



10-14 YEAR-OLDS

**SUNNY
IDEAS
FOR A
RAINY
DAY**

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The Kids Are Alright

One of my favorites images in a children's book is on the opening page of *The Cat in the Hat*, by Dr. Seuss. Two forlorn children sit in wooden chairs, looking out the window on a grey and dismal day. It says,

The sun did not shine.
It was too wet to play.
So we sat in the house
All that cold, cold, wet day.

I love this for so many reasons. For one, I know the delicious mayhem that is about to ensue. Another, is that it's a given that the children want and need to be playing outside. I can still remember the feeling of my 6 year-old nose pressed against the window as I yearned to go outside when the weather wouldn't allow.

Needless to say, there have been extraordinary changes in our world since "Sally and I" were created in 1957. Children have become technologically savvy beyond some of our wildest dreams. The sheer amount of information generated and being accessed by children and adults is unprecedented. Many people, including politicians and some of our leading educators, assume that the brains of today's children, and therefore their developmental needs, have changed dramatically. To my relief and to the relief of those of us who have worked with and observed children daily, this is not the case.

Children's bodies, along with their brains, are growing in the same basic ways at the same times they always have (see note). If this were not true, babies would be sitting up at 2 weeks, writing at 2 years and doing calculus by 10. Seem silly? Still, parents are inundated with false information. We (I'm a parent too) get nervous because we are pressured into believing that today's children need to be doing more cognitively advanced tasks, earlier and earlier.

Let's take a deep breath. Your children, my children, *the world's children*, aren't a new species of human (okay, yes, it feels like that sometimes). Instead, they are traveling along a well-worn developmental path that can guide us if we use the information with discernment. Awareness of developmental yardsticks can help us relax into parenting. It helps us judge whether a school, classroom or activity is appropriate. Informed but not anxious, we can have the peace of mind to let our children grow and learn without pressure to plow ahead of what is nurturing, now.

It helps to remember that *the* essential relationship remains between you and your child. It's the foundation upon which everything else rests. Fundamental to that relationship are qualities: openness, safety and awareness, which lead to golden moments of joy and [connection](#). I always want more of those. At every age.

Obviously, this book is not about encouraging pandemonium in your home a la *The Cat in the Hat*. It is about using years of accumulated knowledge of child development I've garnered as a teacher, parent of two, teacher trainer, and life coach to guide you in providing activities that are not only enjoyable, but encourage you and your child to connect, grow and learn. Rain or shine.²

Notes:






1. An article in the Harvard Education Letter, *Kids Haven't Changed: Kindergarten Has*, (Pappano, Sept./Oct. 2010) states that a national study conducted by the world renowned Gesell Institute For Human Development shows that children are still progressing along the cognitive and behavioral continuum that Gesell identified first in 1925, then in 1940 and in later studies by colleagues in 1964, 1979 and again in 2010.

2. Of course each child is unique (this should go without saying), therefore, you are free to mix and match activities because you know your child.

How To Use These Books

There will be a *Sunny Ideas for a Rainy Day* for each of these age groups: 2 - 6, 6 -10, 10 -14. AND, there will be multiple installments so that you add to the activities you already have.

What will you get?

- ♥ A few general developmental attributes of a typically developing child for each age year
- 2 activities per age (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

A Note About 10- 14 Year Olds

You've probably already noticed that your child has or is cultivating pronounced and specific interests. A wonderful development! And, one that makes it more challenging for me to recommend activities for him or her. This is why I've chosen one activity for each age group that is devoted to media literacy. Every one of our children is exposed to media (some would say, flooded) and if accepted without critical analysis, media can have a negative impact on healthy development. As a bonus, the skills involved in analyzing media help cognitive growth across the disciplines.

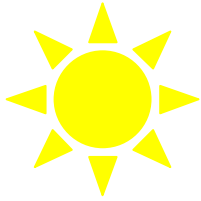
Also, most children in this age range want to spend a good deal of time alone or with peers. However, this doesn't mean that they no longer want and need to feel connected to you. A rule of thumb is to look for openings and to [listen](#) closely.

It helps to ask your child to teach you about something they know well. Learning a new skill from your child is a wonderful opportunity to model light-hearted risk taking, mistake making, humor, and resilience – something that comes harder in these pre and early adolescent years.

