

# Stir the Imagination Of a Child



When you stimulate creative thinking in a child, you're doing more good than you may know. Creative play is vital to childhood learning and development. It fosters mental growth by allowing a child to make choices and convey ideas. It lets children express themselves and showcases their uniqueness.

As a parent or caregiver, you can enrich a child's world by stimulating creative thinking and imagination. Make believe, pretend, and have fun! This doesn't mean big or expensive efforts. In fact, the more you weave simple fun and creativity into everyday life, the better.

- The broccoli on your son's plate is easily transformed into a grove of miniature trees and your son becomes a dinosaur about to devour his way through the forest. Encourage him to tell you about his dinosaur life.
- Wrap an apron around your daughter's shoulder and tell her she's a superhero or bird soaring through the air and see where her world leads.

- Take a blanket or throw from the couch, toss it over a table or chair and make a fort for your child to play.
- Plant seeds in a flower pot with your child and watch the plant grow. Have your child draw pictures of what the plant will look like.
- Take advantage of the warm breezy days of summer by kicking back on a blanket of grass to see what shapes you can find in the clouds above. Let your child help you make a snack to take along on your journey. With this simple popcorn recipe, your child can add the ingredients to the cooked popcorn and mix it together. Popcorn is a whole grain snack that's fun to make and even more fun to eat.

## Teddy Bear Picnic Mix

*Yield: about 12 cups*

- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 5-6 drops pink neon liquid food color, or color of your choice (optional)
- 1/2 cup unpopped popcorn kernels
- 1 cup mini pastel marshmallows
- 1 cup teddy grahams
- 1 cup white fudge covered pretzels
- 1 cup mini cookies  
(iced circus animals, or any mini cookie)
- Stir oil, sugar and food coloring together in a large pot (with a tight-fitting lid) over medium heat. Stir in popcorn kernels; cover. Cook over medium heat until popcorn begins to pop. Shake pot over heat until popping begins to slow.
- Remove pan from heat and pour popcorn into a large bowl. Add marshmallows, teddy grahams, pretzels and cookies and toss lightly.

### *A Note Of Safety:*

Popcorn is not recommended for infants or toddlers as it can pose a (choking) threat.

