



6-10 YEAR-OLDS

SUNNY
IDEAS
FOR A
RAINY
DAY 3

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How To Use These Books

There is a *Sunny Ideas for a Rainy (or any other) Day* for each of these age groups: 2-6, 6-10, and 10-14. AND, there are multiple installments so that you can add a new age group or new activities to your collection. This is installment 3.

What will you get?

- ♥ A few general developmental attributes of a typically developing child for each age year
- A new activity for each age group (feel free to mix and match)
- Instructions for each activity and a list of materials (supplies are easy to find)
- A parent key for:
 - Prep/set up time (1- 4 clocks) 
 - Messy /clean up (1- 4 sponges) 
 - Level of supervision (green, yellow, red)   
 - Why do this activity (besides fun, of course) ?
 - Ideas for extending or adding on +
- Templates for activities when needed
- A list of resources for further reading

Sensory Grammar?

Like you, many parents sent their very young children to a pre-school or childcare facility that did a good job of offering “hands on” learning experiences so they could explore the world actively. Unfortunately, by the time most children hit “real school” attention to sensory experiences dwindles at best, and at worst, disappears completely.

I remember being appalled that my son’s Kindergarten had done away with blocks, dramatic play, and activities that directly engaged the bodies of children (though recess was still intact).

School districts did and still do this because of misguided ideas about how to address their own anxiety over standardized testing; believing that more time “on task” (though there’s nothing wrong with tasks) and constant teacher directed pencil and paper practice of abstract concepts will lead to quicker more measurable results.

In this scenario, the politics of education appears to override biological fact; that significant portions of brain-capacity are aimed at developing *hand skills*. And, that current memory research indicates our memories are composed of “strands” of sensory and verbal data located in disparate areas of the brain to be integrated as needed.

Below is extra quick video showing a homunculus: a representation of what our bodies would look like if our limbs were proportionally the same as the size of the brain space devoted to them.

<http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/flash/hom.html>

I’m figuring you get the implications for education. So much learning occurs when children (and adults) can touch, manipulate, and interact “sensually” with the world. Because we live in and learn through our bodies, the more we can “do” to learn the more easily the abstract becomes concrete, information is stored in multiple ways, finally becoming comprehensible and retrievable.

This is how we are made, how we’ve evolved as a species. We learn by movement, by doing things.

In this installment of *Sunny Ideas for a Rainy Day* for 6 – 10 year-olds, I describe sensory-based activities that underpin grammar. Yup – grammar. Check it out!

Judy

Six - Seven

- ♥ Can learn 20 new words per day!
- ♥ Teeth are changing continuously.
- ♥ Industrious, enthusiastic, receptive, love surprises.
- ♥ Still asks questions for reassurance from adult.
- ♥ Willing to ask open-ended questions.
- ♥ The process of discovery is more important than the outcome.
- ♥ Can generate and respond to Who, What, Where, When & Why questions.
- ♥ They can be active in reading and writing stories.
- ♥ Friendships are not yet based on appreciating the qualities of another.
- ♥ Can follow 3 step directions in sequence.
- ♥ Easily upset when there are changes in plans.
- ♥ It's easier to learn rules for a game, but change them to win, or suit needs – competitive.



Activity: Texture Scavenger Hunt



You'll need:

1. A list of available items that have very different textures – sample on pg.11. You might want to draw them too.
2. Paper & writing utensils
3. Bag or basket
4. Flat surface that you make a mess on
5. Clipboard (optional)
6. Timer (optional)
7. Hat that says “scavenger hunt” on it (optional)

What to do:

1. Hide the items around your home.

2. Decide how long you will give your child to find 5 out of the 6 items (I recommend 10 minutes) and set the timer if you are using one.
3. Send you child (with list, pencil and optional hat and clipboard) to find the items. She will check them off as she finds them and put them in the bag.
4. When she returns, have your child explore what each item feels like on their skin (sometimes it helps to have eyes closed) and record all the descriptors on a sheet of paper. *It doesn't matter if she describes using her other senses, or different words for different parts of the item, as long as they are sensations, you're good.*
5. Some items can be opened for exploration of other textures. An avocado is excellent for this.
6. Keep asking "what else?" to encourage more language. When there are no more words, add some of your own if you wish.
7. When you have a good list of describing words, you can introduce (or re-enforce) the word "adjective," if you like.

? Your child's Language Arts teacher will love you for doing this! Sensory experience is the basis of descriptive language and the more you can give your child concrete experiences and attach language to it, the better for writing, verbal expression and reading comprehension.

