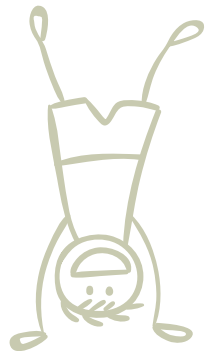


Let's Play!

Activities for Families



Identities,
Social Responsibility,
and Diversity



The Daily Dilemma



What

Many events that occur throughout a day may be joyful or happy, but daily events may also be frustrating, sad, or disappointing. This activity encourages children to talk about some of those times and find solutions to common problems. By talking about dilemmas outside of stressful situations, children begin to understand others' perspectives and learn to discuss and resolve challenges with others.

1 Create the Environment

- Introduce a dilemma that can easily occur in the home, community setting, or school. Share with your child that you are going to tell a story about a problem, and they can help the characters in the story solve the problem.

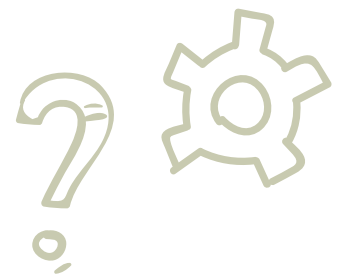
2 Daily Dilemma

- Together, make up or choose characters for the story. Be aware that the more characters in the story, the more complicated the dilemma may be.
- Tell a familiar story. For example, Timmy was working hard at making a very tall block tower. Bindy noticed the block tower and she thought it would be fun to knock it over. Just as Timmy placed his last block onto the tower, Bindy knocked the tower over.
- Ask your child, "How do you think Timmy felt? What are some things he might do after Bindy knocked the tower over? What are some things they could do together after the tower gets knocked down?"
- Do not solve the dilemma. Try to ask questions that help guide your child to a solution.

Why

Through this experience, children will

- Develop an understanding of differences in perspective
- Enhance language use and memory
- Foster identity by advocating for children's perspectives and feelings
- Practice problem solving for real-life challenges



How

Encourage your child to think about the characters' feelings, particularly those whom they might not immediately understand.

Tell your child a Daily Dilemma story from your life. Ask for their ideas about how to solve it. Tell them what you did, or you may want to discuss other possible options.

Provide some options for solutions if children have difficulty coming up with their own. Providing a visual by drawing or taking pictures of your child using solutions supports memory, communication, and critical thinking. Some common solutions to challenging situations with peers might be to

- Ask a friend or a grown-up for help
- Take a deep breath
- Make a new choice
- Ask if you can help fix it
- Tell a friend how you feel or what you need
- Ask for or offer a hug

Use books, dolls, or puppets to demonstrate a situation and one of these solutions. Ask your child to tell a Daily Dilemma story about one of their own situations.

Read a book with your child about problem solving or other ideas that connect with this theme. Here are suggestions:

- *Accident!* by Andrea Tsurumi
- *I Love My Purse*, by Belle DeMont

Where

This activity can take place anywhere.

When

This activity can take place any time throughout the day. Some children might like or need the chance to practice a daily dilemma before going to child care or school, or after they get home.



Everything Changes



What

This is an experience that will help your child learn about difference and change.

1 Create the Environment

Talk to your child about changes that happen every day, such as the weather, a flower that has bloomed, the leaves that have fallen, or that their fingernails or toenails are longer than they were last week.

Talk about how some changes are big, and some changes are small. Sometimes, they may feel happy about changes, and sad about others, and that all feelings are okay.

2 Sharing Experiences

Ask your child to look around and find one thing that has stayed the same, and something else that has changed. Maybe the sunny sky of the morning is still sunny. Maybe a bird you saw outside has flown away. Ask your child, "What do you see?"

Why

Through this experience, children will learn to

- Express a positive regard and respect for self, others, and property
- Understand that all persons have value
- Understand, accept, and welcome changes and differences in themselves and the world around them

How

Explore with your child about some of the things that stay the same, and some things that are different or change. Point them out.

Explore with your child what these changes and differences might look like on paper, either through words, through drawings, or through another creative way.

Explore with your child how these changes and differences make them feel. You can discuss the changes, write them down, draw them, or express them through some other way such as acting them out.

