

**MSB Reaching Out Newsletter**

**July/August 2018**



Hello,

During the summer months we look for fun and preferably educational activities to engage our children. Many parents search Pinterest and parenting blogs for fun activities, but it can be difficult finding activities, projects and outings that are relevant for children who are blind, visually impaired and/or multiple disabled.

Special educators and friends with older children are great resources when looking for ways to adapt these projects and activities. Here are 15 ideas compiled for you through my searches for summer fun to try with your children…

1. **Slip ‘n Slide**: If you don’t live near the beach or have access to a pool, you might want to try getting a [Slip ‘n Slide](http://amzn.to/2p9ZkfI) for your yard. They’re easy to set up and a great way to cool off.
2. **Water Play**: Even if you don’t have a pool to splash in, you can still have fun throwing a home-made [sponge ball](http://www.wonderbaby.org/articles/make-your-own-sponge-ball) around the yard.
3. **Gardening**: Growing veggies and herbs with your children can be a multi-sensory activity: touching the dirt, watering the plants, smelling the herbs and of course, tasting the bounty. Kids that participate in growing gardens typically will try the veggies that they grow…it’s a win-win!
4. **Visit a Farm**: If you live in a less rural community take a ride out to the country and visit a child-friendly farm. Many farms invite families, providing petting zoos and/or pick-your-own days where you can pick your own fruits and veggies. Do a little research prior to your visit for hours of operation and specific programs.
5. **Grocery Shopping**: You may think of visiting the grocery store or farmer’s market as more of a chore than an activity, but if your child enjoys riding in the shopping cart or walking along side he or she can help with the shopping. As with growing their own veggies, kids that contribute to the shopping can be more apt to try new things at the dinner table. This is also a great activity for older children to learn the basic layout of your local grocery store for possible future independent visits.
6. **Visit a Museum or Aquarium**: Science museums and aquariums are very hands on and often have lots of things for kids to touch. Entry fees can be expensive, so look for deals online or even your local library. Our library offers discounted passes in the summer for families.
7. **Sticky Art**: Some kids love the feel and stickiness of stickers and tape. There are multiple degrees of sticky factor when it comes to tape. Blue painter’s tape tends to be a little less sticky, while packing tape has a stronger sticking quality. You can also combine several different kinds of tape and stickers for an expressive sticky collage art.
8. **Visit your local Carnival**: This activity could prove to be overstimulating for some children, while wildly entertaining for others. If you have never taken your child to a summer carnival, attend with no expectations and be ready for almost any scenario and have a back-up plan.
9. **Texture Balloons**: Purchase a pack of larger, round birthday-style balloons and fill each with different ingredients, like flour, sand, dried beans and even water, and see if you can guess what’s inside. This is also a great texture matching activity when you fill pairs.
10. **Finger Paint with Food**: This is a great activity if you want to get messy and try some painting but your child puts everything in his/her mouth. Why not finger paint with pureed baby food (preferably fruit) or pudding?
11. **Outdoor Concerts**: Many towns/cities host free family-friendly concerts in the summer. Some venues back up to playgrounds or parks and provide a physical outlet for your child as well. Early evening concerts can be fun if you bring along a picnic dinner. Encourage your child in the picnic preparation so there are no “surprises” when it is time to eat.
12. **Video Games**: Video games can get a bad rap, but they can also be educational and fun when monitored and not used as a replacement for peer and family interaction. Check out this site for a list of accessible games;  <http://www.wonderbaby.org/articles/best-accessible-computer-games-blind-kids>
13. **Make a Touch Book**: This fun activity is a great pre-reading venture. Start by taking a trip to your local craft store, like Michael’s or A.C. Moore, and purchase a small journal. Search your home for familiar objects with different textures like foil, yarn, tape, buttons or fabric remnants. Glue these items to the pages of the journal. Get creative with a theme or story line for your book that could relate to family activities. Express how your child felt and/or what they learned from the activities. Add text in bold print or braille, using contact paper.
14. **Pool**: If you have access to a pool, then this is a great way to cool off and aid in muscle development all while having fun in the sun. There are also some swim instructors that will travel to your pool or community pool to give individual lessons. Call your local YMCA or neighborhood pool for instructors familiar with teaching children with special needs.
15. **Take a Day trip to a National Park**: You would be surprised as to just how many National Parks there are in and around Maryland. Enjoy the undeveloped atmosphere and natural multisensory beauty that these parks have to offer. Go to www.adayinourshoes.com to apply for a lifetime pass that will allow someone with a disability free access to all of America’s National Parks.

