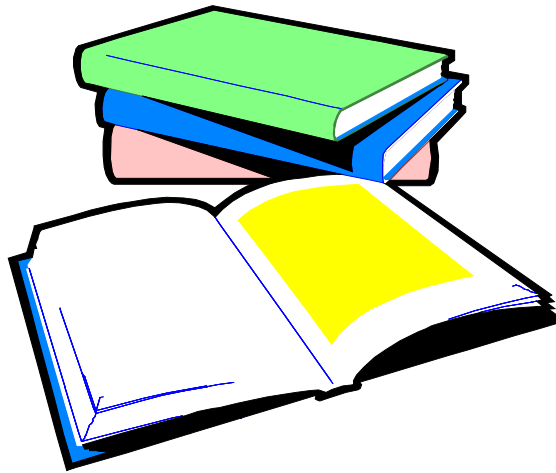
19. Upwords (age 7 - adult)



20. Trivial Pursuit for Kids (age 8 - adult)



Good Books To Read



Good Books To Read

Primary Grade Books

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day - by Judith Viorst

Amazing Grace - by Mary Hoffman

Ameila Bedelia - by Peggy Parish

Are You My Mother? - by Philip Eastman

The Art Lesson - by Tomie De Poala

Beezus and Ramona - by Beverly Cleary

The Big Dipper - by Franklyn M. Branley

Blueberries for Sal - by Robert McCloskey

The Bracelet - by Yoshiko Uchida

Caps for Sale - by Esphyr Slobodkina

The Cat in the Hat - by Dr. Seuss

Clifford the Big Red Dog - by Norman Bridwell



Don't forget to check out the Award Winning Books for Pre-school - Primary Grades on page 39.

Good Books To Read

More Primary Grade Books

Curious George - by Hans Augusto Rey

Does the Moon Change Shape? - by Meish Goldish

Don't Call Me Pig - A Javelina Story - by Conrad Storad

A Giraffe and a Half - by Shel Silverstein

The Giving Tree - by Shel Silverstein

Green Eggs and Ham - by Dr. Seuss

Happy Birthday, America! - by Marsha Wilson Chall

Harold and the Purple Crayon - by Crockett Johnson

Honeybees - by Deborah Heiligman



Don't forget to check out the Award Winning Books for Pre-school - Primary Grades on page 39.

Good Books To Read

4th - 6th grade

The View from Saturday - by E. L. Konigsburg

And One for All - by Theresa Nelson

Are You There God? It's Me Margaret - by Judy Blume

The Bad Beginning - by Lemony Snicket

Bat 6 - by Virginia Euwer Wolff

Because of Winn-Dixie - by Kate DiCamillo

Bud, Not Buddy - by Christopher Paul Curtis

Cat Crafts - by Linda Hendry

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory - by Roald Dahl

Charlotte's Web - by E.B. White

Dog Crafts - by Linda Hendry

Field Trips - by Jim Arnosky



Don't forget to check out the Award Winning Books for 4th and Up on page 40.

Good Books To Read

More 4th - 6th grade

A Giraffe and a Half - by Shel Silverstein

The Great Gilly Hopkins - by Katherine Paterson

Habibi - by Naomi Shihab Nye

Half Magic - by Edgar Eager

Harriet the Spy - by Louise Fitzhugh

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets - by J. K. Rowling

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire - by J. K. Rowling

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix - by J.K. Rowling

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban - by J. K. Rowling

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone - by J. K. Rowling

Holes - by Louis Sachar

The House of Sixty Fathers - by Meinder DeJong



Don't forget to check out the Award Winning Books for 4th and Up on page 40.

Good Books To Read

7th - 9th grade

Across Five Aprils - by Irene Hunt

Adam of the Road - by Elizabeth Janet Gray

Anne of Avonlea - by Lucy Maud Montgomery

Anne of Green Gables - by Lucy Maud Montgomery

Anne of the Island - by Lucy Maud Montgomery

April Morning - by Howard Fast

Bridge to Terabithia - by Katherine Paterson

Catherine, Called Birdy - by Karen Cushman

Chasing Redbird - by Sharon Creech

All Creatures Great and Small - by James Herriot

Among the Hidden - by Margaret Haddix

Brian's Winter - by Gary Paulsen

**READ
THE
BOOK**

Don't forget to check out the Award Winning Books for 7th and Up on page 40.

