

**Self Help Inc.**  
**Community Partnerships for Children**

780 West Main St., Avon, MA 02322

508-559-1666

[www.selfhelpinc.org/CommunityPartnerships/Index.html](http://www.selfhelpinc.org/CommunityPartnerships/Index.html)

# Spring Ehau!



**Spring Curriculum Activities  
for  
Parents of Preschool  
Aged Children!**



The activities, views, and opinions expressed in this packet are not necessarily those of the  
MA Dept. of Early Education and Care and/or Self Help Inc., Community Partnerships for Children.



# Overview & Explanation of Project

When you think your child is just playing at preschool, think again. The fun games and activities that children do in the classroom are actually learning experiences. They provide the foundation that children will continue to build upon throughout their education. We know it can be challenging to keep children busy while waiting for the rebirth of spring. These spring themed activities have been designed to provide some at home learning activities for the spring months. In addition, we have aligned these activities with the Ma State Guidelines that teachers use to plan similar activities for your child in their programs. This illustrates how real learning takes place in the context of your child's everyday play.

If your child is in an accredited preschool, either center based or family childcare, you may hear about the following educational associations that help define and promote quality child care. All of them support high quality early education and are used to measure developmentally appropriate practice in the classroom.

We hope you enjoy the activities that we have provided.

EEC - Early Education & Care, Ma State Standards and Guidelines

NAEYC - National Association for the Education of Young Children

CDA - Child Development Associate

UPK - Universal Pre-Kindergarten

NAFCC - National Association for Family Child Care

CPC Staff!





# Snail Pail

April Showers Bring May Flowers!  
Well, they also bring out snails!



For great results, this activity is best  
done after a warm spring rain!



## Materials Needed

Old Container

A clear square container works best  
(but all others work)

Roll of Plastic Wrap

Magnifying Glass

## What To Do!

Take your child(ren) and container and head for the backyard  
or wooded area!

Have the children start looking for snails  
(under rocks, dead tree logs, leaves, etc.)

Once you find 2 -3 snails, put them in your container.

Have the children gently place some grass, rocks,  
twigs in the container.

Cover your pail with Saran Wrap tightly!

Poke some slits in the cover.

## What They Learn!

During this activity, children learn about  
the environment. They learn to ask  
questions and be curious as to how things  
happen. They will learn how to use  
simple tools such as a magnifying glass  
to observe objects and scientific  
phenomena!

Here comes the fun part!

The snails will start to walk up the sides of the pail, then they will walk across the cover.

The children can see how the snail looks from underneath.

The best thing! They can actually feel it without touching it!

Pretty Neat!



# Sensory Painting with a Scent

## Materials:

Paper (card stock or poster board)  
Several flavors of Kool-Aid (sugarless)  
Paint brushes

(Please note that Kool-Aid stains. Use a smock or old t-shirt for this activity)

## Description:

Mix each flavor in a separate container with about half a cup of water. Allow your child to paint on the paper with the brushes after dipping them in the flavored water. The painting looks just like watercolor paints and it smells good. The children love dipping their brushes in and smelling them before they paint, they try to guess what flavor it is. They come up with some pretty interesting guesses.

After the painting has dried the children can scratch their painting with their finger and smell their picture.

### Here's what they will learn:

Children will learn to explore colors and to use their senses to observe, explore and experiment. Great activity for younger children.



# Frozen Rainbow Treats



Prepare frozen orange juice concentrate in a container, using only two cans of water instead of the usual three. Repeat the same process for cranapple juice and grape juice concentrate.

Place 24 small cups on a baking sheet. Fill each cup, not quite  $\frac{1}{3}$  full with only the cranapple juice.

Place a clean craft stick in each cup and allow to partially freeze for several hours.

Then add the same amount ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ) of orange juice and freeze again.

Repeat for grape juice.

It takes a bit of time but when you freeze them overnight - you'll be sure to enjoy the total rainbow of treats the next day!

DELICIOUS!!!

