



Whether you find conversations about race challenging or consider it a part of your family's daily life, now, more than ever, it is a topic that cannot be avoided. To support these conversations, this week's Family Connections focus on ways to address race and the differences and similarities of humankind in a child-friendly, age-appropriate manner.



- Tell Me About Your Friends**
Various art materials (papers and crayons, markers, and/or paints) markers
- Image Collage**
Variety of child-appropriate magazines, ads, and/or catalogs, Photograph of your child, Scissors, glue (or tape)

Tell Me About Your Friends

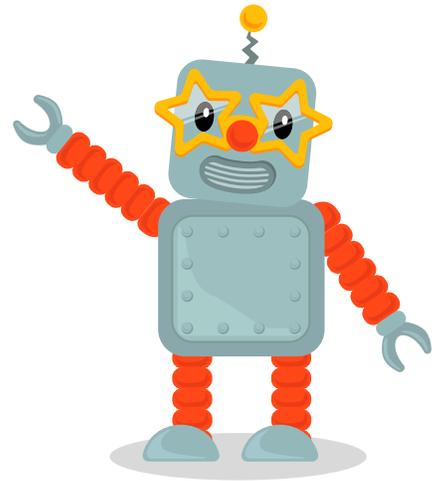
- Ask your child to tell you about his friends.
- Share questions such as, "What are the names of your friends?" "What color is his/her hair?" "How tall is he/she?" "What color is his/her skin?" "What do you and your friends have in common? (i.e. "Do you both have one nose, two eyes, two ears, two legs, two arms?" and so on).
- Encourage your child to describe what he likes best about each friend.
- Next, invite your child to talk about the hobbies, interests, and/or games he enjoys with each friend.
- Pull out some art materials (markers, crayons, paints, papers, etc.) and encourage your child to draw a picture of at least one friend (perhaps your child will decide to illustrate himself playing a game with his friend). Place the picture in a prominent place so you and your child can refer to it throughout the week.

Image Collage

- Share several magazines, catalogs, and/or ads with your child, and work with her to find pictures of people who are alike and different (e.g., hair color, skin color, age, gender, clothing, and so on) from you and your family.
- Affix a photo of your child picture to sturdy paper. If you have one handy, include a picture of yourself, too.
- Go through each of the photos you collected from the magazines and invite your child to talk about the similarities and differences of each person (compared to you and your child). Upon doing so, affix the photographs to the paper, alongside your personal photo(s).
- Talk openly about the similarities and differences, always bringing the child back to the understanding that while our skin, eye, and hair color may be different, we are all human beings, part of the human race, living together (whether near or far apart) in the world.

Full STEM Ahead!

Young children have an innate ability to ask questions. In fact, researchers estimate that preschoolers ask an amazing 76 information-seeking questions per hour! Research also shows that young children are especially receptive to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education. According to the Center for Childhood Creativity, "Even before a child's first birthday, she is capable of making inferences, drawing conclusions about cause and effect, and reasoning about the probability of events." If developed and encouraged, these skills can act as the foundation for abstract reasoning essential to excelling in any STEM-related field. That's why this week's Family Connection focuses on super fun and easy STEM-related experiences!



Ready, Set, Rain!



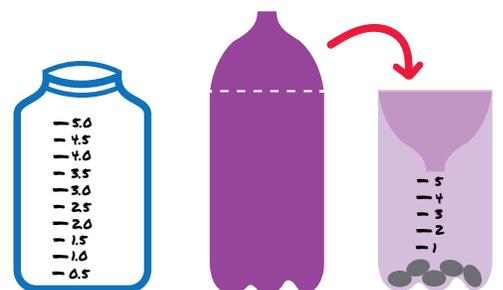
- 1. Make a rain gauge with a Mason jar.**
Using a ruler, mark inches vertically on the outside of the jar.
- 2. Use a plastic 2-liter bottle.**
Cut the top off of the bottle about a fourth of the way from the top; turn it upside down and tape it to the inside of the bottom of the bottle; add stones to keep the bottle from being blown over; then use a ruler to add the measurement marks on the outside.
- 3. Place the rain gauge outside.**
Work with your child to place the rain gauge in a place where it will capture the rain.
- 4. Keep a log.**
Create a log that outlines the measurements (e.g., Monday: 1 inch; Tuesday: 1/3 inch). Talk with your child about the differences in the rainstorms, using language such as "this is a lot of rain", "there is less rain today than yesterday", "there is more rain today", etc.
- 5. Make two!**
Make two rain gauges so you can measure ongoing rainfall. One gauge to collect continuous rainfall, and the second to collect daily (or hourly) rainfall to compare against each other.



What you will need:

- A Mason jar or plastic 2-liter bottle
- Ruler
- Permanent marker
- Tape*
- Small rocks*

*if using the 2-liter bottle



Sink or Float?



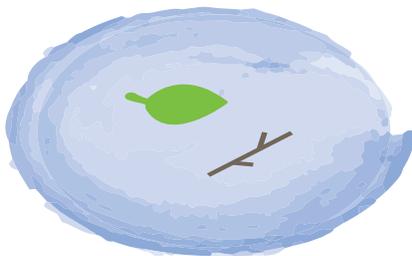
- 1. Fill a small tub with water.**
- 2. Explore and gather.**
Invite your child to gather objects from around your house or yard.
- 3. Does it float?**
Encourage your child to experiment with the objects to determine what sinks and what floats.
- 4. Make a prediction.**
Increase the difficulty by asking your child to predict what will happen before each object enters the water.