? Observation and description skills are essential for scientific inquiry.

+ Can be done with several children, teams, for a party.

+ Try **reversing** next time you play: Give your child a list of adjectives and challenge him to find items in the house that match the texture.

+ Write a story using some of the words you came up with.

Seven - Eight

- ♥ Can learn 20 new words per day!
- ♥ Fidgety. Need physical activity.
- ♥ Can plan the steps to complete a project.
- ♥ Being read to is enjoyable: books beyond their reading level.
- ♥ Defines a friend as someone who is like them in some way and shares similar interests.
- ♥ Can follow complex 3 to 4 step directions.
- ♥ Serious and can be moody, intense, hypersensitive, & self conscious – doesn't like making mistakes.
- ♥ May imitate peers to feel like part of the group, but prefers to work alone to completion.
- ♥ Interested in the world around them, curious, inventive.



Activity: My Action Map



You'll need:

1. Large paper 18x24 or smaller pieces joined together
2. Markers & other writing implement

What to do:

1. To warm up your child's thinking, tell him to imagine himself riding on an eagle, cloud, or star right above your home. Looking down, he can see all the parts of your home at once as if the roof wasn't there. He has special powers to see through it ☺.

2. From that vantage point have him draw the shape of the inside of your home and define the rooms. If drawing isn't appealing, he can cut paper to make the shapes of the rooms and put them together.
3. Next generate a list of verbs for each room, reflecting what *he* likes to do in each one, e.g., for the kitchen: cook, eat, dunk, cut, stir, heat, bite, chew, talk, pour, drink, etc. Sometimes it helps to go into each room to make the list.
4. Keep going until you've got quite a long list for each room. Introduce or re-enforce the word "verb." In this case you are only using active verbs.
5. Now transfer the words onto the "map." Have your child do as much of this as he is willing. Make it fun, use colors etc.
6. Looking at the map, ask your child to tell you where he thinks he spends the most time, what he likes doing best, and indicate this with a design or sticker.

? This is a mapping activity and language activity rolled into one! Your child will be making a map based on spaces he knows well –the best way to learn this skill.

? This activity makes learning parts of speech relevant. If you do the previous activity, Texture Scavenger Hunt, you will have made adjectives relevant too!

? You may be amazed at what you learn about your child from this activity, if you both talk freely about what you do, what you like to do, and how much you get to do it. Seeing where and how he spends his time might be eye-opening for your child too.

+ If he likes this activity, it might be possible for your child to map places he spends a good deal of time, like school, or the playground, or a relative's or friend's house. It will be more challenging to do it from memory.

Eight - Nine

- ♥ Can learn 20 new words per day!
- ♥ Adjusts better to change.
- ♥ Enjoys humor, cooperation and sociability while working.
- ♥ Industrious, in a hurry, tends to underestimate size of projects.
- ♥ Needs a good deal of physical activity, but tires easily, needs short breaks.
- ♥ Tends to exaggerate.
- ♥ Identifies a best friend, having (at least) one is very important at this age.
- ♥ Recognizes what characterizes a “good” friend.
- ♥ More balanced when coping with frustration and failure.
- ♥ Recognizes mixtures and blends of feelings.
- ♥ Can work cooperatively toward a shared goal.



Activity: Winter Wonders *A Noun Collage*



You'll need:

1. Magazines & newspapers with winter themes
2. Scissors
3. Glue
4. Large paper 18x24 (if you have it)
5. Paper for list
6. Markers and drawing implements
7. Any other art supplies you like: paint, pom-poms, confetti, stickers etc.
8. Fixative optional (I like workable fixative)

What to do:

1. If you don't live where it's cold in the winter, have your child either create a collage about holidays that happen in the winter, or make one about cold places – or both.
2. Go through the magazine cutting or tearing out “things” that make you and your child think about winter and/or winter holidays.
3. Feel free to draw items, decorate and add to the collage as you glue the items onto the large paper.
4. Keep a list of “winter things” and/or “holiday things.” If your child is into it, have her write the list, or you can record what she says.
5. Re-enforce the word “noun.” It could be a good time to separate out the Proper Nouns and the common nouns to tell your child the difference.
6. You can stop here or: take a photo of the collage, import the photo to

? This activity makes learning parts of speech relevant. If you do the previous activities, Texture Scavenger Hunt and My Action Map, you will have made adjectives and verbs relevant too!

