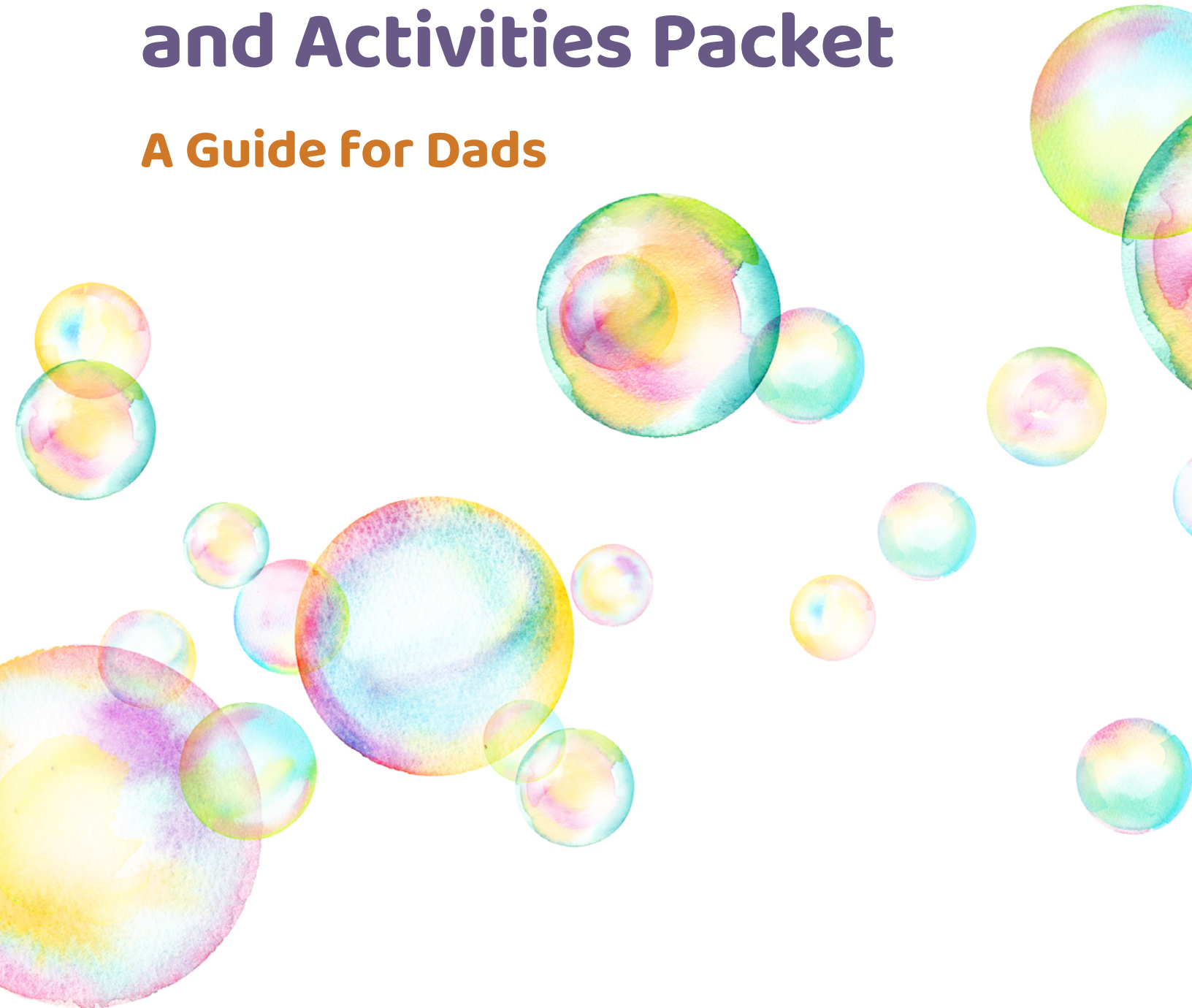


Dad Guideposts and Activities Packet

A Guide for Dads



**National
Fatherhood
Initiative®**

©2022 John R. Holmberg, Psy.D.
and National Fatherhood Initiative®
www.fatherhood.org | www.fathersource.org
info@fatherhood.org | 301.948.0599

Benefits of Play with Dad

Children Need Play

Play helps children grow their minds and bodies. It also helps them be healthy socially and emotionally.

Healthy Risks

Dad play (and bonding style) include helping children take physical and emotional risks. This helps children learn to grow outside their comfort zones explore the world.

Imagination

Dad play helps children master the differences between fantasy and reality, what's possible and what's unlikely to happen.

The Dad Bond

Children spell love "t-i-m-e." The more time dads spend in play with their children, the greater the bond.

Manage Emotions

Dad play leads children to get excited. Children then need to calm down. This helps children learn to control how excited they get and to calm down.

Physical Health

Dad play often uses big muscle groups with heavy breathing, running, jumping, etc. This helps children with their physical health.

Problem Solving

Dad play often includes games with rules, competition, conflict, and ways to resolve differences. This helps children with problem solving skills.

Social Play

Dad play helps children learn about taking turns, cooperation, social interactions, and how to include friends.