## Materials Needed:

Orange Juice Concentrate

Cranapple Juice Concentrate

Grape Juice Concentrate

Water

3 separate containers

24 small cups and popsicle sticks

*By doing such a fun activity like this with your child at home- your child explores, describes and compares the properties of liquids and solids.*

*WOW!*

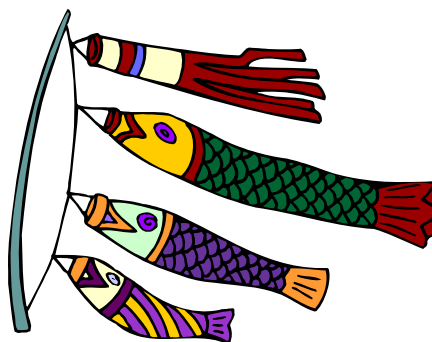
*A beginning career as a true scientist!!!*



# Wind Sock

## Materials Needed:

- Construction paper or large white paper
- Scissors
- Paint, markers, crayons, glitter
- Crepe paper or tissue paper
- String
- Stapler



1. Take a sheet of construction paper or large white paper and decorate it with paint, markers, glitter or crayons.
2. Cut about 6 to 8 pieces of crepe paper or tissue paper about 24 inches long. These will be the streamers of the wind sock.
3. Staple or glue the streamers to the long undecorated side of the paper.
4. Roll the paper into a tube and staple together.
5. Punch two holes opposite each other on one side of the tube. Tie a piece of string and hang from your porch or a tree.

### Here's what you will learn:

Discuss seasonal changes with your child and what air does (takes up space, moves things etc). Encourage dialogue by discussing scientific concepts in everyday life.

# SPRING THAW

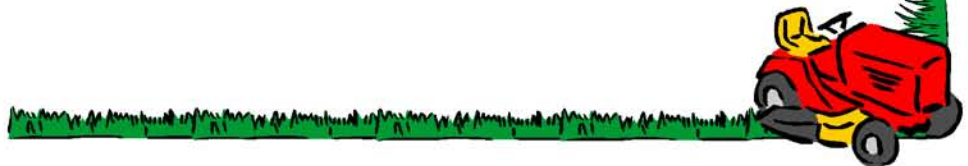
## Grow Your Name

Materials: Small Box (roughly half the size of a shoe box)

Grass Seed

Potting Soil

What You Do: Get small boxes, line them with plastic, and fill them with potting soil. Have your children scratch out their name on the soil (assist children as needed). Have them sprinkle grass seed into the name. Gently cover it with soil and soon their name will be growing!



### Attention Parents!

Did you know that doing this activity with children will be good for their beginning reading skills? Identifying letters is a very important skill for young children to acquire before they begin to read books. Using their names as well as the names of people who are important in their lives (not forgetting the names of family pets!) is a very good way to engage them in this activity!

# Treasure Hunt Map



Kids love maps, and a treasure map is even better. You can use this map for treasure seeking, nature walks, egg hunts, etc.

## Materials

White Letter Size Paper  
1 cup of cold black coffee  
Black Magic Marker  
Flat Cookie Sheet  
Oven



## What They Learn!

First of all, the most important thing happening here is that YOU and your child are having fun spending quality time together. On top of that, your child will be learning math concepts, ie: measuring.

He/she will also be learning about science, ie: the coffee turning the paper brown. And by talking about how you're going to use the map, your child is learning language skills!

## What To Do!

**Remember: ONLY ADULTS USE THE OVEN!**

Set your oven for 350 degrees.

Give your child a piece of paper.

Have him/her tear the edges of the paper to give it a rough look.

Have them wrinkle the paper into a ball, then unravel the paper and smooth it out.

Lay the paper out flat on your cookie sheet.

Gently pour the coffee over your paper.

Drain off coffee making sure your paper is nice and wet.

Place cookie sheet in oven.

The paper will start to curl up quickly.

2-3 minutes tops and you have a map.

It will come out brownish and look old.

Use your imagination drawing on the map.



**Sample Map  
In Back of  
Booklet!**



## Let's Be a Naturalist!



Did you know that there are eight different types of intelligence? Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner discovered that each person has a piece of each of the following intelligences: **linguistic, logical mathematical, visual spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist**. As we explore the world of insects and bugs we will be tapping into our **naturalistic** nature! The following activities will help you enhance all eight intelligences. Using your own backyard as your theme, make it a point to go out and explore nature every day! Sing (**musical rhythmic**) some bug songs as you take a nature walk (**bodily kinesthetic**) around your neighborhood. Help increase your child's vocabulary by teaching your child the names (**linguistic**) of the various plants and creatures you see along the way. Have your child count (**logical mathematical**) the number of birds they see along the way or number of spots they can see on a ladybug. Have them draw a picture (**visual spatial**) of their favorite plants, make a chart of the various plants in the yard or collect items and make a collage. Have your child share (**interpersonal**) their observations later with the rest of the family. Go to the library and take out a variety of books to read together. Leave them in a spot where your child can look at them quietly later. Allow your child to keep a collection of their treasure to study more closely at a later time. (**intrapersonal**). We can exercise all eight of our intelligences in some way everyday

Taking a nature walk around the neighborhood provides you with a living classroom with discoveries in the most unlikely places!