Read a story with your child about weather, changes or other ideas that connect with the activity. Here is a suggestion:

- *The Apple Tree* by Sandy Tharp-Thee & Marlena Campell Hodson



Where

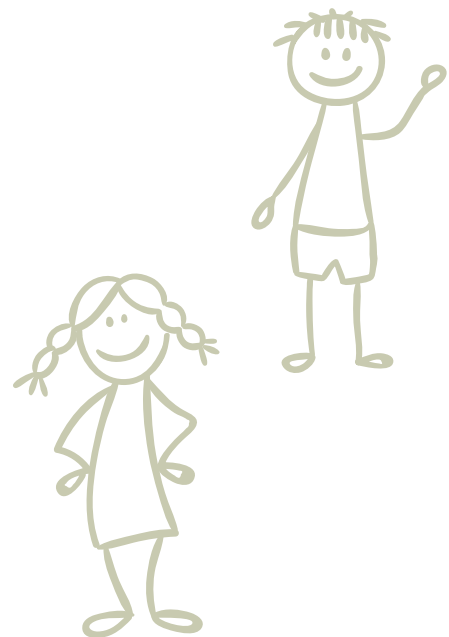
This activity can occur in any familiar area to your child.

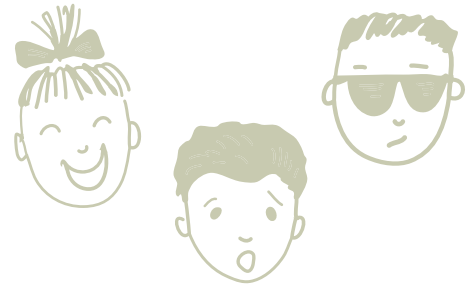
When

This activity can occur at any time of the day.

Reference

Braun, M., & Stewart, W. (2017). *Mindful Kids: 50 Mindfulness Activities for Kindness, Focus and Calm*. [Activity Deck]. Cambridge, MA: Barefoot Books





Face Collage

What

The Face Collage is a wonderful way to teach children about their personal identity, diversity, and foster a sense of belonging.

1 Create the Environment

- Take full-face pictures of your child, children, or your family members. Print the images on a full standard size paper (best in colour). Cut the picture into four to six vertical wide strips. To make the pieces more durable, you can laminate each strip or you can cover each one with clear laminate or packing tape.
- Mix the strips together into a basket and allow your child time to explore.
- Ask your child what emotions they see in the basket and share your observation. "I see a happy smile. That looks like your mouth!"

2 Collage

Children can piece the faces together or explore mixing the strips to create unique faces using facial features of themselves, their family, or friends.

Why

Through this experience, children will learn to

- Recognize, accept, and express a wide range of emotions, thoughts, and views
- Build healthy relationships with both adults and children
- Develop an understanding of diversity and inclusion
- Feel a sense of belonging and personal identity
- Develop emotional literacy skills
- Develop language and communication

How

You may start off with one or two faces with four vertical wide strips. Encourage language development by asking your child what they see. Try pointing at the facial features (for example, a nose, or eyes) and repeat the name several times to support word association. Also, if the child completes the face puzzle, you can repeat the person's name with your child. This helps children to strengthen their relationships with their peers and family members.



Add more faces with four to six vertical strips. Ask open-ended questions such as

- “What/Who do you see?”
- “Do they look the same to you?”
- “What do you think this is used for?” (When pointing to the facial feature, try talking about how humans and animals have similar features with similar functions but sometimes look very different)
- “How do you think they feel?”

Dialogue can sometimes be the most powerful way to support the growth and development of children. Building rich conversations based on the interests and inquiries of children can allow endless learning opportunities. Depending on where your discussion takes you, your child could learn about inclusion and embracing differences in others, emotional literacy, the human body, and basic mathematics.

Use images of unfamiliar people and make four to six vertical strips and four to six horizontal strips for each face. After building new faces, make up a story about who they are and what they enjoy.

Read a story with your child about feelings, families or other ideas that connect with the activity. Here is a suggestion:

- *My Nose, Your Nose* by Melanie Walsh

Where

This experience can be completed on a flat surface, indoors, or outdoors. You can also add magnets to the back of the strips and they can be placed on a magnetic board or on a fridge.

When

This activity can occur at any time of the day, and is best explored individually or in small groups.





