

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING ACTIVITIES

Step 1: Finding the Seed

- Find a lesson plan that relates to what you're doing in your program. What jumps out at you? Start with something that means something to you.
- Search through the Web, peruse educational journals, talk to colleagues and friends to get ideas. Pay particular attention to lesson plans or educational media Web sites

Step 2: Pulling It Together

Once you have found the seed -- the basic idea -- for your activity, assess how it can fit into your program:

- How much time do you need?
- Does your staff have prior knowledge/experience with this material?
- What technology/media do you need? Can you make substitutions?
- What similar activities has your program done in the past?
- How much -- and what kind of -- space do you need?
- Is the material age-appropriate?
- How is this material relevant for your kids?

Step 3: Building the Activity

Now that you have all your resources lined up, it's time to put the activity together.

It's always a good idea to write up what you are going to do. Sometimes, things can get chaotic and it's good to have something to refer to. In addition, if the activity worked well, you'll have it ready for next year. Here are some things to include in your write-up:

- How much time will it take?
- What are the materials that the kids will use?
- Will the kids work in groups?
- What is the activity?
- Will there be a culmination activity, or assessment project (poster, presentation, picture, website, slide show, etc.)

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITIES

Does the educational piece you have pulled from a classroom lesson:

- build on kids' interests?
- seem relevant to kids' lives?
- include a warm-up that connects with kids' lives?
- use age-appropriate timing?
- have fun, engaging, active tasks?
- use a "hook" to get children interested, involved and motivated?

- avoid lecturing, and instead use modeling and discussion?
- include open-ended questions for staff to ask?
- have a clear purpose and intention?
- give children a sense of accomplishment?
- include follow-up activities?