Verbal Skills

Dads tell jokes, play language games, and use words that are a little challenging. This helps children with their verbal skills, such as how many words they know and can use.

Layout of Dad Guideposts and Activities

Each handout has **Dad Guideposts and Dad Activities** for you to use with your child. The handouts focus on children of different ages or growth phases. Each **Dad Guideposts** section has information on child growth, changes, and common problems. Each **Dad Activities** section has things dads and children like doing together that you can choose from.

Each handout has the same order of details.

The first **Dad Guidepost** (called **Fitting the Phase of Development**) talks about changes children have at different ages. Children change in their minds, bodies, and relationships. This guidepost talks about how you will see your child grow in the following areas:

- **Milestones** are ways you can see a child is growing emotionally/mentally, physically, and socially
- **Attachment** is the trusting bond that grows between children and dads. It also is one of the ways children learn to do things on their own.
- **Regulation** is the amount of excitement the child is experiencing. Most of the time, children need to keep their excitement level in a normal range (i.e., not too tired, not too upset, not too wildly excited). Regulation is also learning how to cope with your experiences. As children grow, they need less help coping with their experiences.
- **Learning** is the ways that dads can help children with getting new information about people and the world.
- **Communication** is about the ways dads and children share their experiences and understand each other.

The second **Dad Guidepost** (called **Fathering Foundations**) shares helpful dad behaviors for children that age. The third **Dad Guidepost** (called **Parenting Partners**) has ways to help your child interact with other important people in their life. There are different changes for children at each age or phase. This knowledge will help you know what to expect and how to meet your child's needs.

Child Age Groups or Phases:

- 1.0 Infancy
- 2.0 Preschool
- 3.0 Elementary
- 4.0 Middle School
- 5.0 High School

Definitions:

Guidepost - Ways a child is growing physically, emotionally/mentally, and socially.

Milestones - Skills and abilities that you can see in older compared to younger children.

Attachment - The trusting bond that grows between children and parents.

Regulation - Being able to cope with your experiences.

Learning - Gaining knowledge about people and the world.

Communication - Dad and child sharing their experiences.

Dad Guideposts: 1.0 Infancy (2-months to 12-months)

GUIDEPOST 1.1 - Fitting the Phase of Development

Milestones. Babies grow up fast. Babies grow their bodies, mind, feelings, and skills in interacting with you. At each visit, your child's doctor (the "pediatrician") will measure your baby's growth. Babies get behind sometimes. A specialist in child growth can help a baby catch up.

Attachment. Baby is learning to count on you. By caring for your baby, you will become good at noticing or guessing what your baby needs. Your baby will learn how to ask you for help. Your baby will learn to trust that you will give them what they need. That bond will be important to your baby for their whole life.

Regulation. Not too much, not too little, just right. Babies grow best when caregivers help them balance excitement near the middle zone. The middle zone is enough excitement to learn from the world. Too much excitement makes babies look away or become fussy.

Learning. Babies need experience to grow. Experience with all of baby's senses—sights, sounds, taste, touch, feelings, and movement—help with growth. The best learning comes from time with you. It is fun to use and share different senses together.

Communication. Baby cues. Babies communicate and share their experience from the first days after birth. For a long time, babies only communicate with their behavior. Babies will make sounds, movements, make faces, or change what to focus on to help others understand their needs. With more time together, you will become a good baby detective. You and your baby will figure out what different cues mean. Videos and posters of common baby cues can help you read what your baby might be saying.

GUIDEPOST 1.2 – Foundational Fathering

Parenting Skills. Leading and following. Even very young babies can imitate face movements. As babies get older, they want to take turns for who is signaling and who is copying or replying. Practice taking turns making sounds or faces and who replies.

GUIDEPOST 1.3 - Parenting Partners

Working with your child's important people. Developing routines and rules is important. Babies grow best by having many things stay the same but having some new experiences. Knowing that your baby can count on you, mom, or grandma or grandpa helps grow confidence. It's a little like knowing the play in sports. Players need to know what to do, even if you all do them a little differently.

Dad Activities: 1.0 Infancy (2-months to 12-months)

ACTIVITY 1.1 – Here, Disappear, Reappear

Materials. Anything that babies will experience with one of their physical senses. For example, paper to crinkle, keys to jingle, soft and rough material, bright and dull colors, sweet and stinky smells.

Why. As babies grow, they start to expect and will look for their favorite things when they disappear. Children get excited when they think you will bring back their favorite materials. This activity grows physical senses, thinking, memory, attachment, and coping with feelings.

- Steps.**
1. Pick different materials to share with your baby. Put them all in a box or container.
 2. When your baby is rested and alert, take each out one at a time.
 3. See which materials or objects draw your baby's attention.
 4. For a few of the ones your baby likes best, take turns sharing it for a couple of seconds. Then move it out of sight a couple of seconds. Next, bring it back and help your baby notice it.
 5. With your words and face expressions, show your baby that you like some things better than others too.