Family Tree

What

At an early stage, children are eager to establish a sense of belonging in their world. A child's first words will often identify words or names for their siblings, parents, guardians, or care providers. As children become more confident in their abilities, and develop their individual personalities, they become increasingly aware of their similarities and differences with their peers.

This Family Tree exploration is a wonderful way to nurture a child's sense of belonging and identity as well as learn more about their family lineage and culture. It is also a simple way of exploring diversity between family units and ways of being.

1 Create the Environment

- The concept of "Family" has many ways of presenting itself. Introduce the idea by talking about your family, looking at family photos together, or reading a story about families.
- Talk with your child about different emotions that may arise within a family (e.g., a sibling might feel sad about a broken toy, an auntie might feel loved when getting a hug).

2 Explore your Family Tree

- Place images of family members/caregivers on paper or poster-board and begin making your family tree, starting with the child in the centre. Add images of grandparents, uncles, aunts, partners, cousins, or siblings. Do the same for caregivers.
- Try making your family tree resemble an actual tree by placing images on cut-out leaves or use real leaves to mount photos. Images might be connected by a line, string, or stick. This is a good way of visually showing the connection between family members and loved ones.

Why

Through this experience, children will

- Develop self-confidence, a sense of belonging, self-expression, and diversity
- Enhance communication, language, and literacy skills
- Develop creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills



How

You can play this activity with your child in various ways; however, it is best to “know your audience.” Adapt to your child’s individual needs, such as using personal photos, drawings, or by saying or writing names.

Try using the images in guessing games (i.e. guess the person/s name or other things about them).

Children who aren’t yet talking can match pictures to people who are close by. Rather than having your child repeat or say the names, ask your child, “Where is Daddy?” and have your child go to, look for, or point towards a person.

Try drawing images of family members instead of using pictures. You can also add individual family information under each image (where they were born, their favourite food, hobbies).

Children who are still learning the names of family members or caregivers can look at photos. Laminate the images (try using either laminate, packing tape, or plastic page protector sleeves) and place pictures on a key ring or in a box or stack. Names can be added on the front or back of photos. Talk about the images regularly to help your child become familiar with them.

If your child attends a classroom setting, consider inviting your child to share their family tree or photos with their friends. This may open great dialogue between peers.

Read a book with your child about different types of families.

Here are suggestions:

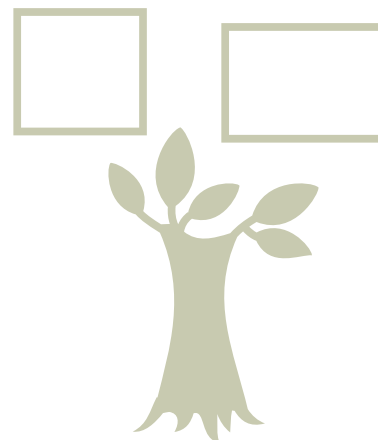
- *A Family Is a Family Is a Family*, by Sara O’Leary
- *The Family Book*, by Todd Parr

Where

This experience can be explored anywhere; however, it is ideally played at a table where you can assist in piecing together the family tree. It is best explored one on one or within a small group.

When

This activity can occur at any time of the day.



Gardening with Kids



What

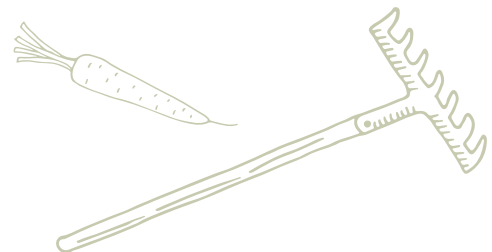
Getting young children involved with gardening is a great way to connect with nature, learn about food, and how food grows. In the garden, children also get to use all of their senses (touch, taste, see, hear, and smell). For example, they can see fruits and vegetables as they grow, and possibly taste them once they are ripe. Children are often more keen to try something they have helped grow or prepare. Early spring is a great time to start seeds indoors and talk to children about our growing season.

1 Create the Environment

- Explore what a garden is with your child and the different things that can be found in a garden.
- Ask your child for their ideas about caring for plants and gardens.
- Look at pictures in books or gardens in your neighbourhood.
- Ask if they would be interested in making their own garden at home!