What you will need:

- A small tub filled with water
- Small, water-safe objects, or an area where your child can find water-safe objects

Float Your Boat



- 1. Set up a workspace.**
Find a puddle or bring a shallow container filled with water outside.
- 2. Explore and gather.**
Encourage your child to explore the area nearby and bring back a variety of small objects like leaves, twigs, and acorns.
- 3. Does it float?**
Have your child select one of the items he found and ask him if he thinks it will float or sink; then have him place it on top of the water.
- 4. Sort it out.**
Have your child group the items that do float into one pile and those that do not float into another pile. Ask him how the items are similar and how they are different.



What you will need:

- A shallow water source such as: puddle, rimmed cookie sheet, plastic tub, or a large bowl
- Outdoor natural area

Magic Ice Melt



Demonstrate “change of state” to your child by using salt to melt ice in this *cool* experiment!

- 1. Set it up.**
Have your child help you fill a freezer-safe bowl with water and explain that it will go in the freezer. Ask your child, “What will happen if we leave the water in the freezer overnight?”
- 2. Let it freeze.**
Let the bowl of water sit in the freezer overnight or long enough for the water to freeze solid. This may only take a few hours depending on the size of your bowl.
- 3. Get ready!**
Remove the ice from the bowl and place it on a tray or plate. If you have food-coloring handy, encourage your child to add a few drops to the ice.
- 4. Watch it melt.**
Give your child salt and have her shake or sprinkle it over the ice. Sit back to watch the magic happen! As you two high-five over this cool scientific experiment, talk with her about the properties of the water and ice, and how the salt helped make the changes happen.



What you will need:

- A freezer with an open flat space for your bowl
- A freezer-safe bowl
- Water
- Salt
- Baking tray or plate
- Optional: Food Coloring

Homemade Rainbows



- 1. Rainbows with chalk.**
After a rainstorm have your child use sidewalk chalk on wet pavement. Point out how moisture intensifies and blurs the colors. The effect is very different from coloring with chalk on dry land!

As the colors blur, ask your child to describe what they see as the colors mix (“What happens when yellow and blue blend?”).
- 2. Rainbows with food coloring.**
While it’s raining, sprinkle a few drops of food coloring onto a paper plate. Have your child take it outside and watch the rain make watercolors!

Encourage your child to swirl the liquid around to make designs. Bring the plate inside to dry, or press another piece of paper on top and peel it off to make a print.



What you will need:

- Sidewalk chalk
- Paved driveway, sidewalk, bricks, or stepping stones
- Paper plate
- Food coloring
- Sheet of paper

Practice team-building and turn-taking while having fun as a family! Work together, take turns, and enjoy one another's company while practicing important life skills (self-regulation, collaboration, communication, listening, fine-motor development, and so much more).



Turn-Taking

Rolling a ball seems like the simplest of tasks, and while that may be true, it can also be a great opportunity for your child to practice cooperation, teamwork, and turn-taking!

- 1. Set up the game.** Work with your child to create guidelines or rules that apply to your turn-taking, ball-rolling experience.
- 2. Use directional words.** Encourage your child to use directional words as the ball rolls back and forth.
- 3. Reach a goal.** Continue playing until you reach a mutually agreed upon end, like counting to 20, reciting the alphabet, or singing a song.



What you will need:

- Playground ball (or a soccer ball, basketball, etc.)

Example Rules:

"The ball needs to stay on the ground."

"The ball should only go from you to me (and not around the room)."

"Count aloud each time the ball lands in the right spot."

Directional Statements:

"I rolled the ball too far."

"Now the ball is behind the couch!"

"The ball is under the table!"

"The ball went to the right of your leg."

Family Blanket Toss

You need to have at least two people to enjoy this experience, but, three or four people will make it even more fun!

- 1. Set up the toss.** Each person will hold a corner of the blanket, with the beach ball in the center of the blanket.
- 2. Don't let it touch the ground!** The challenge is to bounce the ball without letting it touch the ground. (Good luck keeping the giggles at bay!)
- 3. Plan ahead.** As you and your child bounce the ball, encourage her to talk about what you should do when the ball goes beyond the perimeter of the blanket, to keep it from touching the ground. Give her suggestion a try and see what happens.
- 4. Reach a goal.** Ask your child to pick a number between 10 and 20, and then work together to consecutively bounce the ball that number of times. Count aloud with your child as the ball bounces. If you and your child don't reach the goal, practice more challenging math skills by determining how many more bounces you would need to get to the goal. If you exceed your goal, determine how many bounces you achieved beyond the original goal.



What you will need:

- Beach ball (or a lightweight playground ball)
- Small blanket



Mathematical Scavenger Hunt



green leaf		
window		
big flower		
little flower		
triangle		
dog		

Scavenger hunts are a fun, easy, inexpensive (dare we say, “free?”) experience that provide children a guided way to explore the world around them while learning how to make observations. Scavenger hunts can also get your child moving and give you the opportunity to teach her about your neighborhood or community.



What you will need:

-  A list of items to find
-  Optional: Phone with a camera

1. Prepare for the hunt.

Create a list of objects, places, people, etc. for your child to identify in the area where you will be playing. Incorporate a variety of mathematical terms with the scavenger hunt items such as “big,” “little,” “one,” “four,” “round,” or “rectangle.”

We recommend you start with five or six objects the first time you play (adjust this based on your child’s age and attention span).

2. Invite your child to join you on a scavenger hunt!

3. Keep focused!

While on the hunt, continue to remind your child which items remain on the list.

4. Say it out loud.

Ask your child to verbally identify what she sees as she finds the items. Encourage her to photograph each item.

5. Do it again!

Scavenger hunts can easily be repeated, while not being boring! Change the scavenger hunt objects, add more objects, or try new locations each time you play.

Examples:

Patterns: flower petals, windows, doors

Shapes: circles, squares, triangles

Sizes: small, medium, large

four bushes

five cars

two people

two dogs

one stop sign

triangle-shaped sign

circles

big trees

tiny pebbles