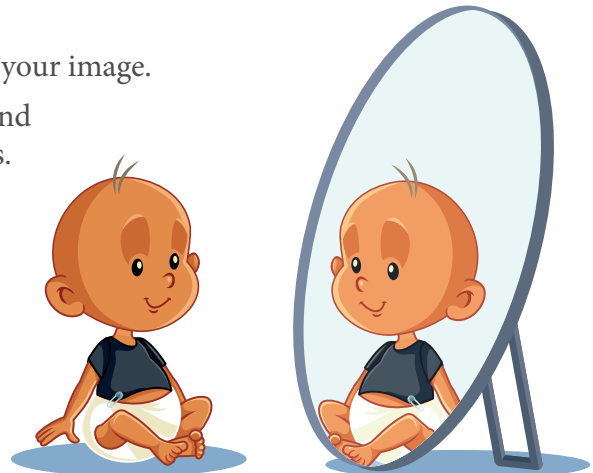


ACTIVITY 1.2 - Mirror Play

Materials. Any size mirror or something that reflects your image.

Why. This activity grows physical senses, thinking and memory, attachment, and coping with feelings.

- Steps.**
1. Using your mirror, encourage your baby to look at the mirror and say out loud what each of you can see in the reflection, such as "There is you," "There is me," "There is your nose in the mirror," and "There is your nose on your face."
 2. Talk about how the reflection is not just like what you each look like. Some parts look real, some parts look strange or different because of the mirror.
 3. Help your baby notice their reflection. Notice how the reflection changes when you move. Make funny faces and noises in the reflection. Talk about everything you see.

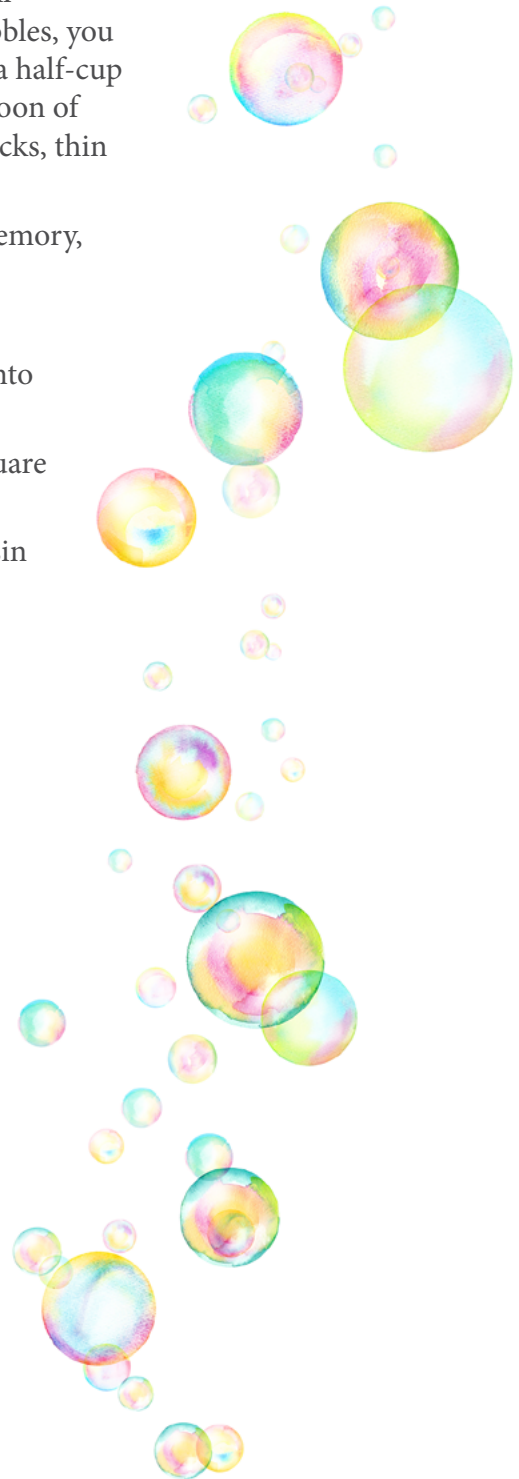


ACTIVITY 1.3 – Share Time with Bubbles

Materials. There are many ways to make bubbles. Stores sell inexpensive bottles of bubbles. For home-made bubbles, you will need the following things. Eight cups of water, a half-cup of dish soap, a tablespoon of vegetable oil, a tablespoon of baking powder, a stick in the shape of a Y or two sticks, thin string, and a wash basin or pan with sides.

Why. This activity grows physical senses, thinking and memory, and coping with feelings.

- Steps.**
1. For home-made bubbles follow these steps.
 - a. Pour the water, soap, oil, and baking powder into wash basin or pan with sides.
 - b. Tie your string in the shape of a triangle or square on to the stick.
 2. Take the stick with string and dip in the wash basin just below the top of the soap-water mix.
 3. After a couple seconds, slowly raise the stick and allow air to fill the space within the string.
 4. Wave the stick slowly to release the bubble.
 5. Watch and talk with your baby about how the bubble grows, falls, and then goes “pop!” It’s fun to make your baby laugh with funny noises for when there is sudden “pop.”