2 Gardening Activities

- Decide if you will be growing plants outside or only inside. If you do have room outside for a small garden or planter, encourage your child to help prepare the soil by weeding, tilling with shovels or sticks, and stirring in compost or other natural soil additions (avoid chemical fertilizers which can be toxic if ingested from children's hands).
- Choose your seeds with your child. Together, decide what types of vegetables or beans you could grow depending on the space and sunlight you have, and what your family and/or community has traditionally grown. For example, squash need to spread their vines along the ground and need more room like a large planter or garden plot. Tomatoes, herbs, lettuce, chard, and kale grow more vertically and can be planted in pots. Beans and peas need a trellis or a fence to grow up alongside. Save the seed packets to remind yourself of what your plants need to grow.
- Start growing your seeds inside by sprouting them in moist paper towels inside small plastic bags. Label the bag so your child can start to recognize words. Encourage each child choose (ideally) two types of seeds to start, just in case one doesn't grow. Place these in a sunny window. Check daily to ensure the towel stays moist and to watch for the seeds to open. Ask them what they see as the seeds sprout. Encourage them to draw what they see each day, and label it with one or two words.
- Once sprouted, together with your child, move to a small pot or an empty paper egg carton with some fresh potting soil (choose soil that is specifically for growing food plants). Egg cartons work well as they can be planted right into a bigger pot or the garden, and the paper will eventually break down (note that this won't happen with Styrofoam egg cartons).



- Move seedlings outdoors (if you can) once there isn't a risk of frost outside. Some plants may need to stay warmer longer, like tomatoes. Some plants may need stakes to help support them.
- Encourage your child to try out the different gardener roles, like watering, weeding, and eventually picking the veggies. If you have more than one child, ask them to take turns trying out the different roles of the gardener. If your crop doesn't end up quite big enough for everyone to try some, consider getting some extra from the grocery store. Consider a taste test to see which tastes better!

Why

Through this experience, children will learn to

- Appreciate how their actions—through gardening—can affect nature and the planet
- Explore and learn about family, community, and the wider world by growing food that is important to their community
- Develop motor skills/abilities by planting the seeds and by pouring and scooping water or soil
- Appreciate and understand nutrition and nature
- Build empathy and see the impact of their actions in the environment around them

How

Some children might require guidance or assistance for the above activities. Do the activities with your child by guiding their movements with your own, such as hand over hand so that the child has the experience of doing the actions.

Create a space for your child to explore the different activities independently, and try watching from the sidelines. Observe their interests and ask questions that explore these interests further.

Encourage your child to think of new games and ideas that incorporate a gardening theme.

Read a story with your child about gardening or other ideas that connect with the activity.

Here is a suggestion:

- *A Day with Yayah* by Nicola Campbell & Julie Flett

Where

This activity can occur indoors or outdoors, depending on where the garden is being grown.

When

These activities can occur any time between morning and early evening.

Check this listing of plants and when they grow during the year in British Columbia:

<https://www.appetitetoplay.com/healthy-eating/tips-ideas/seasonally-available-british-columbia-fruits-and-vegetables>





People Playdough

What

Children learn about the world around them through inquiry and observation. They learn from those around them, and eventually, they discover or realize that there are similarities and differences between themselves and others. It is important during this process that parents, caregivers, and educators support development of a positive self-image as well as the understanding that diversity, or difference, is a fact of our world, and something to be celebrated.

1 Create the Environment

One way to introduce this activity is by reading a story about diversity such as *The Skin You Live In* by Michael Taylor. As you read the book together with your child, talk about the skin tone colours. After reading, look at your own arm and have your child guess what colour your skin tone is. If you are in a group, you can engage other children by asking what colour they identify as. Ask questions about their family members, about what they look like, and most importantly, what makes them unique or special.

