

ENTERTAINING CHILDREN

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

ACTIVITIES TO KEEP CHILDREN ENGAGED

RATIONALE: Keeping children engaged and learning requires intentional time together which can be difficult, especially if the caretaker needs to get other work completed. However, we can take a tip from the success schools have keeping children learning all day long. A major part of their success is using routines.

PROGRAM GOAL: To provide caretakers with helpful suggestions to help create learning and engaging routines for their children.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

- Identify steps to determine fun learning activities.
- Create a five-day activity routine with additional activities.
- Provide free digital resources for rainy days.

FACILITIES REQUIRED:

- Meeting room space with tables and chairs for participants
- Projector for PowerPoint presentation
- Sound for video

PROGRAM PREPARATION:

- Review PowerPoint and the speaker notes.
- The program content should take 30 minutes to cover; however, schedule the program for 45 minutes to have flexibility with the schedule and time for additional questions at the end of the presentation.

INTRODUCTION:

As the facilitator:

- Introduce yourself and the program topic.
- Share with the class housekeeping materials.
- State the objectives to the class.
- Instructions to share: Take a few minutes to mingle with others in the room. See if you can fill in the answers in each block by asking different people the questions.

OBJECTIVE 1: Identify steps to determine fun learning activities.

As the facilitator:

Ask the question: What are some ways you determine what you and your child will do?

Review the slide and be sure to refer to the slide notes to ensure you don't miss anything.

Step 1. Make a list of your child's favorite activities; presenting this as a challenge to them can be helpful.

Step 2. Make sure to write these on paper, so in a time of "I'm bored," you can quickly hand them the list.

Step 3. Help them brainstorm activities by categories. Start with indoor activities and go room by room to ensure you do not miss an activity. Then ask about outdoor activities, activities done alone, activities they like to do with others, activities they like to do every day, activities they like to do on special occasions (i.e., seasonal activities like picking apples at the orchard, or beach trips during the summer).

Remind caretakers that teaching your child to brainstorm will pay off because beginning in the fourth grade, children are required to learn this process in their writing classes.

OBJECTIVE 2: Create a five-day activity routine with additional activities.

As the facilitator:

First discuss the five-day activity routine provided in the PowerPoint. Be sure to explain the complexity and variability of each activity. For instance, a walk in the woods could be an adventure as pirates exploring a never-seen-before island, or maybe you are mermaids in a deep ocean with all sorts of new things to discover.

Most of the text is on the slide, however, be sure to read the slide notes as additional details are included there.

Learning Activity 1: Create a five-day Activity Routine

Distribute items for activity. Each caregiver receives one sheet of paper and a writing utensil. Encourage each caregiver to write their own five-day activity routine using the sample in the slides. You may need to return to the previous slide to use as the example. Allow seven to 10 minutes to complete.

Discussion Question: Does anyone want to share their five-day activity routine?

As the facilitator:

Now let's look at some additional activities you may not have thought about.

Advance the slide to the list of "Other Fun Activities." Once you are here, ask someone to read through the list. Have other participants comment on what activities they have done, or not. Be sure to explain any activity that participants may not be familiar with.

OBJECTIVE 3: PROVIDE FREE DIGITAL RESOURCES FOR RAINY DAYS.

As the facilitator, share:

Now we all know there are days when weather can restrict the type of fun we can have and where we can have it. So here are a few free, child-appropriate, and highly educational online resources that are sure to engage and entertain your little ones when getting outside is not on the agenda.

Question: Are there other online resources that you are aware of that are not on this list that you would like to share with the group?

SUMMARY:

As the facilitator, share:

Keeping our children engaged in fun learning activities can be difficult. However, having a routine can help provide structure and not leave us in a lurch when one activity we have planned does not work out for one reason or the other.

REFERENCES:

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- Danckert, J., Hammerschmidt, T., Marty-Dugas, J., & Smilek, D. (2018). Boredom: Under-aroused and restless. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 61, 24–37.
- Eastwood, J.D., Frischen, A., Fenske, M. J., & Smilek, D. (2012). The unengaged mind. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 7 (5), 482 –495.
- Mann, S. (2018). *The science of boredom: The upside (and downside) of Downtime*. Robinson Press.