Dad Guideposts 2.0: Preschool Age (13-months to 4-years)

GUIDEPOST 2.1 - Fitting the Phase of Development

Milestones. Children this age continue to grow and change quickly. Your child likely has more important relationships such as teachers and childcare providers. These relationships help children learn to ask for and accept help from people outside the family. Friends are becoming more important. All these relationships help your child with self-confidence and social skills. Young children still need regular daily routines. Children still need lots of adult help while they grow to do things on their own. Children can repeat social and family rules. They will test that social rules are consistent in different places. Children are learning what they like and do not like.

Attachment. Your child is learning to care for themselves but needs you as a safe base. Understanding that you will help them if they struggle helps your child grow in trying new things.

Regulation. Young children feel strongly that they want to do things their way. Children this age need lots of adult help to stay in the middle zone of excitement. Not being able to do things on their own is frustrating. When your child gets upset, they need lots of adult help to cope and calm down. As they move from preschool to elementary classes, sleep will continue to be an important way your child resets their mind and body.

Learning. Experiences, stories, songs, pictures, media, observing, and asking questions are important for children. Young children are growing in and learning in all sorts of ways. Your child learns from nearly every time they are with you. They learn from talking with you and having you explain things to them. They learn by watching others. For children this age, the most fun comes from learning by doing things on their own and time with their friends.

Communication. Children this age are learning many new words and growing their language skills. Songs like “clean-up time” and the “A-B-Cs” help children remember bigger amounts of information. Parents and children create shared phrases to describe behavior with many steps. For example, your child is learning that “get ready for bed” means doing many steps before getting into bed.

GUIDEPOST 2.2 - Foundational Fathering

Parenting Skills. Leading and following are important. Children at this age are learning to use rules in games and relationships. Games teach children important skills like starting, stopping, taking turns, coping with excitement, and calming frustration. From simple games, like red-light, green-light, to board games, parents help children with life skills. Finding ways for your child to teach you about things they know or just learned is great fun and helps their growth.

GUIDEPOST 2.3 - Parenting Partners

Working with your child's important people. Shared routines, rules, and what to expect are important. Children need things that are consistent and new experiences. Helping teachers know what routines work for your child can help at school. Bringing home the words and phrases from the classroom to create social rules, like being a good friend and washing your hands, helps your child follow those rules at home too.

Dad Activities: 2.0 Preschool Age (13-months to 4-years)

ACTIVITY 2.1 – Create Our Own STOP-START Game

Materials. You can use anything as a game board.

For example, squares on the sidewalk, you can draw boxes with a stick on the dirt, or cardboard with crayon lines. You will need dice and about 24 small square pieces of paper. You also need a pen or crayons.

Why. This activity grows thinking, memory, planning, starting and stopping behavior, trust, attachment, and coping with feelings.

Steps. 1. Talk with your child about a way to lay out the game, such as draw boxes you can jump or step into.

2. Pick boxes to be different parts of the game.

- a. Problem boxes, such as mud-bog, toys to clean up before moving forward, and prickly pine floor.
- b. Booster boxes, such as power of speed, power of quick thinking, and ability to fly.
- c. Reverse or u-turn boxes, such as have to go back two squares or back to the start.
- d. Finishing line or recharge station, such as to start over and go back through the boxes.

3. Pick a way to move forward in the game.

- a. You can use dice or cut paper into small squares and label them as 1, 2, and 3. If using paper, put them in a pile, box, or hat to select when it's your turn.
- b. Cut up more small paper squares and label them with different ways to move from box to box, such as tippytoe, twirl, dance, roll, crawl, walk backwards, dance, wiggle, etc. Put this set of paper squares in a pile, box, or hat to select when it's your turn.

4. Play the game!

- a. Go to the start box together.
- b. The first person rolls the dice or picks one of the paper squares with a number of boxes. This will be the number of squares to move forward to. Next, pick one of the paper squares with ways to move. Now move yourself forward that number of steps moving the way the card picked for you, such as dance.
- c. The second person rolls the dice or picks a number paper square. Then pick one of



Section Title

the ways to move paper squares. Now go forward that number of squares.

d. If someone lands on a booster box, remember what power you collected.

e. If you land on a reverse box, go back two squares. If you land on the u-turn box, you re-start from the beginning.

f. Keep going until someone lands on the finish line or recharge station at least one time. The first one to finish and the one with the most booster powers are both winners.

ACTIVITY 2.2 - Make a Thematic Story or Movie Together

Materials. Make your own puppets or dolls with crayons and paper bags, toys, towels, cardboard, etc.

Why. This activity helps with thinking, memory, creativity and story telling, cooperation and understanding relationships, and coping with feelings.

Steps. 1. Talk with your child about how to make a pretend story or movie.

a. What characters should be in the story, such as family or classrooms are fun characters at this age? You can also try starting with some of your child's favorite animals or forms of transportation, such as bears, trains, and planes. Do characters have funny personalities, such as Grumpy Grandpa Bear?

b. What kind of situation, adventure, or problem might be going on for the characters, such as someone brought eggs that are going to hatch baby chickens?

c. Pick which character or characters you will each play.