When you take a nature walk and engage your child during the walk in the ways listed above, your child is learning many skills. Observing, identifying specific characteristics of living things and learning about what makes something a living or non-living thing are skills related to science. Their vocabulary will increase as they learn the names of familiar things in their yard. Their bodies will grow stronger with each step they take as they walk and observe the wonders of nature.

Here are three more activities that can be done as a follow-up to your nature walk.

### **Worm Painting:**

This activity would be great to do after observing worms seen on your walk.

#### *You Will Need:*

Pieces of yarn cut in a variety of shapes  
Small flat containers of brown paint  
Construction paper

#### *Here's What to do:*

Talk to your child about the worms they observed in puddles or in your yard. Allow your child to select a paper and a piece of yarn and let them recreate the movements of the worms they observed outside.

Give your child a piece of construction paper and a container of paint. Ask them to select a "worm" from the pieces of yarn. Instruct your child to dip their worm in the paint and move it across the paper and make a "worm design". As your child works talk about their design and how it relates to the worms they observed outside.

For a more colorful variation use a variety of paints to make the designs.



Did you know that feet can make a beautiful butterfly? This activity would be fun to do outside on a warm spring day. If you have a roll of paper it could be the beginning of a wonderful outdoor mural.

### **Butterfly Feet:**

*You will need:*

Long piece of paper or a piece of construction paper for each child  
A variety of paint colors on flat plastic trays  
Baby wipes  
Pipe cleaners  
Glue or tape



*Here's What to do*

Have your child remove their shoes and socks  
Instruct your child to step onto the paper so their feet are going outward with the heels together.  
Have your child use the baby wipes to clean off their feet  
Allow the butterflies a few minutes to dry  
Attach pipe cleaners for antennas  
Give your child supplies such as glitter to decorate their butterflies  
Take it one step further and have the children create a garden around the butterflies.

April showers forcing you to stay inside? How about making a batch of clean mud with your child? When the rain goes away take your child outside to play in real mud and compare and contrast the two types of mud. Take a vote on which mud makes the best mud pies. Generate a list of the ways clean mud and real muds are the same and how they are different. Maybe even allow your child to mix the two types of mud and see what happens!

### **Clean Mud**

*You will need:*

Plastic bin (dish pan)  
One roll of white toilet paper  
One bar of Dove soap  
Warm water (warm enough to melt soap)  
A cheese grater

*Here's what to do:*

Have your child tear the toilet paper into small pieces and place in plastic bin  
Using a cheese grater, grate the soap into the bin on top of the toilet paper  
Pour warm water a little bit at a time into the bin while mixing the toilet paper and soap together.  
You have added enough water when the mixture begins to feel like a thick cool whip. The more you play with it the fluffier it becomes.

Your child is learning about shapes and textures as they complete the two activities above. They will delight when they see their two feet turn into a beautiful butterfly. The clean mud allows children to explore the way matter changes as they mix together several types of matter to create a new substance. They will also practice comparing and contrasting as they compare clean mud with real mud.

Spring is a wonderful time to explore the wonder of nature with your child. Nature will provide your child with a treasure trove of new experiences. They will be able to exercise their minds and their bodies and continue to develop all their intelligences in the ever-changing classroom found in your own backyard!