+ Thank You Note: take a photo of the collage and use it to create thank you notes for holiday gifts. You can include a photo or drawing of the gift in the collage too!

Nine – Ten

- ♥ Looks for explanations of how things work, why things happen the way they do.
- ♥ Issues of fairness and justice become important and interesting.
- ♥ Complains about aches and pains.
- ♥ Can be critical of self and others, anxious and easily worried.
- ♥ Wants to “make deals” with adults and peers.
- ♥ Can manage two concepts simultaneously.
- ♥ Keeping it light, laughing, and good-natured humor go a long way.
- ♥ Increased sense of truthfulness and trustworthiness.
- ♥ Often outspoken and critical of adults, although still dependent on adult approval.
- ♥ Values the process and the outcome.



Activity: Holiday Mad Lib



You'll need:

1. Print Mad Lib of *'Twas The Night Before Christmas* on page 12
2. Writing implement
3. Could help to have done the previous activities in this eBook

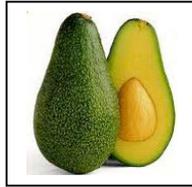
What to do:

1. Fill in the blanks.
2. Read and laugh.
3. Repeat.

? This activity is a fun way to practice parts of speech with a poem your child probably feels too old and too cool for now. Making it funny will appeal.

Texture Scavenger Hunt

Avocado



Hairbrush



Sand Paper



Onion



Petroleum Jelly



Other suggestions: Peanut Butter, Velcro, scarf, bar of soap, pantyhose, velvet, wrapping ribbon, twine, cornmeal, gourd, melon, cactus, raw broccoli, tissues.

'Twas The Night Before Christmas

adapted from Clement Clarke Moore

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house,
Not a creature was stirring, not even a _____ (noun).

The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that _____ (Proper Noun) soon would be there.

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of _____ (plural noun) danced in their heads.

And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's _____ (noun).

When out on the lawn there arose such a _____ (sound/noun),
I sprang from the bed to see what was the _____ (noun).
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the _____ (noun).

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below.
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny _____ (plural noun).

With a little old driver, so _____ (adjective) and _____ (adjective),
I knew in a moment it must be _____ (famous person/Proper Noun).

More rapid than _____ (noun) his coursers they came,
And he _____ -ed (verb/past tense), and _____ -ed (verb/past tense), and
called them by name!

"Now _____ (first name/Proper Noun)! now, _____ (first name/Proper Noun)!!
now, _____ (first name/Proper Noun)!
and Vixen!

On, _____ (first name/Proper Noun)!! On, _____ (first name/Proper Noun)!
on, _____ (first name/Proper Noun)!
and Blitzen!

To the top of the porch! To the top of the wall!
Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!"

His eyes-how they twinkled! His _____ (noun) how merry!
His cheeks were like _____ (adjective) _____ (plural noun),

his _____(noun) like a cherry!

He had a broad face and a little _____(adjective) belly,
That shook when he _____-ed (verb/past tense), like a bowlful of
_____ (kind of food/noun)!

And laying his _____(noun) aside of his _____(noun),
And giving a _____(verb), up the _____(noun) he
_____ (verb)!

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, 'ere he drove out of sight,

"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a _____(adjective) _____(noun)!"

Additional Resources

(See *Sunny Ideas For A Rainy Day1 and 2* for more)

Websites for Education

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Experiential_education

explanation of “Experiential Education”

Good Books for Parents to Read

Raising Lifelong Learners: A Parent's Guide by Lucy Caulkins

The Whole-Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind by Tina Payne Bryson and Daniel J. Siegel

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The information in this book is culled from years of experience in the classroom, from readings (see Resources), attending conferences and working in collaboration with inventive, interesting and extraordinary teachers. I cannot name them all, but some contributed so much to my understanding of children, child development, teaching and creating curriculum that I must name them.

So thank you to:

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Barbara Allen-Lyall, who taught me so much about mathematics and about the brain.

Marcia Zimmerman, who thought up the original “Block Recipes” (See *Sunny Ideas* for 2-6 year-olds) and whose compelling and inventive activities supported the learning of so many Pre-K and Kindergarten students.

Chris Mutolo, whose passion for reaching every child and whose skills at breaking down complicated procedures into small steps helped me do the same.

Unfortunately, I can’t identify where all of the activities in this book come from. I’m guessing that it was a teacher, one of my sisters, or a camp counselor that showed me some of them.

Thank you,

Judy