2. Show your child how to get started by having your character start the story.

3. Take turns telling the next part of the story.

a. If your child struggles to move the story forward or takes the story in a confusing direction, invite the story to go in a different direction.

b. You can also offer a new character, like the mayor, who makes a suggestion for the characters to try.

4. However long or short the play becomes, celebrate that you had fun making it together! You can even take a bow for the pretend audience who were watching.



ACTIVITY 2.3: Parent-Child Yoga

Materials. Find a library book, online video, or child yoga poses printable on line.

Why. This activity helps grow focus, body control, and “mindfulness” (calm emotions).

- Steps.**
1. Together, look at a few yoga poses or actions. Pick some easy ones to try first, such as blow the steam off your hot cocoa. Talk about how there is no perfect way or wrong way to do it. Just try your best.
 2. After you have tried a few see how many you can do in a row without laughing or falling down.
 3. Make new poses you like or rename the poses you like, such as the curled-up puppy.



Dad Guideposts: 3.0 Elementary Age (5-years to 10-years)

GUIDEPOST 3.1 - Fitting the Phase of Development

Milestones. Children this age are learning many skills and lots of information. Your child is working with many more adults throughout their day, such as teachers and coaches. These relationships help children grow by sharing many new ideas. Different social rules and personal boundaries are better understood, such as your teacher can't come over to play. Friendships are becoming the center of your child's day. Your child is growing in their sense of who they are. They know what is fun and growing in self-confidence.

Attachment. Children this age spend most of their day away from home and family. Each daily transition can feel like a big struggle. When children this age are upset, they can use coping skills like deep breathing to help them calm. Items from home like a small picture or personal object, can help your child feel close to you when feeling low.

Regulation. Children this age want to do things on their own. Most children continue to need adult help to stay in the middle zone of excitement. Helping your child learn skills to cope when they are upset is important. Techniques to fall asleep and ways to maintain sleep routines are also important at this age.

Learning. Children are shifting to symbols. School aged children learn, research, and explore in all sorts of ways. They can learn from symbols like letters and numbers rather than just what they experience. Hands-on interaction is still the best learning for most children this age. Your child still values having you explain why things are the way they are in the world.

Communication. Friends' words count at this age. With more time with friends, children this age are learning lots of new words and phrases. Children grow in believing some things are especially important or cool. Using words to influence others becomes important, including those words that say mean or hurtful things. Helping your child to be assertive and counter bullying is important.

GUIDEPOST 3.2 - Foundational Fathering

Parenting Skills. Taking turns leading and following helps at this age. Children at this age know most of the family's rules. Children are now good at talking about and negotiating rules for games. Children this age need to feel they can ask for changes in family rules. Parents help children practice finishing their homework on their own. Children like to share about what they are doing at school. Praise your child for success and give them encouragement to keep going when frustrated. That will help your child become confident.

GUIDEPOST 3.3 - Parenting Partners

Working with your child's important people. Children this age have many social groups and ways to try new things. It's important that you help your child try many activities, take some healthy risks, and stick with a few things they like. It's normal for children to feel nervous or resistant to try new things. Introducing your child to coaches or leaders and giving your child a question or two to ask can help, questions like, "Can I pick up my dribble again?" and "Can I play more than one position in the next game?" Knowing which activities your child wants to keep doing or stick with may take a few tries. Learning which activities are fun and exciting, and which activities are not as fun, are equally important.

Dad Activities: 3.0 Elementary Age (5-years to 10-years)

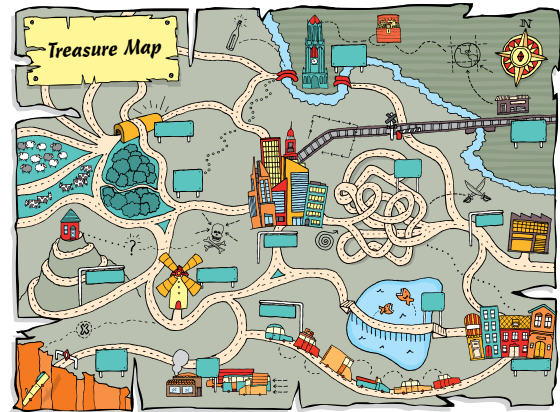
ACTIVITY 3.1 – Treasure Map

Materials. Many materials work for this activity. You can use flower seeds, small painted rocks, or pieces of paper with positive messages or wishes. For the map, you need cardboard or a large piece of paper and a piece of string with measurements, such as in feet, meters, or steps. You also need a pencil, markers, or crayons to draw the map.

Why. This activity will help your child learn to orient to community landmarks and find their way. This activity grows thinking, memory, planning, getting around the community, trust, and coping with feelings.

Steps. The goal is to make your own map, a treasure map.