Have fun with these activities. Don’t be afraid to get a little messy; having fun, learning and exploring are the main goals. By trying new things and introducing different activities you will find what your child can and cannot tolerate. Visit <http://baltimoreschild.com/special-needs-recreation/> for more ideas.

Enjoy the remainder of your summer!

Until next time,

**Renee**

 ***Summer Community Events*** 

**Milburn’s U-Pick Berry & Grape Adventures**

Enjoy wholesome family fun on our Farm!
We have everything you need for picking. Just pay for what you pick.
Everything is priced per pound. Please visit our website [www.milburnorchards.com](http://www.milburnorchards.com) or call us for updated pricing!
$5.00 deposit required for picking. The $5.00 goes towards your final price when checking out.

Approximate ripening times:

U-Pick Raspberries                       Mid-August
U-Pick Grapes                               Mid-August

U-Pick Adventures Hours:
Wednesdays
8am-12pm
Saturdays & Sundays
8am-4pm
​
Please remember that all U-Pick activities are weather permitting. For current field conditions & up to date information, please call our Harvest Hotline at 410-398-1349!

**Wonderful Wednesdays at Port Discovery Children’s Museum**

**35 Market Place / Baltimore, MD**

**Current Hours: Monday – Saturday: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm, Sunday: Noon – 5:00 pm**

Admission is free with museum entry, which is $15.95 for individuals two and up. Members and children under two enter free.
Have a little one age six or under? Join us on Wednesdays, when our drop-in programming is designed especially for children ages birth to six! Join in our interactive story time, explore rhythm and music together during Jingle Jangle Music Time and introduce children to early literacy skills through Mother Goose on the Loose®. Ride Hippity Hop horses and use Port Discovery’s special lances to join in a joust. Learn about this very old game that is also one of Maryland’s State Sports while strengthening balance skills and learning that being active is a lot of fun!

**Teen Improv Workshop!**

Date - Saturday, August 11, 2018
*11:00 am - 12:30 pm*

[The BIG Theatre](http://baltimoreschild.com/locations/the-big-theatre/) - 1727 North Charles St / Baltimore

Let your teens jump into some seriously hilarious improv work while simultaneously learning newfound confidence! In addition to growing their speaking and listening skills, teens will learn how to build exciting stories, create fascinating characters, and present them through fun improv scenes and games. Students will also learn different types of improv formats, structures, and games. These workshops are all about jumping in, having fun, playing hard, working together and finding your voice. Always fun, this class will focus on developing improv skills and creating performers. For teenagers ages 13-17, with any level of experience.

**Singing Insects Campfire**

Date - Saturday, August 25, 2018
*7:00 – 9:00 pm*

[Lake Roland Nature Center](http://baltimoreschild.com/locations/lake-roland-nature-center-3/) – 1000 Lakeside Dr / Baltimore

The soundscape of summer evenings include the trills, chirps, and beeps of insects calling for mates. We’ll learn how they make their music and take a walk through the park to see how many we can identify by using our sense of hearing. Participants will help collect data for the “cricket crawl” citizen science project. Then, we will end the evening with s’mores around the campfire. Registration is required, please email LakeRol-RP@baltimorecountymd.gov. Ages 5+
$5/person

***\*If you have any questions about our programs or are in need of resources for your child or would like to be removed from our emailing list, please contact:***

***Renee Kirby***

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