2 Make Play Dough!

Cooked Play Dough Ingredients

- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 4 Tbsp Cream of Tartar
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup salt
- Food colouring (see ratios)
- 2 cups water

Food Colouring Ratios for Different Skin Tones:

- Tan: 3 drops yellow, 2 drops red, 1 drop blue
- Brown [darker tan]: 3 drops yellow, 3 drops red, 3 drops blue
- Olive/Brown: 10 drops yellow, 8 drops red, 6 drops blue
- Pink/Blush: dip a toothpick into the red food colouring and swirl it into the water, adding tiny amounts until you reach the desired tone

Directions

Mix all dry ingredients in a bowl and set aside. In a saucepan, stir liquid ingredients over medium heat for 3-5 minutes, and add dry mixture slowly until the mixture congeals. Once cooled, you can knead the dough on a chopping board lightly dusted with flour. Note: Homemade playdough can be a little bit tricky. If it's not turning out quite right, try adding more flour or water as needed. Playdough is very forgiving, so keep working with it until you reach the proper consistency.

3 Play!

This child-led activity can be set up on a table with playdough or with a variety of materials such as body shaped cookie cutters, buttons, googly eyes, and a variety of yarn (orange, yellow, brown, black, and white). Your child can explore using the items to make a model of themselves, their peers, or any person they wish.



Why

This activity helps to

- Develop creative thinking skills
- Develop an understanding of diversity, individualism, and positive self-image
- Develop empathy and greater social and emotional awareness
- Strengthen fine motor (hand) skills
- Develop tolerance for a variety of sensory experiences

How

Try creating a model of yourselves, peers, or loved ones with the playdough and other items on the table. Reflect their exploration in positive terms. For example, if a child places strands of yarn on the belly of their person, you can say “You’re putting hair on your tummy,” instead of saying, “You don’t have hair on your tummy, you have hair on your head.” Observe what the child is doing and encourage explanation and discussion. Remember it’s about the process, not the product!

For children who are still learning to talk, create people together and help your child to label them as caregivers, educators, friends, or family. Show them photos if this helps your child to make connections.

To create another layer of sensory exploration, substitute food dye with natural ingredients such as carob, cocoa, ginger, mustard powder, paprika, cinnamon, chili and taco seasoning, to create colour density and a variety of skin tones in addition to different scents. This will encourage children to explore the diverse smell of different foods and engage in discussions about them.

Read a book with your child about diversity, making different types of dough or other ideas that connect with this theme. Here are suggestions:

- *Shades of People*, by Shelley Rotner
- *Suzie’s Sourdough Circus*, by Kathy Sager.

Check out MOSAIC BC, a BC charity serving immigrant, newcomer and refugee communities with programs and events across BC: <https://www.mosaicbc.org/about/>

Where

This activity is best suited for one to four children at a table where they can talk and explore.

When

This activity can be explored at any time of day. Make sure there’s plenty of time, so children aren’t rushing through the experience.

Reference

Hollander, D. (2012, Oct. 6). *Flesh Tone Play Dough Tutorial* [Blog Post]. Retrieved from https://littlestarslearning.blogspot.com/2012/10/flesh-tone-play-dough-tutorial.html?_sm_au_=iVVqMmmV7VpV5WBs

Restaurant Pretend Play



What

Children love to engage in pretend activities, including pretend play with food. This activity provides children with an opportunity to engage in dramatic play through pretending to plan, prepare, and serve food.

1 Create the Environment

Introduce the idea of a pretend restaurant. Together, decide on the foods that you will serve at your restaurant. You can choose foods that you both love, foods that are your child's favourites, or pretend foods.

2 Play Restaurant

Give your child some choices if they are having difficulty getting started. Here are some jobs that might need to be done to make a restaurant:

- Make a menu
- Set the table
- Prepare the food
- Get dressed (with an apron, hat, scarf, or whatever you imagine!)
- Wash dishes
- Invite guests

Why

Through this experience, children will

- Develop creative thinking skills
- Develop an understanding of diverse worldviews
- Strengthen literacy and communication skills
- Self-regulate while they are involved in role-play



How

Encourage your child to create the foods they've decided on; for example, use playdough, blocks, cut pictures from newspapers, magazines, or draw, colour or paint your own.

Together, make menus and signs for the restaurant. Your child can decide on a restaurant name, what kinds of foods you will serve, how much they will cost, and draw pictures of the foods.

Talk about what else might be needed to prepare for this restaurant (e.g., a place to sit, glasses, cutlery, napkins). Your child might even think of music they would like to play in the background while people eat!