1. Gather your materials and things to make the map.
2. Look for tall features and things that stand out (landmarks) around you.
 - a) Pick a landmark for North, South, East, and West. (Many phones have a compass app, if you need help.)
 - b) Pick some other landmarks that are easy to remember.
3. Get out your map materials and markers.
 - a. Draw in the four landmarks about where they land near the four corners of your map.
 - b. Draw in where the sun rises and sets, from east to west between those landmarks.
 - c. Add other landmarks where you see them.
4. Walk around the community and find some places where you can hide or bury some treasure, such as flower seeds, a stash of positive messages, painted rocks, or happy pictures.
5. Before you stash or bury the items, use your string to measure how far the treasure is from other objects.
6. Draw your treasure locations on your map.
7. Come back in a few days or weeks. Can you still find the treasure? Have people found your treasure? Has anyone left a treasure for you, in return?



ACTIVITY 3.2 – Musical Moments

Materials. Music instrument, objects that make sounds, or a way of playing recorded music.

Why. This activity helps you connect with your child by sharing and talking about music. The activity grows thinking, memory, creativity, cooperation, relationships, and coping with feelings.

Steps. There are many ways to do this activity.

1. Talk about what types of music you listened to and how you listened to music at their age.
2. Talk about the ways music has been helpful to you, such as helps get through the work day, helps to calm you when upset, and is part of your spiritual practice or represents your family culture.
3. Share some of your favorite songs about fathers and children. See if you can find new songs.
4. What would be the best song for a father-child dance video? Create or learn a dance together.
5. Write a song, poem, or rap about the fun that children and dads have together. Make some instruments from materials around you. Nothing available? Try using your mouth and body. Anything goes, so long as it is fun and you can do it together!



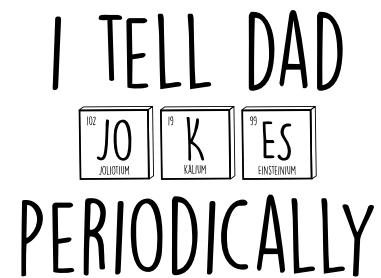
ACTIVITY 3.3 – Dad Jokes

Materials. Conduct an internet search for “dad jokes” to read or watch on videos or a book from the library about dad jokes.

Why. This activity helps you connect with your child through laughter. This activity grows thinking, memory, creativity, cooperation, relationships, and coping with feelings.

Steps. There are many ways to do this activity.

1. The main steps are to find a good number of dad jokes and share them with each other.
2. You can pretend to be judges on a new TV show—called “America’s Top Dad Jokes”—and record your making the show together.
3. You can pick cut out jokes and put them in a basket. Pick them out at random and see which ones lead to the loudest or longest laugh. Maybe you’ll save the ones you like best.
4. Make up some dad jokes together.
5. Once you have a bunch of favorite dad jokes, talk about some reasons why dad jokes are funny to most people, such as they take a normal situation and there is an unexpected turn, they are easy to remember, they aren’t really that funny, they use words with multiple meanings, and they are “punny!”



Dad Guideposts: 4.0 Middle School Age (11- to 14-years)

GUIDEPOST 4.1 - Fitting the Phase of Development

Milestones. Children this age are growing in use of organization and doing things on their own.

They are sometimes referred to as “tweens” because they can sometimes experience the world like a child. Other times, they will impress you with their maturity. Tween children are gaining skills to delay their instincts and impulses, control their behavior, problem solve, make plans, and finish their own work. Tweens still need regular adult help with many life skills. (Dads can struggle with how their youth can move forward in independence, then seem less mature on other days.) Youth have grown in the skill of sharing their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Some youth share that they have problems with their mental health. These problems can last or they can seem to improve on their own. Your family’s doctor can help you track these problems. Your doctor has specific questions to find out if your child needs professional support.

Attachment. Youth this age still rely on your help. Most children this age want to independently explore and find their own way in the world. Knowing that they can count on you if they struggle, gives them confidence to face new challenges.

Regulation. Tweens go through big changes, such as puberty. Children this age will start these changes at different times. Of youth in the same class, dads notice large differences in schoolwork, social skills, and play in sports. Children this age will still struggle to cope with strong emotions. Feelings like big fears, frustrations, and anger can be hard for your youth to calm without significant support.

Learning. Learning from their own experience is important at this age. Since tweens are growing to be good at work on their own, teachers will encourage them to take a lead in their learning. Youth often need help in thinking of topics to explore. A “why don’t you try this, see if it works for you” approach can be a big help to dads. This approach can help your youth try different ways to start a task. Knowing there are many ways to get work done, and that you will still guide them, is a big help.

Communication. Tweens may have strong feelings about and hard problems with classmates or teachers which are hard to share. When talking with your youth, ask questions so they don’t have a simple yes or no answer. You can help by suggesting your youth try less direct ways to share those experiences. Skills for sharing with art, music, or analogy are helpful. Once you know what is happening for your youth, you will better be able to help them.

GUIDEPOST 4.2 – Foundational Fathering

Parenting Skills. Parents and youth are helped by shared routines, rules, and expectations.

Tweens often question and even oppose family rules. Their expanding friendships and growing understanding of the world can be complicated. Most youth are not ready to face big challenges in the world on their own. You will find it helpful to stay patient and talk with your youth about their ideas. When you compromise with your youth, even with small changes, it helps them feel valued.

