

CONNECTIONS

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Mud, Marvelous Mud!

Adapted from Community Playthings, June 28, 2016

International Mud Day was held on June 23rd this year, It is never too late to enjoy mud play though.

Oh the joys of mud! Since the dawn of time, children have been drawn to mud puddles and dirt as a part of their play. Mixing soil, water, and other natural materials like pebbles, leaves, or grass provides children endless possibilities for learning and fun. Many of us have fond memories of creating mud pies, digging for worms, or making streams and valleys in the mud. But it's not just about fun. Children benefit from messy, muddy play.

Scientists have now confirmed something that children have always instinctively known; playing in mud is a joyful experience. Recent research has shown that dirt contains microscopic bacteria called *Mycobacterium Vaccae* which stimulates the immune system and increases the levels of serotonin in our brains, an endorphin that soothes, calms, and helps us to relax. Scientists say regular exposure to the bacteria may help reduce a child's vulnerability to depression. In short, playing in mud makes you happier!

Mud is also an excellent medium for learning. The rich, engaging sensory play children partake in while playing with mud allows them to express their creativity

while enhancing their fine motor skills. Children practice social skills such as cooperation, negotiation, communication, and sharing as they work together. Emergent math and science skills are practiced as children make before and after comparisons, solve problems, test theories, and measure and count ingredients for their mud pies. This is the scientific process in action! Mud is a wonderful art medium. It is in ample supply, can be easily molded to create endless sculptures, and responds differently than clay or play dough. The open-ended nature of mud encourages creative thinking and allows children to freely create without fear of making mistakes. This also contributes to a child's sense of self, helping to build a strong inner sense of competency.



Playing in the mud inspires children to feel a connection to nature and develop an appreciation for the environment. But maybe the greatest benefit of mud play is the memories being created by the children. Mud play and the wonder and joy associated with it are the stuff that fabulous childhood memories are made of!



Our Summer calendar & newsletter cover both July & August. Save the calendar and flip it over for August fun. Summer playgroups resumed July 2nd but feel free to call and see if there is still space.

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Published by Joan F. MacDonald

Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant



Story Times & More

Story times abound in the area.

Wednesdays:

The Hull Public Library offers a puppet show with Leigh, July 18th at 11:30am and July 25th-August 8th at 10:30am.

Weir River Farm offers a story time weekly through September.

Fridays @ 10:00am:

Buttonwood Books & Toys in Cohasset offers a story time.

The Carousel in Hull also offers a weekly story time session featuring a character in costume each week. There is a separate charge for a ride on the carousel.

Both Cohasset & Hingham Public Libraries, offer age-specific story, craft, activity, music & STEM times throughout all of July until mid-August. Check out their websites for details:

www.cohassetlibrary.org

www.hinghamlibrary.org



The Trustees of the Reservations offer a wide range of programming for families at their local sites. Check them out at <http://www.thetrustees.org/>

Preschool Games for the Whole Family



1. **Duck, Duck, Goose:** Everyone sits in a circle. One child is "It" and goes around the circle tapping everyone on the head and saying, "Duck." At this child's discretion, he or she taps someone and calls out "Goose." At that moment, the child tapped must jump up and chase the child who was "It" around the circle of kids. If the child who was "It" makes it around the circle and sits down, then he or she is "safe." If tagged by the "Goose", then he or she becomes "It" again.

2. **London Bridge is Falling Down:** Two children form a bridge by joining hands across from each other. As everyone sings the nursery rhyme, all the children pass under the up stretched arms. When the song ends, the arms are dropped around the child passing through at the time. Then, the song changes to, "Take the key and lock him up." Those joining hands can start rocking arms back and forth. Preschoolers delight in being "locked up" and swayed to and fro.

3. **Limbo:** Bring a broomstick outside and ask two older children or adults to hold the ends. Have the children go under the stick bending backward if possible without touching it. If the stick is touched, then that child is out. After everyone has had a turn, the stick can be gradually lowered in increments. This can be done to music, too, if available.

4. **Egg Races:** Make some hard-boiled eggs or use small golf-sized balls and bring them outside with some tablespoons. Have fun telling your preschooler where they have to walk, run, jump, etc., while balancing the egg on the spoon. This promotes balance and dexterity.

5. **Simon Says:/Follow the Leader:** These are one of the most popular games for young children to play. It encourages good listening skills and focus. You are Simon. Stand facing your children and give orders, such as "Simon says, touch your nose" or "Simon says, do a jumping jack." As you call out each order, the children must do whatever you do, as long as you have said, "Simon Says." If you just say, "Do this," whoever follows the action that you now do, is out. The last child standing wins. In Follow the Leader, move all around doing different movements. Everyone has to do what you do. Simple. Great. Fun.

6. **Nature Walks:** You can turn literally any walk outside into a nature walk—even a walk around the block. Observe the weather, animals, bugs, and plants. You might say, "Look at those big clouds", or "Touch this grass. It is still wet from yesterday's rain." Preschoolers especially love exploring and are sure to have plenty of questions for you along the way!