Ten - Eleven

- ♥ Love factual information and collecting it.
- ♥ Good at memorizing.
- ♥ Can think about and enjoy organizing-type principles like classification.
- ♥ Generally content.
- ♥ Bodies growing rapidly – need frequent breaks and snacks.
- ♥ Some will have begun puberty.
- ♥ Social groupings, popularity and social hierarchy take on importance.
- ♥ Cooperative, inclined to problem solving and mediation.
- ♥ Greater understanding of other's feelings and intentions.
- ♥ Can follow multiple storylines at once.

- ♥ Enjoys group bonding experiences and working with younger children.



Activity: Ad Smarter



It's the Media, Do You Know Where the Ads Are?

You'll need:

1. A computer with Internet
2. Magazines (ones of interest to your child)

What to do:

1. Go to www.admongo.gov and play the online game with your child. Discuss your answers together.
2. Visit the website for [Girl's Life magazine](#), or [Sports Illustrated for Kids](#) and see how many advertisements you can find together.
 - Ask yourselves some of these questions: Is this an ad? How do you know? What is it trying to get you to do? What is it for? What problem does it think you have? Do you have that problem? Will the product solve it? Who is responsible for the ad? Who is the ad talking to? What is the ad trying to get you to think?
3. Without looking at the magazine yourself, ask your child to go through a magazine and take note of as many ads as possible, looking carefully for the ones that don't appear to be ads. Now see if you can find them.

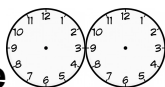
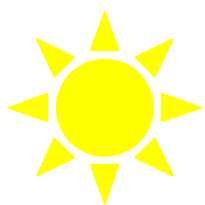
? This activity helps you and your child join together to analyze the advertisements you see and hear.

? It develops critical thinking skills: observation, questioning, interpretation, analysis, inference, evaluation and explanation.

? Media literacy has become a necessity in our world today and on into the foreseeable future

+ Instead of magazines, go to favorite websites, computer and/or video games.

+ Or, look at catalogues (all ads) and discuss what the ads might be trying to have you think and/or feel.



Activity: Cookies for a Cause *Practice Fractions and Help Others Too*

You'll need:

1. The cookie recipe on page 19

What to do:

Part 1

1. Help your child decide who will receive your donation.
 - Does your child have a passion that might have an organization related to it? For example, a passion for sports could lead to finding an organization that donates sports equipment to children who don't have any, or to Special Olympics, or disabled athletes. Let's say your child loves horses, you might find an

organization that takes care of abandoned horses or provides horse therapy.

2. Research this with your child. Here are some sites with ideas:

- <http://www.parentdish.com/2009/01/07/kid-friendly-charities-to-encourage-your-children-to-give/>
- <http://www.more4kids.info/652/top-childrens-charities/>
- <http://www.charity.com/charities/Arts/index.shtml>

3. This recipe makes only 15 cookies.
4. Decide how many you'd like to make.
5. Have your child work out the needed changes in the recipe.
See ? below.
6. Gather the ingredients and get cooking!
7. Discuss how you will sell the cookies.

Part 2

1. Decide how much money you'd like to charge per cookie and calculate how much money you will make if you sell them all.

? Cooking is a fantastic way to bring fractions into the real world. If your child is not yet ready to calculate a doubled or tripled recipe, have him or her use the measuring cups to figure it out and write down the recipe as (s)he discovers it. For some, measuring accurately and observing the relationships between the ingredient amounts may be enough.

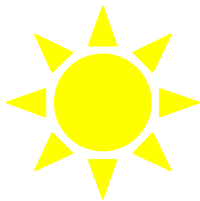
? If you haven't already, this is a wonderful age to have your child make choices about how to give to others, based on her or his passions. Research into happiness, strongly suggest that giving to others and gratitude are fundamental to life long happiness.

+ Ask friends to contribute items to a larger fundraiser.

+ Make posters and advertising for it (you can use some things you learned from Ad Smarter).

Eleven - Twelve

- ♥ Curiosity about and ability to identify with other cultures and time periods.
- ♥ Can grasp abstract concepts – including abstract humor.
- ♥ Body changes (some are in puberty) = body consciousness and strong confusing emotions.
- ♥ Focused on peers and what everyone else is doing – uses phone, texting, etc., to keep up.
- ♥ Dramatic and can appreciate complex social situations.
- ♥ Emphasis on physical appearance, including clothing.
- ♥ Can think about moral and ethical questions and confront issues of loss, separation, and exclusion.
- ♥ Challenges, argues, tests limits.
- ♥ Can be impulsive.
- ♥ Looks to learn new skills. Refine and practice old ones – not so much.
- ♥ Needs a good deal of physical activity, sleep, and breaks to recharge and distress.
- ♥ Likes to imagine self in adult roles.