GUIDEPOST 4.3 - Parenting Partners

Working with your child's important people. Youth develop many new types of relationships.

They often struggle to manage those friendships. It's a big help at this age to talk with your youth about personal boundaries, such as what you tell a classmate you hardly know compared to a close friend. Getting to know your child's friends, teachers, and coaches is another big way to help your youth.

Dad Activities: 4.0 Middle School Age (11- to 14-years)

ACTIVITY 4.1 – Collections

Materials. Almost anything can make for a good collection.

What types of things does your youth spend time on? What did you collect as a youth? Many people had a collection of local rocks, beach sand, origami, pressed bugs, comic books, pennies, stamps, Pokémon or sports cards. It will be helpful to have a box or container to keep the collection safe.



Why. This activity helps you share an interest with your youth. Sharing your experience as a youth will be helpful for your child. This activity helps grow thinking, memory, planning skills, personal interests, trust, and coping with feelings

Steps. There are many ways to start a collection.

1. Talk with your youth about starting a collection. If you don't have a way to keep a physical collection together, start a collection of pictures, music, or jokes. Talk about some of the big collections in your community like those at museums, such as those for cars, science, art, or history.
2. Talk about why collecting and learning a lot about something can be fun and important. Share with your youth how collecting helped you learn about searching, sticking with something, organizing, and taking care of your things.
3. If you still have a collection from your youth, share it with your child. Next, think about 5-10 things that you could collect together. (Some parents and children collect things that connect their generations, like vinyl records today.) Talk about ways to start, organize, and grow the collection. Pick a consistent day of the week or month to work on the collection together. Start your collection!

ACTIVITY 4.2 – Everyday is Earth Day

Materials. Choose the items for this activity based on what you pick to do together. For example, you don't need materials to write a poem about recycling. If you go out and pick up trash, you need some bags or boxes and gloves. To help the bees, you might need some flower seeds.

Why. This activity is about learning together and helping nature. The activity helps grow thinking, planning, relationships, and coping with feelings.



Section Title

- Steps.**
1. Start with a discussion about why it's important to know about and help take care of and respect nature. We all depend on the earth. Talk about your values related to the earth, nature, and being sure humans have a planet in the future.
 2. Talk about the many things you can do to help nature and the earth. For ideas, try an internet search on Earth Day activities for families.
 3. Choose one or two things to do together in the next hour, next month, and next year. Find what materials you need. Pick a day and time for the fun.

ACTIVITY 4.3 – Mindful Community Map or Mindful Walking Labyrinth

Materials. Your materials will depend on what you pick to do. You don't need materials to walk around the neighborhood looking for spaces where you feel at peace. To make a mindful community map, you will need paper and markers or pens. To make a labyrinth (a human-sized maze), you can use chalk, string, sticks, or stones. To walk a labyrinth before you make one, check this worldwide list at <https://labyrinthlocator.com>. You might print a picture with the steps to create a labyrinth pattern.

Why. This activity grows thinking, planning, relationships, relaxation, and mindfulness.

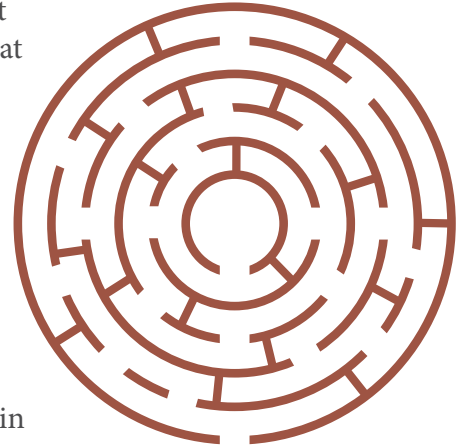
Steps for Activity A. - Making a Mindful Community Map

1. Talk with your youth about what it means to be mindful. Mindfulness is focusing each of your senses—sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste.
2. Get some markers and a piece of paper.
3. Together, walk around the neighborhood.
 - a. Look for places that make you feel peaceful.
 - b. Look for places that are busy or exciting.
 - c. In both types of places, notice what you experience with each of your senses.
 - d. Pick a few spaces that were best for each sensation. For example, the hilltop gets the most wind to feel air on your skin.
4. Draw the best spaces on your map. In the next few weeks, re-visit the spaces on your map. What order of stops makes you and your youth feel best by the end of the walk?



Steps for Activity B. – Making Your Own Labyrinth

1. Talk with your youth about what would be fun about making a labyrinth. A labyrinth is a pattern of paths that you can walk through without crossing the lines. The Labyrinth Society (<https://labyrinthsociety.org/about-labyrinths>) found that people have been walking these patterns for thousands of years.
2. Find a space where you can make your labyrinth. Pick a spot where people will not accidentally knock it down.
3. Decide on what you can use to make the sides of the pattern. For example, you can use a stick to draw lines in the dirt. You can put rocks in grass or sand. You can draw chalk lines on cement.
4. Decide if you want to print an example to follow or make one on your own pattern.
5. Go to where you will make the labyrinth and get started.
 - a. Start in the middle by drawing a cross or circle.
 - b. Add some outside lanes that will circle around and return to the middle.
 - c. Add rings further out.
 - d. Add as many rings as you want.
6. Try it out! As you walk, quiet your mind and notice all your body's senses. Tell your youth to do the same.