7. **Tag:** You can be "It" for starters. In a backwards variation everyone tries to catch you and tag you. If you are tagged, then that child gets to be "It." Some designated spots can be considered "safe" like all the trees, or park benches, etc. A variation to keep everyone moving and not being out is to play dead bug tag- when you are tagged you lay down on your back moving your arms & legs like a dying bug to a count of 10.

Hull Family Network

Note from the HFN Coordinator:

Joan F. MacDonald, jmacdonald@town.hull.ma.us

At some point in my newsletter preparation I go back and check out what was in the previous year's editions. Last year I announced that the HFN budget had been cut again, and that the Advisory Council that helps oversee the grant would be spearheading a fundraising campaign in the fall to make up the difference. We have a revolving account that allows us to carry over a set amount each year but not over it. Therefore, as a result, each year we will need to raise some funds to help supplement the grant funds from the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). We started out this year with our participation in Wonderful Wednesday at Hull's Kitchen and HK Too. Thanks to all who went out to eat that day. I know I enjoyed getting out of the kitchen during a weeknight! Once again this fall we will have a matching Ask Campaign and will participate in Endless Summer with a raffle. Last year we were able to fully fund the programs cut and I am hopeful we will once again.



Beach Tips

Over the years I have heard and seen many tips for making life easier at the beach.

- ♦ Trying to keep a sheet clean is tough but bring a fitted sheet then use 4 larger items to secure the 4 corners upright when it is spread out.
- ♦ Make your own ID bracelet for your child using clear packing tape. Write your cell phone number, cover the note with packing tape that you fold in half over it while overlapping the ends to make a secure but not too tight bracelet or secure it to the strap of the bathing suit.
- ♦ Baby powder absorbs the moisture that helps the sand cling to your child. Sprinkle then wipe it all off easily.
- ♦ Make your own baby pool by digging a hole that you then line with a shower curtain to hold in the water.
- ♦ Mesh pop-up laundry bags help hold beach toys and allow the sand to shake out. Label your toys with a Sharpie or Deco-Marker to ensure you find your toys at the end of the day. All children love anyone else's toys.



Wayne Potash's Music Fun Concert

Thursday,
August 16th @ 6:30pm
Friends or Jones Park
at the corner of
Touraine Avenue and
Kingsley Road.

In the event of rain, the concert will be held at the Hull Family Network. Weather updates will be on our Facebook page. This event is sponsored by the Helping Our Kids Fund and the MA Cultural Arts Council.



June
29th
through
August
31st,

8-10 museums, parks and other places of interest, offer free admission thanks to the Highland Street Foundation. Check online at <http://highlandstreet.org/programs/free-fun-fridays> or on our Facebook page.

Hull Family Network

180 Harborview Rd., Rm. C101

Hull, MA 02045

Return Service Requested

Check our website for additional
events and information at

www.town.hull.ma.us



This newsletter is
provided by the
Hull Family Network, now
serving families with
children up to age 8
years.

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What is the Hull Family Network?

The Hull Family Network supports all parents and caregivers who have children prenatal through age eight. Our goal is to help parents create and maintain a healthy family environment as well as to promote family well-being through parent education and community support.

Funded by the MA Department of Early Education and Care through a grant to the Hull Public Schools, the Hull Family Network provides playgroups, parent education workshops, parent support groups, family activities, as well as information on parenting and community resources. By providing family recreational activities and playgroups, we hope to help parents build connections that will extend beyond the HFN Center and be a support to them. By providing parent education workshops, support groups, and having an extensive parenting lending library, we hope to help parents enhance their child-rearing skills.

Our programs are free to all residents in the town of Hull who are pregnant or have children through the age of eight. Most of our programs are offered at our center which is located at 180 Harborview Road, inside the Jacobs School. We are open Monday-Friday and are always happy to meet a new family.



Mud Play Ideas

Community Playthings, June 28, 2016

So what can you do to provide opportunities for children to play in the mud? It can be as simple as allowing children to explore a muddy puddle after a spring rain. But if you are up for it, there are many ways you can implement a variety of mud-related play activities. Here are some ideas:

Paint with mud—provide different types of soil to create different shades of “paint”. Or you can add food coloring or tempera paint to watery mud for more vibrant colors.

Make mud sculptures—encourage children to sculpt and mold mud, adding pebbles, twigs, or leaves to individualize their sculptures.

Build with mud! Use mud as a mortar to build with stones, sticks, or even real bricks.

Construct roadways and waterways—add toy dump trucks, excavators, and back hoes to build roadways in the dirt. Provide cars and trucks to add to the play. Offer pieces of PVC pipe to build waterways and pipelines.

Create animal homes—add plastic animals or dinosaurs to the mud area and have children add leaves, sticks, and stones to create a forest, jungle, or even Jurassic Park!