Activity: Wrapping Paper Bracelets *Recycled Jewelry*



You'll need:

1. 2 designs of wrapping paper (recycled, or the end of the roll)
2. Clear tape
3. Scissors
4. Ruler

What to do:

1. Cut strips of wrapping paper into 24"x 2" strips.
2. Fold each strip three times lengthwise to make them $\frac{1}{4}$ ".
Note: If the wrapping paper is sturdy, cut strips $\frac{1}{2}$ " and fold once.
3. Tape or glue the strips along the long edges.
4. Take one of each design and tape them at a right angle to each other.
5. Fold the bottom paper design (call it A) over design B.
6. Now fold B over A.
7. Keep doing this until all the paper is folded. It will look like you are making an accordion box.
8. Tape the end.
9. Join the ends and voila! a bracelet.

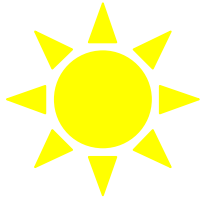
? This is a foundational activity that will lead to making more complicated weaving projects out of recycled materials.

? Handcrafts are calming, grounding and soothing, in general, and a particularly welcome break for this age group.

+ Experiment with a variety of paper design and color.

+ Try different lengths, widths and thicknesses to make a variety of sizes, including necklaces.

+ Give as gifts and/or teach someone else to make them.



Activity: Food, Beautiful Food



Ms. Burger, Are You Ready For Your Close-up?

You'll need:

1. It would be best to do the **AD Smarter** activity in the previous section before doing this one
2. Access to the Internet

What to do:

1. Ask your child what cardboard, glycerin, a blowtorch, glue, hairspray, cotton balls, and cigarette smoke have in common.
2. Now show your child the pictures of the food at this website <http://www.janinestyles.com/> (click on "portfolio" and then on "advertising"). Note: there may be beer in some photos.
3. Which of these foods would you like to eat? Are you hungry after looking at the photos? I was 😊.
4. How do they do they make the food look so beautiful and scrumptious?
5. Let your child know that there's a job called "food stylist."
 - This person's job is to make the food look fabulous. The stylist and the photographer work together to use tricks to make the food look delicious and beautiful. They also make sure food won't fall apart during the photo shoot or while making the commercial.

6. Why would a food company (like Dominos) want to use a food stylist?
7. Now go to this short clip of a food stylist explaining how she manipulates food for advertising.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUjz_eilX8k
8. These photos compare food from the ad or commercial to the very same items bought from the store or restaurant.
<http://www.thewvsr.com/adsvsreality.htm>
9. Yes, there are U.S. laws called “truth in advertising” that require an ad for say, pizza, to use the real pizza they’re selling in the ad. However, there are many legal ways to make it look much tastier. And, if they are selling rice, for example, they can use fake materials to make all the other food shown with the rice look spectacular.

Psst...a common trick for showing ice cream is to use mashed potatoes.

10. Go back to #1 and see what your answers are now.

? This activity helps children understand that food advertisements are constructed. And, that there are specific jobs unique to the field that support it, and that require skills.

? This activity helps you and your child join together to analyze the advertisements you see and hear. Deconstructing ads helps us all become less easily manipulated.

? Critical thinking skills: observation, questioning, interpretation, analysis, inference, evaluation and explanation used in this activity are skills that translate across all areas of learning.

+ Make your own “beautiful food.” Read the article below for some styling tips and try making spaghetti with tomato sauce look mouth watering! Or, try some of your own ideas.

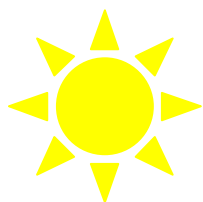
<http://www.peachpit.com/articles/article.aspx?p=1749175&seqNum=7>

+ If your child is interested in the truth in advertising rules as applied to food ads, try reading this simple article.

http://www.ehow.com/facts_7466829_law-fake-foodadvertisements.html

Twelve - Thirteen

- ♥ Body changes (some are in puberty) = body consciousness and strong confusing emotions.
- ♥ Very energetic + growth spurts = need to eat frequently.
- ♥ Cares deeply about peer opinions, grapples with decisions and defining ethical behavior for self.
- ♥ Uses a good deal of slang.
- ♥ Admires older teens.
- ♥ Self critical, especially of appearance.
- ♥ Can reason hypothetically.
- ♥ Moody.
- ♥ Can understand multiple perspectives, and sides to an argument.



