



## The Art of Change

“The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order.” – *Alfred North Whitehead*

As adults, we know that life doesn't stay the same. We must constantly adapt and accept changes in our lives. There are changes that are minor, others that are monumental, some that we've initiated ourselves and others that catch us totally off-guard. If we reflect on how we've handled those changes in our lives, I think most of us would agree that the changes that we knew about ahead of time were the easiest to adapt to and manage.

It is important to realize that the children in our lives are also affected by change. It's our responsibility to help them make those transitions as smoothly as possible. Some of the biggest changes in a child's life are: going to child care for the first time and starting school. Other changes that children may have to deal with are: moving, loss, divorce or a traumatic event such as a natural disaster.

Starting child care or school can be very exciting and it can also be stressful for both the parent and the child. Parents may experience guilt and feel uncomfortable about leaving their child. The child may be apprehensive about what might happen in the new environment. Children are influenced by their parents' reactions and the steps their parents take create a smooth transition. Here are some practical tips that can help “preserve order amid change”.

- Be sure to talk to your child about school or child care so they will not be surprised by the new arrangement. Encourage them to tell you how they feel before and after their visit to the new environment.
- Don't rush your child. Allow plenty of time in the morning to get ready for child care or school and spend some time with your child once you arrive at the location. This allows the child time to adjust to the new environment, the teacher/caregiver and the other children.
- Help your child become acquainted with the new surroundings and unfamiliar adults and children before you leave. This puts the provider/teacher in a better position to offer reassurance.
- For children in child care, let your child bring a special blanket, stuffed animal, toy or picture of the family. These can help them feel more secure about leaving home.
- Let your child know that you understand and accept their feelings. Mocking, chastising, criticizing, teasing, or threatening are some of the responses that can prolong or worsen anxiety. Resist the temptation to bribe a child into hiding or controlling their emotions.
- When it's time to leave, tell your child good-bye, where you are going, and when you will return. Don't slip out without letting the child know you are leaving. It will only make the separation more painful for the child. Your departure should be handled honestly.
- Remember, it's normal to feel anxious about leaving your child. Communication with other parents can be a great support.

For Providers/Teachers:

- Encourage parents to spend some extra time at drop off and pick up times to ease the transition between home and school.
- Respect the child's feelings. Their distress is temporary and will decrease as you bond and they feel secure and welcomed in their new environment.
- If you need to step in to help the child separate, say “I'm glad you're here. Now it's time for parents to go to work and children to go to child care. You will see mommy again when she comes to pick you up. Let's go see what there is to do today.” Lead the child as you both wave good-bye.

Change is inevitable, but given the right tools and information, it doesn't have to be painful!

**Our mission is to enrich children's lives through innovative support, education and enhanced family and provider services. Our programs put families at the center of a community of support services.**

## Low Cost, Low-Tech Toys

The importance of free, uninterrupted play time for children cannot be stressed enough in supporting a strong foundation for lifelong learning. As Bev Bos noted in her workshop for Choices for Children, 4/12/2008, most children are too often exposed to a glut of toys that distract them from real play. Real play is child-initiated and child-directed. Generally, toys that require batteries and are labeled as “learning toys” have only one outcome and do not encourage divergent thinking or encourage creative play. Adults can often interfere in child-directed play by overscheduling their children, or organizing or directing the play of children. You can support the important work of “child’s play” by providing plenty of free-time, limiting screen time for television, computers and video games, and offering plenty of open-ended items children can use in play. A good toy is one that children can use in a multitude of ways.

*Some suggested low-cost, low-tech materials:*

1) **Sand and water** are open-ended sensory materials that invite children to use their imagination and make discoveries. Provide plenty of household objects to enhance the experience. Shells are a great addition to both sand and water play.

2) **Paper** to paint or color. Send “mail”. Make lists, cards, paper dolls, and fans. Play tic tac toe and hang man. Have fun tearing, rolling into a ball and “shooting baskets”.

3) **Dress-up clothes.** A dress-up box is essential. Save scarves, anything shiny, old sunglasses, purses, shoes, bags. Thrift stores and yard sales are a great place to get a jump start on a dress-up box.

4) **Blocks.** Good old, wooden blocks with pictures and letters of the alphabet encourage spatial awareness and language. Sets can be enhanced by adding differently shaped pieces- like “jenga” pieces.

5) **A ball** is such a versatile toy that has the magic of keeping your child’s attention over their lifetime. Children not only develop their large motor skills they also learn social skills by learning to take turns and later to play on a team.

6) **Playdough** is a great, tactile and open-ended material. To reduce the cost make your own. Enhance the experience by allowing children to choose the color, add a fragrance (such as an unsweetened kool-aid packet), or texture (such as coffee grounds, sand, or cornmeal).

7) **Hand puppets** encourage imaginative play, self-expression, and language. Your child can make some out of lunch sacks, socks, or even out of a shadow of their hand.

8) **Household objects** such as bowls, pans, plastic food storage containers, baskets, empty spice jars and yogurt containers, and measuring cups, turkey basters, spatulas, melon scoopers, whisks.....

9) **Bubbles.** Children of all ages can appreciate bubbles. Babies can track them with their eyes and head, toddlers can run and pop them. Preschoolers can blow bubbles and school-age children can even make the bubble solution.

10) **Cardboard boxes.** Instead of breaking them down and taking them straight to the county recycling station, leave them out and watch what children create.

**Summer Library Program:** Thursdays at 10:30am-11:30am, beginning June 19 and ending July 31. Two separate ages groups this year! Ages 4-7 years & ages 8-12 years. Call the library at 694-2120 for more information.