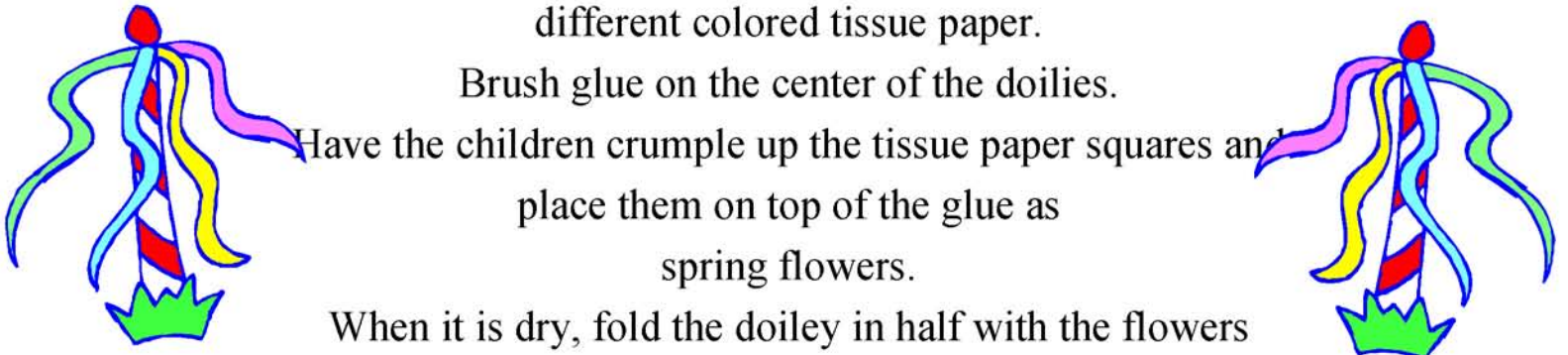
# Let's Make May Baskets!



Give the children paper doilies to make simple May Baskets!

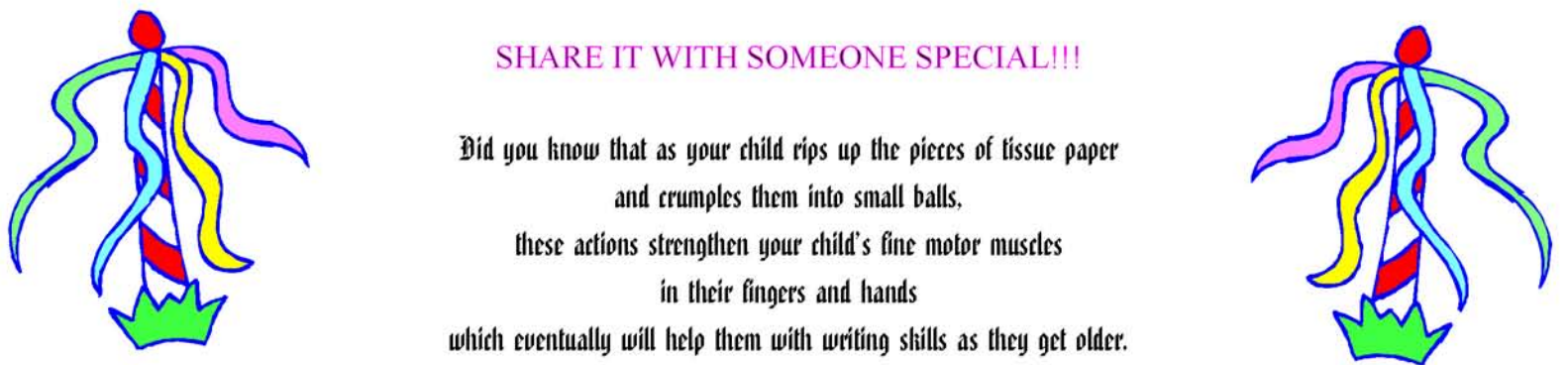
Cut or rip small squares and pieces from a variety of different colored tissue paper.

Brush glue on the center of the doilies.



