

Let's Play!

Activities for Families



**SET
2**

Focusing on
Communication
and Literacies

Overview

This package of resources was developed by the BC Ministry of Education for parents and caregivers who want to support their child's early learning experiences through play.

Each play activity connects with one of the Living Inquiries described within the BC Early Learning Framework, which include:

- Engagement with Others, Materials and the World
- Well-being and Belonging
- Personal Identity, Social Responsibility, and Diversity
- Communication and Literacies

These resources describe simple play activities using this easy to follow format:

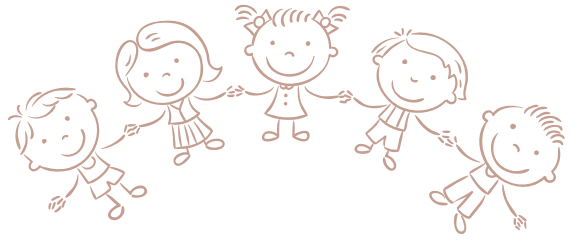
- What
- Why
- How
- Where
- When

Acknowledgments

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Talking Stick



What

The Talking Stick experience is an adaptation from the tradition of indigenous peoples in North America. Talking sticks are traditionally used when teaching children, holding council, making decisions regarding disputes, holding powwow gatherings, having storytelling circles, or when conducting a celebration where more than one person speaks. The Talking Stick is passed from person to person as they speak, and only the person holding the stick can talk during that period. The contribution of each member of the circle is considered a sacred point of view.

The Talking Stick teaches children the fundamentals of communication through a respectful, patient, and collaborative lens. It encourages children to learn skills such as turn taking, waiting, and problem solving in a calm and safe environment.

1 Create the Environment

There can be a variety of ways to introduce the Talking Stick. It may be in your vehicle, during a mealtime, while sharing a story, or it can begin as a collaborative art project. Try introducing this activity when going on a nature walk with your child, or if they are having a disagreement and need a tool to help support conflict resolution. You can also try this when there are just too many people talking at one time, and you want to ensure that everyone has a chance to say something.

Regardless of how you plan on sharing the principles of this activity, it is important to establish the basic **ground rules** of using a Talking Stick in a sharing circle:

1. In a sharing circle, everyone will have a turn to speak, so encourage everyone to be mindful of the time they are taking to share their thoughts.
2. Whoever is holding the Talking Stick has a “sacred point of view.” This person determines when they are finished speaking and can then share the stick with an individual who has not spoken yet.
3. When someone is sharing their thoughts or insights, everyone else in that talking circle should respect them by listening and not commenting until that person has completed what they wished to share.

Why

Through this experience, children learn to

- Be creative
- Feel self-confident and express themselves
- Communicate, use interpersonal skills, and diplomacy
- Foster positive coping strategies and problem-solving skills
- Communicate thoughts and experiences creatively using many different forms of expression
- Develop diverse language abilities and the capacity to communicate with others in many ways
- Experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures
- Express their own points of view and reflect on others’ views

How

Children may need time to process the concept of a Talking Stick. To introduce the activity, try encouraging your child to decorate a piece of driftwood with various items such as paints, glitters, recyclable items, and feathers. During their exploration, it's key to engage the children in conversations about how they will be using the stick and how it is traditionally used.

Try sharing a story or a book about a Talking Stick (such as "The Talking Stick" by Dot Meharry). Sharing the story and having a discussion afterwards on the importance of a Talking Stick helps establish a true understanding of the fundamentals of communication.

Traditionally, an **Answering Feather** may be held by a person responding to a question. A question is posed and the feather is passed to the person who will answer. This will help foster the development of diplomacy and negotiation skills.

Where

This experience can be completed anywhere but preferably in a space that is quiet and with little distractions. If completing the activity with a group of children, use an area where the group of children can sit in a circle.