Activity: Salt Signature Art



You'll need:

1. Paper and pencil
2. Paint brushes
3. White glue
4. Liquid watercolors or food coloring
5. Salt
6. A flat tray like a cookie sheet
7. Dish or container for extra salt
8. Eye dropper (optional)

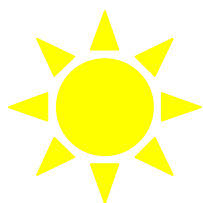
What to do:

1. Write signature in pencil on the paper – as large as possible.
2. Paint the glue, following the lines of the letters.
3. Pour the table salt over the glue.
4. Shake off excess salt and save for another painting.
5. Use the paintbrush to dab or eyedropper to drip some color onto the salt and *then watch as it gets absorbed and starts to travel down the lines.*
6. Keep adding color when needed.

Note: These painting won't last long.

? Some children will have been taught cursive writing in their schools and some have not. In either case, signatures are still needed for important documents, credit cards etc. This is wonderful practice with beautiful results.

- + Practice other cursive letters, make non-lettering designs.
- + Experiment with mixing colors and different kinds of salt (kosher, sea).
- + Research the scientific reasons the paint is absorbed and appears to move.



Activity: Logos



Everything Tastes Better with the Right Logo on it?

You'll need:

1. Access to the Internet

2. It helps to have already done the **AD Smarter** activity in the first section and **Food, Beautiful Food** in the previous one.

What to do:

1. Go to <http://www.finegardening.com/item/17828/plant-identification-quiz> and take the plant quiz (it's short).
2. Now go to <http://www.logoquiz.net/> and before taking the quiz, do you notice any ads? Where?
3. Take the logo quiz and discuss the experience. Try taking it separately. Compare your knowledge of common flowers to brand logos. Hmmm....
4. Read this article about an experiment with McDonald's. Discuss what happened.
<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/Healthday/story?id=4508191&page=1#.T5mhEuWVZac.email>
5. Does branding influence adults? Or teens?
Do logos make us think differently about a product? What's the purpose of a logo? Are logos effective?
6. Think of a similar "experiment" like the one in the article to test teens and/or adults for influence by logos.

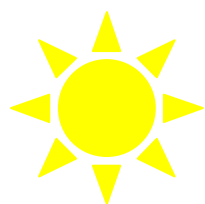
? I was surprised at my score on the logo quiz. You might be too. We all like to think that we are "strong-minded" and aren't susceptible to advertising. It will help to become media literate *with* your child, instead of lecturing about it or ignoring it.

? Setting up an experiment is fantastic for developing cognitive skills like planning, organizing, hypothesizing, problem-solving, tracking and analyzing data. These skills cross over many disciplines.

+ Your child might be interested in writing up his/her experiment and letting others know about it.

Thirteen - Fourteen

- ♥ 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, good-natured humor go a long way.



Activity: Family Names



Every Name Has a Story

You'll need:

1. Some kind of recording device (phone, digital recorder)
2. Camera or phone with photo capabilities
3. Access to family members

What to do:

1. If you haven't told your child the story of how you got your name, tell the story now.
2. Ask your child if (s)he would like to interview you about how, why, when, etc. (s)he was named. Use the recording device.
3. If interested, (s)he can interview family members about their names and record the interviews.

4. Take pictures of each person interviewed.

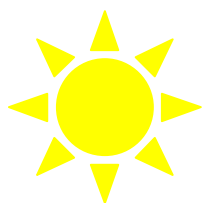
? Talking about names inevitably leads to questions about other aspects of family history and your child's personal history. It is a wonderful way to revisit their roots from their more mature perspective. Family stories can ground your teen as they start to explore "Who am I?" questions of this developmental phase.

+ Go to <http://storycorps.org/record-your-story/question-generator/> if your child is interested in more interviewing questions.

+ This activity goes very well with the Signature Art activity from the previous section.

+ Your child might want to compile the stories into a book, or audio recording.

+ Do research on your ancestors.