Good Books To Read

7th - 9th grade

The Cay - by Theodore Taylor

Children of the River - by Linda Crew

The Christmas Box - by Richard Paul Evans

December Stillness - by Mary Downing Hahn

Dacey's Song - by Cynthia Voigt

The Endless Steppe - by Esther Hautzig

The Golden Compass - by Philip Pullman

Guts: The True Stories Behind the Hatchet Books - by Gary Paulsen

Gutsy Girls: Young Women Who Dare - by Tina Schwager

The Agony and the Ecstasy - by Irving Stone

Both Sides of Time - by Caroline Cooney

Franny and Zooey - by J.D. Salinger



Don't forget to check out the Award Winning Books for 7th and Up on page 40.

Good Books To Read

7th - 9th grade

Friday Night Lights - by H.G. Bissinger

The Good Earth - by Pearl S. Buck

Hatchet - by Gary Paulsen

The Hobbit - by J. R. R. Tolkien

In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex - by Nat Philbrick

Johnny Tremain - by Esther Forbes

Julius Caesar - by William Shakespeare

The Old Man and the Sea - by Ernest Hemingway

The Road from Coorain - by Jill Ker Conway

Romeo and Juliet - by William Shakespeare



Don't forget to check out the Award Winning Books for 7th and Up on page 40.

Award Winning Books To Read

Award Winning Books



Pre-school-3rd

Make Way for Ducklings by Robert McCloskey This Caldecott Medal winner is a great book for preschoolers, kindergarteners and beginning readers.

Frog and Toad Are Friends by Arnold Lobel a Caldecott Award winner, is one of the best classic picture story books.

Kitten's First Full Moon by Kevin Henkes, winner of the 2005 Caldecott Medal, a good children's picture book for toddlers and preschoolers.

Freight Train by Donald Crews, a Caldecott honor book

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak: Caldecott Medal, Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for Illustration and ALA Notable Children's Books award. for preschoolers, kindergarteners and beginning readers.

Blueberries for Sal by Robert McCloskey. Preschoolers, kindergarteners and beginning readers will enjoy this Caldecott honor book, one of the best picture books for children.

Madeline by Ludwig Bemelmans, Caldecott Honor book. A great story to read aloud.

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus by Emmy Award-winning writer Mo Caldecott Honor Book. The humorous story is great for reading aloud.

Don't forget to check out the Award Winning Books for 4th and Up on page 40.

Award Winning Books To Read

More Award Winning Books

4th - 7th

The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread
by Kate DiCamillo (Fairy Tale)
(Newbery Honor Book 2004) (Grades 4 and up)

The View from Saturday by E.L. Konigsburg (Fiction)
(Newbery Medal 1996) (Grades 4-6)

Pictures of Hollis Woods by Patricia Reilly Giff (Fiction)
(Newbery Honor Book 2003) (Grades 4-7)

Shoeless Joe and Me by Dan Gutman (Fiction)
(Publisher's Weekly) (Grades 4-7)

5th - 8th

My Daniel by Pam Conrad (Fiction)
(Notable/Best Books ALA) (Grades 5-8)

Traitor: The Case of Benedict Arnold by Jean Fritz (Biography)
(Notable/Best Book ALA) (Grades 5-8)

When Zachary Beaver Came to Town by Kimberly Willis Holt (Fiction)
(Notable/Best Books ALA) (Grades 5-8)

6th - 8th

The Skin I'm In by Sharon Flake (Fiction)
(Kirkus) (Notable Best Books ALA) (Grades 6-8)

Touching Spirit Bear by Ben Mikaelson (Fiction)
(Notable/Best Books ALA) (Grades 6-8)

Walk Two Moons by Sharon Creech (Fiction)
(Newbery Medal 1995) (Grades 6 and up)

7th and up

The Night Journey by Kathryn Lasky (Historical Fiction)
(Notable/Best Books ALA) (Grades 7 and up)

Nothing but the Truth: A Documentary Novel by Avi (Fiction)
(Newbery Honor Book 1992) (Grades 7 and up)

**READ
THE
BOOK**



Families that play together stay together.

Products mentioned that are available at <http://www.bonnierrylearning>

Five Minutes to Better Reading Skills: A Fast Phonic Approach to Improve Reading Skills

Ten Minutes to Better Study Skills

The Sentence Zone

The Comprehension Zone: Rocket Rap

The Math Zone

Free articles and teaching tips available at: <http://www.bonnierry.com/blog/>