When

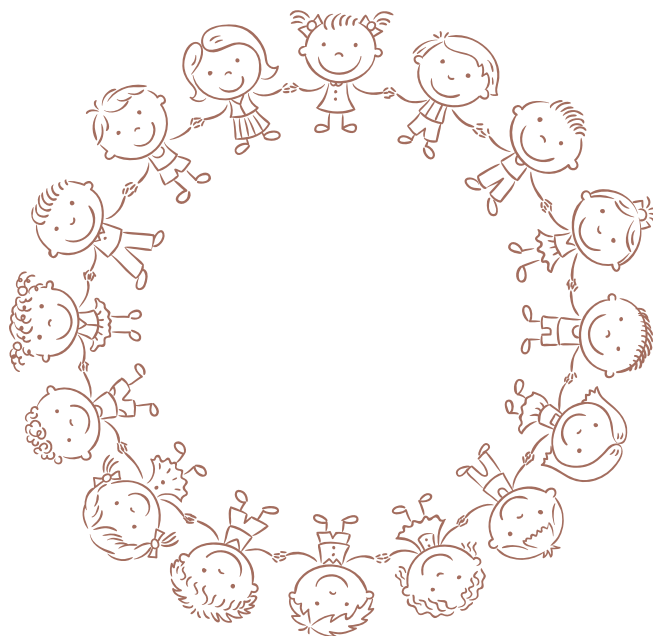
This activity can occur at any time of the day but best explored in small groups, or with the entire family.

References

Native American Legends – Traditional Talking Stick.

Retrieved from <https://www.firstpeople.us/FP-Html-Legends/TraditionalTalkingStick-Unknown.html>

Meharry, D. (2006). *The Talking Stick*. New Zealand: Raupo Publishing Ltd.



Musical Drawing



What

This experience explores the senses of sight and sound together and can be very fun for your child if they show interest in music and rhythm.

1 Create the Environment

- Choose any type of music that your child and you listen to, or perhaps important in your community, such as different types of drumming, dance, or other types of instrumental music.
- Tape a large piece of easel paper to the floor, or use regular size paper. Bring out some crayons, markers, chalk, or finger paint.

2 Musical Drawing

Play the music and encourage your child to draw or paint on the easel paper, using the drawing tools, according to what they hear in the music.

Why

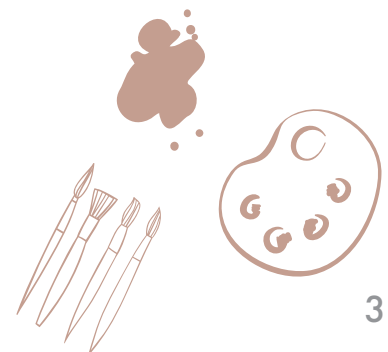
Through this experience, children will learn

- Explore the world using their bodies and senses
- Build, create, and design using different materials and techniques
- Actively explore, think, and reason
- Be creative and expressive in a variety of ways
- Express a zest for living and learning

How

Encourage your child to draw or paint based on the music that is being played. If you are using paint, try to add other elements such as soap or sparkles, so they can see the different textures of the paint they are using.

You can ask how the song made them feel. Did the song make them happy? Did the song make them sad? Did the song make them calm? Are those feelings anywhere in the picture?



When the music is complete, and your child has finished drawing, ask your child questions about their drawing:

- What did you make?
- What colours did you use?
- What types of drawing tools did you use?
- What was your favourite part of the song? Where is that in the drawing?

Observe your child's drawing and get curious. For example, you might notice that there is one area that is sparse, or one area that has a lot of drawing on it. Ask your child why they drew it like that.

