

Humor in Child Care

Activity of the Month – July 2009

Laughing together with children is a great way to connect with them. Laughter has the ability to make them smarter, healthier, happier, and better able to cope with difficult situations.

All children have the ability to develop their own sense of humor when given the opportunity from an adult that knows how to amuse them and takes time to laugh with them. Here are a couple of activities to help make that happen!

The Park in the Dark

Closing your eyes and imagining things will always lead to humorous ideas and experiences. Take an imaginary trip to the park in the dark.

1. Ask the children to lie down and close their eyes.
2. Make noises of things you might hear in the park, such as birds, bees, wind, car horns, bicycle bells, crickets, and son on. Suggest to the children to imagine where the sounds are coming from and what is making the sound. For example the cricket sound could be on the tree who is riding the bicycle.
3. Children can guess what sound you are making.
4. Soon they will give suggestions of more noises for you to make or have them make the noises.
5. Extend this activity by reading the book *The Listening Walk* by Paul Showers.
6. Take walks in the dark with the children in other environments like the zoo, the beach, camping, etc...

The Body Walk

Children will laugh their way to learning about the following skills/concepts: body awareness, coordination, creative movement, and sequencing.

1. Talk about using two parts of your body.
2. How can you walk on three parts of your body (two legs and one elbow).
3. Try walking on four parts of your body (one leg, one knee, and two hands).
4. Explore all the different ways to walk on four parts.
5. Can they think of five parts?



Tips When Using Humor with Children

Children of different ages develop humor in different ways. What is humorous for an infant may not be funny for a four year old. It is important to know what is likely to humor children of all ages.

Infants are intrigued by facial expression and love having adult smile and laugh at them. Infants understand an adult's sense of happiness and imitate that emotion. **Older infants** enjoy the element of surprise and often enjoy a game of peek-a-boo. **Toddlers** tend to enjoy physical humor and love trying to make adults laugh. Language explodes at this age and toddlers often enjoy rhyming and non-sense word play. **Preschoolers** are likely to find humor in a funny picture or something out of the ordinary (a bird flying upside down). At this age they often become aware of bodily functions and find humor in them. However, a fine line does exist between funny and scary. They may find people in costumes, like, clowns frightening instead of funny.

The Power of Laughter. Silberg, Jackie. Gryphon House, Inc.

Encouraging Your Child's Sense of Humor. Retrieved June 1, 2009, from Kid's Health website: http://kidshealth.org/parent/growth/learning/child_humor.html#



Benefits of Laughter

- 😊 When you laugh, chemicals called endorphins, which make you feel good are released by the brain.
- 😊 Laughter increases learning and retention. Laughter stimulates both sides of the brain. People get the message quicker and remember it longer.
- 😊 Laughter reduces pain.
- 😊 Laughter is a universal language. You don't need to speak the same language to laugh together and is a

- 😊 form of communication that everyone can relate to.
- 😊 Laughter stimulates the brain, the nervous system, the respiratory system, the hormonal system, and the muscular system. Studies show that it lowers blood pressure, decreases depression, increases muscle flexion, reduces allergy symptoms, strengthens the immune system and reduces stress.