## June

7- Alpine County's Fish & Game's "Kids Fishing Day" at Indian Creek Reservoir. 10am-noon. Alpine Kids is providing hotdogs and drinks.

13- Storytime in the Park at the park adjacent to the Markleeville Library. 5-7 pm with a puppet show, other entertainment and Indian's Tacos. The entertainment is free. There is a minimal cost for the tacos. Call 694-2120 for more information.

## July

6- Dinner at Turtle Rock Park for Alpine Kids. Come sign-up for Alpine Kids and receive a full-size three-dimensional kite! Call Edie at 694-2934 for more information.

20- Alpine Kids horseback riding and BBQ at Antelope Valley. Overnight camping on the night of the 19th. Children over 5 and adults can go on a 1 hour horseback ride into the wilderness. Pony rides for smaller children, a BBQ, horseshoes and roping steer. Call Edie at 694-2934 for more information.

## August

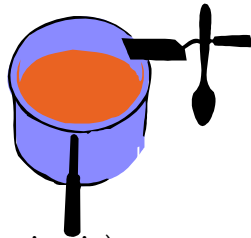
30- Annual Alpine Kids outing to Wild Island in Reno. Beverages and lunch provided. Mini golf and go-carts included. Call Edie at 694-2934 for more information.

### Play Dough

Store bought play dough is expensive. This is a great recipe you can make at home for less than a dollar and lasts weeks outside of the refrigerator.

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup salt
- 2 Tablespoons oil
- 1 tsp cream of tartar
- 2 cups of water (mix food coloring in)



Cook over medium heat until dough pulls away from the side of the pan.

### Bubble Solution

Glycerin helps soap bubbles hold water, which helps keep the bubbles from popping. Try a tablespoon or two of glycerin for a small batch of solution. Glycerin can be purchased at most pharmacies.

#### Ingredients:

- 7 to 10 parts water
- 1 part dish detergent
- Glycerin
- Bowl



Mix the water, detergent and glycerin in a bowl.

### Child-Centered Art Idea

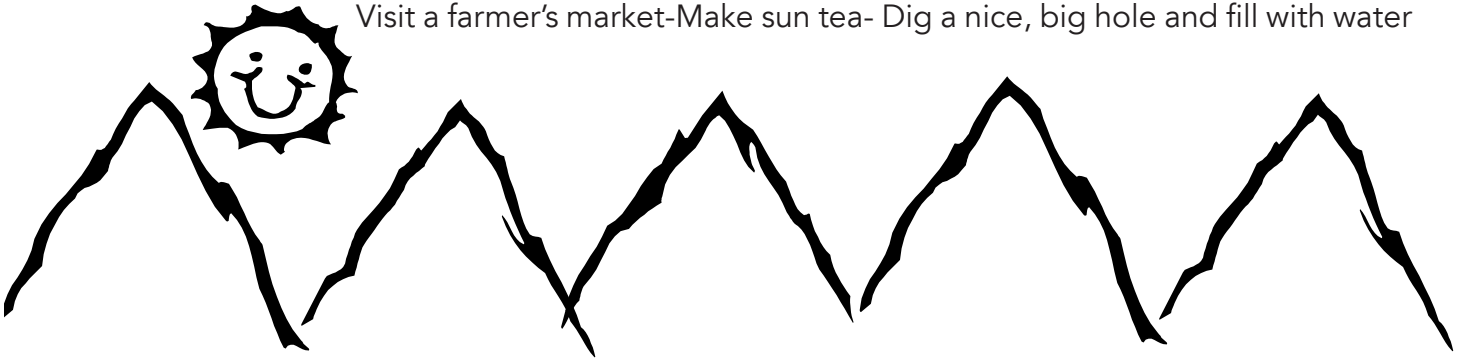
an idea shared by Bev Bos at the 4/12/2008 workshop "Creative Art, Music, and Language"

Take a large piece of plain, white paper and cut a large hole in it. Give the child the circle (positive space) and/or the paper with the hole (negative space). Supply the child with paint and paint brushes and let them create! The younger the child is, the larger the paper needs to be.

*Child-centered art activities are creative, unique, and original. They are diverse and individual like the children who create them. They are open-ended and unstructured. They involve self-expression. They are*

## Summer Fun Ideas

Make ice cream- Grow a plant from a seed- Have a picnic in your yard- Take a walk- Go fishing- Go to the library- Read together- Fly a kite- Blow bubbles- Run in the sprinkler- Visit the Minden airport and watch the planes take off and land- Hunt for four leaf clovers- Visit the swim center or pool at Grover's -Go to a yard sale- Gaze at the stars- Ride bikes- Play kickball or soccer in the park or in the upper field at DVS- Pitch a tent in the back yard- Paint or draw a landscape- Paint or draw a self-portrait- Cook together- Play board games- Jump rope- Press flowers- Write stories- Tell stories- Write a play- Act out a play- Collect feathers- Create sidewalk art with chalk- Play frisbee- Lay back and watch the clouds- Send out postcards- Make a milkshake or fruit smoothie-Go to the movies- Work on a large puzzle- Visit a pet store- Watch the machines at a construction site- Go bowling- Feed the ducks in Lampe Park- Make a windchime out of old utensils or keys- Have a puppet show- Go on a treasure hunt- Watch the sunrise- Watch the sunset- Work with clay- Walk to the waterfall at Grover's - Visit the museum- Make a sundial- Build a fort- Keep a journal- Visit a firestation- Dig for worms- Take pictures- Throw a tea party- Make a sandcastle- Write an illustrate your own book- Visit a farmer's market-Make sun tea- Dig a nice, big hole and fill with water



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Visit us at [www.choices4children-alpine.org](http://www.choices4children-alpine.org)

*(we have all of our Play & Learn activity sheets on our site)*