Activity: 5 Ways to Get a Teenager's Attention ●

You'll need:

1. Access to the internet

What to do:

1. It helps to have done the **Ad Smarter, Food, Beautiful Food, and Logos** activities from the previous sections before doing this activity.
2. If you were going to try and sell something to teens (market it to them), how would you get their attention?

3. Advertisers think teens will want to buy something if it makes them laugh, or look cool, sexy, brave, and keeps them from being a geek.
4. Watch the following commercials with your child. Which one(s) appeals to humor, looking cool, brave and non-geeky?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJQ8kNw5Nn0> - Pepsi flyer

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9pKUMvN7SU> - Red Bull

<http://www.welovead.com/en/works/details/842zhrww> - Sprite

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYywiQ3-6To> - Pepsi

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tt6C6P3bJq8> - Mountain Dew

Note: Don't forget to notice the ads on YouTube. Also, you might want to hide the comments for these commercials.

5. Consider these questions:
 - What is the commercial trying to get you to do? What is it for? What problem does it think you have? Do you have that problem? Will the product solve it? Who is responsible for the ad? What is the ad trying to get you to think? Do you need that product? Is the product healthy for you?
6. If your teen is interested, have him or her write a commercial for something (s)he doesn't want to do, eat, or own, using one of the strategies from the commercials viewed to be persuasive.

? This activity helps you and your child join together to analyze the commercials you see and hear.

? It develops critical thinking skills: observation, questioning, interpretation, analysis, inference, evaluation and explanation.

? Media literacy has become a necessity in our world today and on into the foreseeable future

+ Investigate commercials that are targeted to you, the adult. Be appropriately honest with your child about what influences you, and why.

+ Film the commercial your child @e Á !ã^} (or you wr[te together) and enlist other friends and family.

Recipe for Chocolate Mint Cookies

Makes 15 cookies

Ingredients:

- 1 cups semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 cups milk chocolate chips
- 10 unwrapped Andes candies (chocolate mints)
- 1/16 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 1/2 (9-ounce) package plain chocolate wafer cookies
- Waxed paper

Preparation:

Stovetop Directions:

In medium double boiler combine milk chocolate chips and semisweet chocolate chips. Stir until melted and smooth.

Stir in mint candies until melted and smooth.

Add peppermint extract until combined.

Dip each cookie into the chocolate mixture. Gently shake off excess chocolate and place on waxed paper to cool and set. Store in cool place.

Microwave Directions:

In medium microwave-safe bowl, combine milk chocolate chips and semisweet chocolate chips. Microwave on high power for 30 seconds: remove and stir. Return to microwave and cook on 50% power for 30 seconds longer; remove and stir. Continue microwaving at 50% power and stirring until chips are melted and mixture is smooth.

Remove from microwave and stir in the chocolate mint candies until smooth. Add peppermint extract and stir until combined.

Dip each cookie into the chocolate mixture. Gently shake off excess chocolate and place on waxed paper to cool and set. Store in cool place.

RESOURCES

Websites for Child Development

<http://www.common sense media.org/about-us/our-mission/about-our-ratings/10>

Good Books for Parents to Read

Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? by Beverly Daniel Tatum PhD. --- the development of racial identity

Mind in the Making by Ellen Galinsky
---7 essential skills children need

A Whole New Mind by Daniel Pink

Yardsticks by Chip wood

Articles

“The Growing Backlash Against Over Parenting” by Nancy Gibbs
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1940697,00.html>

“Don’t! The Secret of Self-Control” by Jonah Lehrer
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2009/05/18/090518fa_fact_lehrer

Media Literacy Sites

<http://www.realitybitesbackbook.com/fun-with-media-literacy/media-literacy-fun-for-the-whole-family/>

<http://www.medialit.org/>

www.common sense media.org/

<http://pbskids.org/dontbuyit/teachersguide/foodadvertising.html>

<http://acmecoalition.org>

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:

Karen Biddulph, Director of the Mead School, whose faith in me, friendship, and consistent guidance in the social and emotional development of children, taught me more than I can say.

Joy Lenters, teacher extraordinaire, whose years as my teaching partner (and friend) inspired me to quest for depth and meaning in curriculum and is still inspiring me outside of the classroom.

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

Unfortunately, I can't identify where some of the activities in this book come from. I think people have been making salt paintings for a long time. I don't remember the first time I did this. Some of the media literacy activities are built off of ideas found on the sites I recommend in Resources.

Judy