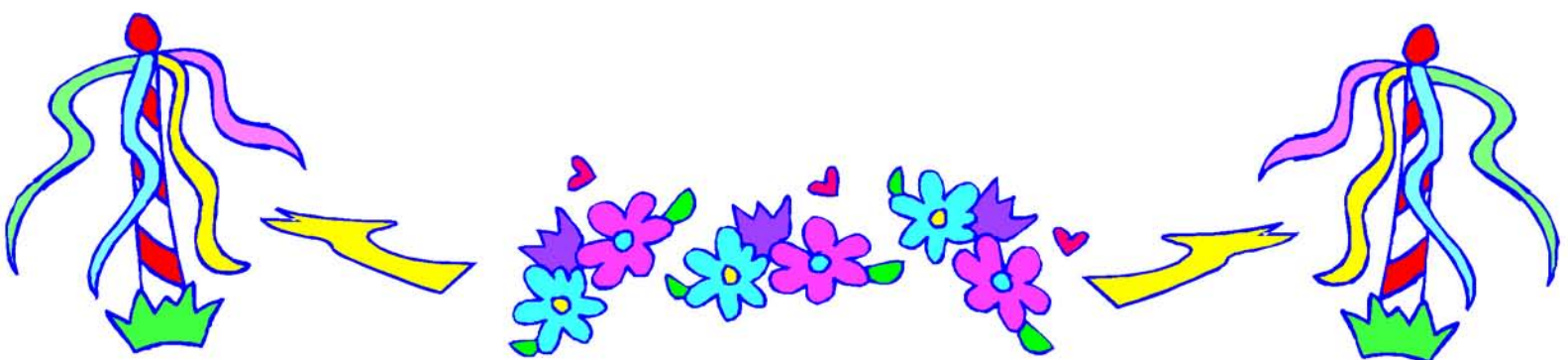
Have the children crumple up the tissue paper squares and place them on top of the glue as spring flowers.

When it is dry, fold the doiley in half with the flowers inside and attach a ribbon or yarn handle to the edge of this simply made basket!



## SHARE IT WITH SOMEONE SPECIAL!!!

Did you know that as your child rips up the pieces of tissue paper and crumples them into small balls, these actions strengthen your child's fine motor muscles in their fingers and hands which eventually will help them with writing skills as they get older.



# Making Rainbows

Ideas taken from [www.preschoolexpress.com](http://www.preschoolexpress.com)

## Mirror Rainbows (Science)

You can help your child make a rainbow appear on the wall by having them place a small mirror in a glass of water. Have them place the glass on a window ledge in the direct sunlight. Help them adjust the mirror so that the light hits the mirror and reflects through the water, creating a rainbow on the wall.

## Water Rainbows (Science)

On a sunny day, get out a garden hose and show your child how to spray out the water so that it makes a rainbow in the spray. To make rainbows, we need light and water. Explain to your children that light contains many different colors; red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. And when it is filtered through water, the water breaks up the light rays and we can see the different colors.

## Rainbow Art (Visual Arts)

Tie three crayons together and then let your child color with it. Encourage them to make rainbows on their paper with the crayons. This activity is especially great for children just learning to color because they will be successful making rainbows each time.

## Rainbow Ribbons (Music)

Give your child six sections of ribbon, one red, one orange, one yellow, one green, one blue and one purple. Sew or glue them to a large hair elastic and use them as ribbon dancers. Turn on some music and let your child dance and spin to the music.

### What they learn:

Children will learn to explore sunlight and describe the effects of the sun. Discuss colors and how rainbows occur in nature. Spend time dancing with your child. Find music about rainbows.







## Songs About Spring

Adapted from [www.preschool education.com](http://www.preschool education.com)



### The Days Of Spring

Sung to: "The Farmer In The Dell"

The days of spring are here.  
Warm, sunny days are near.  
Birds in trees, flowers and bees,  
The days of spring are here.

### Spring Song

Put up your umbrella  
When the rain comes down.  
Wear a happy smile  
And wipe away a frown.  
Splash in all the puddles  
And do a little dance.  
Rain is just the thing we need  
For new spring plants.



### This Old Earth

Sung to: "This Old Man"

This old earth  
Needs our help  
To stay fresh and clean and green  
With a pick it up; pitch it in; and throw it in the can  
This old earth needs a helping hand!

### Come Fly a Kite

Sung to: "On Top of Old Smokey"

Oh, come fly a kite,  
Way up in the sky.  
Watch it climb so far up,  
Up in the sky.

Oh, come fly a kite,  
And just watch it sail,  
Across the sky,  
Waving its tail.





## Spring Children's Storybooks

**Spring has Sprung and it is time to spend time outside! Here are some great ideas to help you make the best of this nice weather.**

**Read the book A Listening Walk** by Paul Showers with your child. Take a listening walk around your neighborhood. Make a list of all the things you hear with your child. Have your child draw a picture or make a collage of all the things you saw and heard. The sky is the limit to how you can expand a simple walk!