Consider visiting an art gallery or a nearby museum for inspiration:

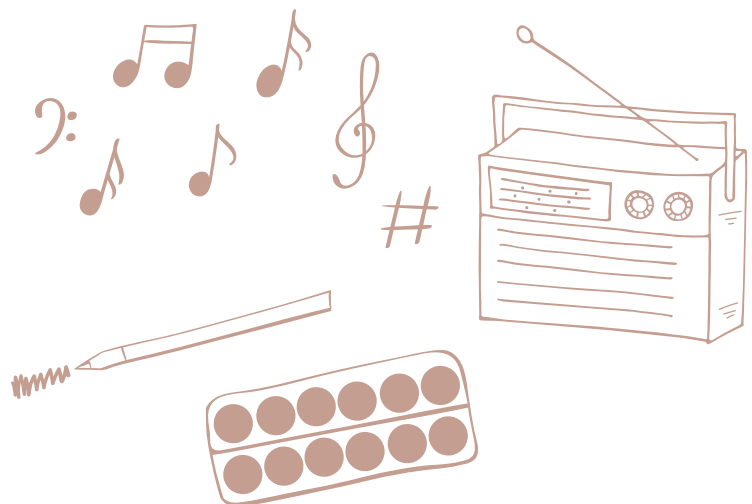
<https://www.hellobc.com/things-to-do/museums-heritage-sites>

Where

This activity may get messy if using paint. Try this experience either inside or outside.

When

This activity can occur during any time of the day.



I am Thankful



What

This experience provides an opportunity for children to share their gratitude with others.

1 Create the Environment

Before your child goes to sleep, tell them about someone or something you love, or something wonderful that happened to you that day.

2 Sharing Experiences

Ask your child to think about someone or something they love, or something wonderful that happened to them that day. Maybe they are thankful for having fun, spending time with a relative, sharing a family meal, or making a new friend.

Guide your child to take three soft, slow breaths, and feel thankful. This encourages your child to be mindful and reflect on their experiences.

Why

Through this experience, children will learn to

- Reflect on themselves and how they feel
- Communicate thoughts and experiences creatively using different forms of expression
- Be curious about vocabulary, concepts, and written language
- Express their points of view and reflect on others' views

How

Try the activity as described. You can remind your child about the day's activities or share what you noticed.

Help your child write down what they are thankful for. Ask your child to draw a picture that represents the words you have written together.

Wake up in the morning and try revisiting what you were thankful for with your child. Use this activity as a reminder of the good things in your life.



Where

This activity can occur anywhere.

When

Try this activity before your child goes to sleep.

Reference

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



Story Stones



What

This activity originates from a tradition of Aboriginal peoples of Australia. Story Stones are painted stones kept in a small pouch and used as a tool to tell stories.

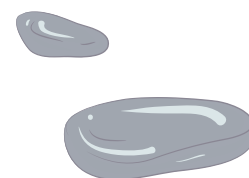
Simplicity is key for this activity. Paint or draw various simple images that support the child's different interests on small rocks. Once dried, place them in a pouch.

Invite the child to explore the stones and create their own stories using the rocks.

Why

Through this experience, children will learn to

- Communicate thoughts and creatively use many different forms of expression
- Experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures
- Express their points of view
- Understand abstract and critical thinking, creativity, and invention
- Be independent and confident as they take initiative to create storylines
- Enhance their communication and literacy skills



How

Paint simple images on the stones: house, dog, cat, tree, car, mountains, waves, and individual people (possibly even small caricatures of family members). For some children, this will act as more of an explorative or sight-word activity. Encourage your child to repeat the name of the image several times with you.

Allow the child to explore the stones. Some children will automatically create a storyline whereas others may need some encouragement. You can support children's development by having them explain the symbolism of the stones and ask them who the characters are or what the images represent. Ask probing questions such as "Where do they live?" or "What are they doing?" to help them develop a storyline.

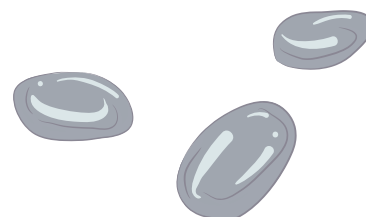
Your child can paint their own rocks. This will allow them to take full ownership over the activity and highlight and encourage their ideas and creative thinking. Also, try encouraging your child to develop a storyline.

Where

This experience can be completed anywhere, preferably in an area with ample room for the child to spread out the stones to create their story.

When

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





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