If your child needs help to get started, show them how to do something (wash a dish, stir a pot) and encourage them to copy you. As they play, help them to string a sequence of things together: get a cup, pour something in, stir it, drink it!

Try asking your child open-ended questions such as "What things worked well?" or "What are some other things we might need?" Encourage your child to include these ideas and play again.

With your child, talk about who else they might want to invite to their restaurant. These could be people in the family, other favourite people, or even stuffed toys. Try making invitations and send them to these people to share food with your child at their restaurant.

Read a book with your child about pretend play in a restaurant or other ideas that connect with this theme. Here are suggestions:

- *Eat*, by Elizabeth Verdick
- *Soup Day*, by Melissa Iwai
- *There's a Fly Guy in My Soup*, by Todd Arnold

Where

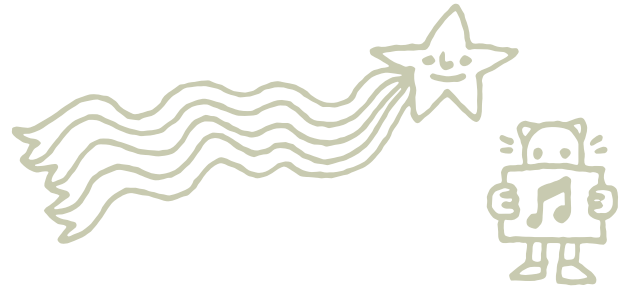
This activity can take place indoors or outdoors where there is space to set up the restaurant.

When

This activity can occur any time throughout the day, month, or year.



Telling Stories



What

Try this activity if you are noticing that your child is interested in listening to stories, or is starting to develop stories on their own.

You don't need to be a master storyteller to delight your child with a story. You can tell a personal meaningful story from your own childhood. Children also love to hear stories about themselves, like the story of their birth and how much you were looking forward to meeting them.

It's okay for children to interrupt stories and ask questions. There's no right or wrong way, and this supports the development of self-esteem.

Just relax, have fun, and go with the flow!

Why

Through this experience, children learn to

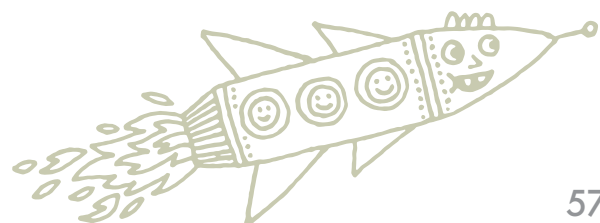
- Appreciate your values and beliefs as well as your culture
- Explore and learn about family, community, and the wider world
- Appreciate and acknowledge new vocabulary and language comprehension
- Use critical thinking skills if you involve them in the story. For example, ask them what they think might happen
- Tell a story about themselves or their family
- See and hear a model of storytelling which will encourage them to make up their own stories
- Feel empowered by learning life lessons from their parent or caregiver

This activity can help you and your child to bond. Often, children like to snuggle while listening to the story. The physical contact makes them feel close and connected by spending the time talking and listening to each other.

How

If you don't have much experience telling stories, you can start with something short. For example, try telling your child about something funny that happened to you or something funny your child said when they were smaller.

Tell longer stories that you know well. Children love to find out more about their culture and family members through stories. You can tell them about things you used to enjoy as a child, or things that scared you and how you overcame your fear. Tell your child about people who were important to you and how they impacted your life. You can tell stories about your child and the things they used to love or fear and show how they've changed and grown.



Involve your child in the telling of the story by asking questions like, “What do you think happened next?” or “How do you think that felt?” You can also make up stories where your child is the hero that saves the day. Include your child’s favourite character in the story. You can be creative or tell stories you know. Either way, children will love the attention and the time you spend talking together.

Explore stories at your local library:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/arts-culture/public-libraries>

Read a book with your child about storytelling or other ideas that connect with this theme. Here are some suggested books you might find at your local library:

- *The Typewriter*, by Bill Thomson
- *I am a Story*, by Dan Yaccarino

Where

You can tell stories anywhere.

When

This activity can be done at bedtime, when you want to occupy your little one, waiting for an appointment, or while travelling. It can happen anytime when you or your child are in the mood!

Reference

Community Action Program for Children (CAPC)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/childhood-adolescence/programs-initiatives/community-action-program-children-capc.html>