### **Some Other Great Books to Read with Your Child**

*Read any of these great books, build a kite with your child.*

*You will find some great kite building activities at [www.preschooleducation.com](http://www.preschooleducation.com) just add wind and watch it soar!*

Curious George Flies A Kite... by Margret Rey  
The Flyaway Kite... by Steve Bjorkman  
A Sky Full of Kites... by Osmond Molarsky  
Grover, Grover Come On Over... by Katherine Ross  
Lucky Song... by Vera Williams  
The Great Kite Book... by Norman Schmidt



*Read any of these books to help introduce the wonders of spring to your child. Have a scavenger hunt in your yard looking for signs of spring.*

Splish, Splash, Spring... by Jan Marr  
When Spring Comes... by Robert Maass  
Spring's Sprung... by Lynne Plourde  
Spring Song... by Barbara Seuling  
When Will It Be Spring?... By Catherine Walters  
Turtle Spring... by Deborah Zagwyn  
In the Tall, Tall Grass...by Denise Fleming  
I Love Bugs...by Philemon Sturges



*Share these great books with your child then grab some shovels, gardening gloves, plants or seeds and begin a garden adventure with your child.*

Planting a Rainbow... by Lois Ehlert  
City Green... by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan  
The Carrot Seed... by Ruth Kraus  
Flower Garden... by Eve Bunting  
Growing Vegetable Soup... by Lois Ehlert  
The Sunflower Garden... by Eve Bunting  
Seeds...by Ken Robbins  
Zinnia's Flower Garden...by Monica Wellington



Here are additional activities to help add some new and exciting things to do as you celebrate spring with your family. They are from an activity book called The Ooey Goey Handbook by Lisa Murphy. Just add nice weather and you'll have a wonderful adventure that is educational and fun!



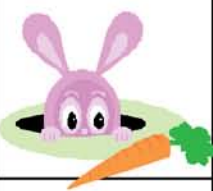








# March 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
1	2 Today is Dr. Seuss's Birthday. Read one of his books with your child!	3	4 Talk about the letter C, then look for things that begin with C in your child's books!	5 	6	7 Create an imaginary land. Tell your child a story about silly characters that live there.	
8 	9	10 Play "Word Rhyme" with your child. Take turns thinking of words that rhyme.	11 	12	13 Tell your child a story, nursery rhyme, poem or song that was your favorite.	14	
15	16 Cut out shamrocks for each letter of your child's name. Help them put them in order to spell their name.	17 St. Patrick's Day! 	18	19	20 1st Day of Spring! 	21 Teach your child "Five Fingers." Learn the motions together.	
22 Let your child help set the table for dinner. Practice counting out forks, plates, or cups.	23 	24	25 	26 Go for a walk with your child. Find a spot of dirt or sand and let your child draw shapes.	27	28 	
29 	30 Dress up as a familiar character. Play a guessing game with your child.	31	Please post this calendar and use it as a guide to do some fun and educational activities with your children!				

# April 09

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Please post this calendar and use it as a guide to do some fun and educational activities with your children!			1 Make your child laugh! Tell a joke, read a funny story.	2 	3	4 Talk about the letter D, then look for things that begin with the letter D!
5	6 Trace your child's hands and then let them color the tracings.	7	8 Make a Seder Plate out of a paper plate with your children!	9 Passover! 	10	11 Boil some eggs, color & decorate them with your child.
12 Easter Sunday! 	13	14	15 Play a game by counting how many square shaped objects your child can find.	16 	17	18 Act out a favorite nursery rhyme with your child.
19	20	21 Encourage your child to help with chores. Play together by putting them away.	22 	23	24 Make a puzzle by cutting an old photo or greeting card into large pieces.	25
26 Start a family band. Use kitchen items such as wooden spoons, pans, pie plates!	27	28 	29 Go on a listening walk. Ask your children to be quiet and just listen to nature.	30		

# May 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Plant a flower garden with your child.	2
3 Talk about the letter S, then look for things that begin with the letter S!	4	5 	6 Make a butterfly net and go catch some butterflies!	7 	8 Pick some wild flowers for a special person!	9
10 Mother's Day! 	11	12 Go to your local ice cream stand and get some ice cream!	13	14	15 Go outside and look for birds, squirrels, & other animals.	16 
17 Get some sidewalk chalk and let your children draw on the ground!	18	19 	20 Talk about community people such as the Police, Nurses, etc.	21	22 	23 Go on a backyard picnic!
24 Memorial Day! 	25	26	27 	28	29 Visit a local farm stand and let your child pick their own fruit.	30
31	<p>Please post this calendar and use it as a guide to do some fun and educational activities with your children!</p>					