Dad Guideposts: 5.0 High School Age (15- to 18-years)

GUIDEPOST 5.1 - Fitting the Phase of Development

Milestones. One in five teens have mental health problems. Your family's doctor can help you decide if your teen needs professional help.

Attachment. Even though they are older now, your teen still counts on you. Most teens want to do things their way and on their own. Knowing that they can count on you, if they struggle, gives them confidence. It's hard for teens to balance the strong wish to be independent while still learning to be successful on their own. The opposite can also be true. Some teens need lots of encouragement and support to do things on their own.

Regulation. Teens' brains develop fast but this process will not be done for years. Your teen's brain is likely to mature at a different pace than their friends' brains. Teens make mistakes by not fully considering options or consequences. Teens are influenced by friends. Their choices can be influenced by strong emotions.

Learning. Teens often learn best from experience. Doing something their way, and reflecting on what worked and what didn't work, helps them learn. Teens also may need encouragement to see how something new could be fun or helpful. Dads who use a "try it this way first, then you can tell me if you will do it a different way next time" approach can help teens expand their options.

Communication. Teens may resist parents' offers for help. Teens who often talk with their dads do well. Dads who use a "coaching" approach find it helpful. Rather than telling your teen something, ask them about their plans and how they will face problems. This approach helps your teen to feel in charge and still benefit from your advice.

GUIDEPOST 5.2 - Foundational Fathering

Parenting Skills. Teens benefit from cooperation in setting rules and expectations. All teens will face things they didn't expect. Sharing different ways to face problems can be helpful. Dads who have daily conversations with their teens help them succeed.

GUIDEPOST 5.3 - Parenting Partners

Working with your child's important people. Teens with many adults to turn to find more success. Dads can help teens find adult allies such as teachers, coaches, and mentors. Working with your teen to find who they think is the right type of ally for them is important.

Dad Activities: 5.0 High School Age (15- to 18-years)

ACTIVITY 5.1 – Meaning from Movies

Materials. Print a list of father-focused movies. (Visit <https://www.imdb.com/list/ls071879454/> for ideas.)

Why. This activity helps grow relationships, attachment, and coping with feelings.

Steps. 1. Invite your teen to start a movie marathon.
2. Print a list of movies with important father characters, such as Instant Family, Daddy’s Home, Mi Familia, Nemo, The Incredibles, and Meet the Robinsons.
3. Talk with your teen about the pros and cons of each film. (Write them down if that will help.)
Think of things that make these movies important.



- What are the top “dad things,” such as behaviors, ways of communicating, sacrifice, encouraging, and setting limits, that characters did well?
- What would make the dad characters more real or genuine, like an actual person?
- Talk about how dads in your family handled situations like those in the films.
- What would the dad characters be doing if there was a follow-up movie?

ACTIVITY 5.2 – Cooking for Culture

Materials. Find recipes and pick up ingredients to make food that is meaningful to your family and culture.

Why. This activity grows cultural awareness, family history, relationships, attachment, and coping with feelings.

Steps. 1. Talk with your teen about making food that is meaningful to your family. Discuss what ingredients and tools, like a fryer or wok, you will need or might need to borrow.

2. While you are cooking and eating, share memories about your family’s culture and food. Discuss questions like those below.

- How would you describe our family’s culture?



- b. How do these foods reflect our family's culture?
- c. Why are these ingredients important to our family's culture?
- d. Why were these foods important to the success of our distant relatives?
- e. Why do these foods lead to feelings of closeness, warmth, and safety?
- f. What types of activities or rituals would happen around these family meals?

ACTIVITY 5.3 – Media Interviews: Making Meaning of Fathering

Materials. This activity uses paper and pens.

Why. This activity helps grow social skills, work skills, relationships, attachment, and coping with feelings.

Steps. 1. For this activity, take turns being a radio or podcast host.

- a. Think about the activity, like you are a host that is interviewing an expert dad.
 - b. It might be fun to record each interview with a computer or cell phone.
2. Take turns being the journalist and the person being interviewed.
3. Try out some of the questions below or come up with your own.



Teen's questions for dad:

- 1. What are some the things your child/children have done that made you proud?
- 2. What are some things that your child/children taught you about being a dad?
- 3. What are three things that your child/children do that remind you of yourself?
- 4. What are three wishes you have for your child's/children's future/futures?
- 5. What advice would you give to someone just starting out as a dad?
- 6. What is one skill your child/children has/have that you wish you had?
- 7. Any other questions you think of...

Dad's questions for teen:

- 1. What are some things your dad does to make you feel safe?
- 2. What is something you noticed about yourself that your dad does too?
- 3. What activities make you feel closest to your dad?
- 4. What would you say are three strengths or positive dad skills your father has?
- 5. If your dad was a superhero, what super skills would he have?
- 6. What's the worst dad joke your dad ever shared?
- 7. Any other questions you think of...