

the GENIUS of
PLAY™

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It's more than play!



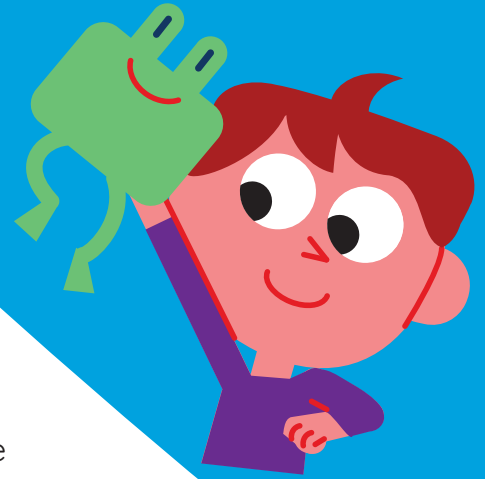
Welcome to the Genius of Play's "Summer Playbook"!

Thank you for stopping by! With school in recess, summer is the perfect time to explore new things and try new activities together as a family. Whether you are traveling or staying close to home, we've put together a few fun ideas and activities to keep kids occupied and learning during the long summer days. From ready-to-use coloring pages to engaging and easy to set up games, there is something for everyone.

As a non-profit initiative, The Genius of Play's mission is to help parents and caregivers raise healthy and happy kids through the power of play. Over the past seven years, we have been providing families and educators with free play ideas, expert advice, facts and research through our website and social media channels. If you like the ideas and activities in our "Summer Playbook," you can discover a lot more at thegeniusofplay.org or by following @geniusofplay on Facebook and Instagram.

Enjoy the summer and play away!

The Genius of Play Team



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INGREDIENTS:

- Action figure
- Sponges
- Washcloths
- Plastic dishes
- Timer

PREP TIME:

15 minutes

Action Figure Float

(For Ages 5+)

Designed for one or more players, Action Figure Float is a fun game for kids to play in the bathtub, swimming or wading pool or kitchen sink. This is a great activity for both indoor and outdoor play!

RECIPE FOR FUN:

Step 1: Have your kids gather their favorite action figure, as well as items your children believe will float. This play idea is more fun if the kids bring toys of different sizes and weights.

Step 2: While your kids are gathering their toy figures, prepare kitchen sponges to use as rafts, tubes or other toy-sized floatation devices.

Step 3: Fill the bathtub, children's pool, or sink with water.

Step 4: Ask each child to make a prediction about how long their action figure will float and/or how long it will take to get wet.

Step 5: Start the timer.

Step 6: Have each child carefully place the toy's floatation device on the water, and then place their action figure on it.

Step 7: The toy that floats the longest wins!



BENEFITS OF PLAY:



Cognitive



Creative



Communication



Social



INGREDIENTS:

- Bubble mixture
- Different sized bubble wands
- Plastic rings from soda can 6-packs

PREP TIME:

10 Minutes

Bubble Blowing Games

(For Ages 3+)

A perfect play activity for one or more children! Pour some of the bubble mixture into a larger bowl and vary the bubble blowing experience by switching up what is used as bubble wands.

RECIPE FOR FUN:

Step 1: To make your own bubble solution: combine 1/2 cup of dish soap and 1 ½ cups of water in a large cup.

Step 2: Add 2 teaspoons of sugar to the soap/water mixture and stir.

Step 3: Go outside and have fun blowing bubbles. If you don't use the entire solution, it can be poured into a tightly sealed container and saved for another day!

GAMES TO PLAY:

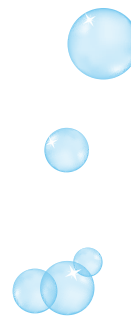
Classic Bubbles: The most popular bubble game is a traditional bubble-blowing competition. See who can blow the largest bubble or whose bubble lasts the longest before popping?

Bubble Tag: This is a classic backyard game of tag with a twist. Instead of tagging players with their hands, the player who is "it" must instead blow a bubble onto another player. Once a player is hit with a bubble, she/he is either out or must take the place of being "it."

Bubble Race: Have children stand in a race line. Choose a finish line. Have each child blow a bubble at the same time and then try to blow their bubbles over the finish line. The first child whose bubble goes over the line wins.

BENEFITS OF PLAY:

-  Creative
-  Physical
-  Social



INGREDIENTS:

None

PREP TIME:

10 Minutes

Animal Moves

(For Ages 4+)

A great play activity to get kids up and moving while building their motor skills and encouraging creativity.

RECIPE FOR FUN:

Step 1: Create a list that includes a variety of animals that each have distinct movements (i.e. a galloping horse, waddling duck, jumping frog, buzzing bee, playful monkey, winding snake, lumbering bear, swimming shark, etc.)

Step 2: Show or mark off the boundaries of the area to the children before you begin.

Step 3: Begin calling out an animal from your list one by one. Make sure to give kids enough time to understand each animal and how it moves. For the first animal, have kids work their way from one end of the space to the opposite end.

Step 4: For the next callout, have kids turn around and go back to the starting point. Continue calling out different animals until all the animals on the list have been said.

Step 5: If your kids have gone through your list and want to continue - ask them for new suggestions and build a bigger list for the next time!

BENEFITS OF PLAY:



Creative



Cognitive



Physical



Communication



Social



Wiggly Worm Farm

(For Ages 4+)

Worms are fantastic recyclers that can convert food scraps into nutrient-filled, organic waste to use as a good fertilizer to feed your garden. This play activity is great for teaching kids all about recycling and taking care of the environment.

RECIPE FOR FUN:

Step 1: Make sure your play space is clear of anything you don't want to get dirty! Choose a transparent container with a lid or cover to prevent your worms from escaping, and add air holes at the top and tiny drainage holes at the bottom.

Step 2: Line the container with garden soil, sand and/or shredded newspaper. Fill the container about 2/3 of the way and make sure to keep it a bit damp.

Step 3: Wearing plastic gloves, carefully, one by one, have your child add the worms into their new "home."

Step 4: Once you have made your worm "home," add some small food scraps to the container. Add more only when you notice the food scraps have been eaten.

Step 5: Worms do their best work in the dark! Sunlight may dry out their skin and make it difficult for them to breathe. Help create a kind environment for your worms by covering their containers with towels or dark opaque paper to keep light out. Track their progress daily to see how fast they work!

INGREDIENTS:

- **Worms** (you can find worms in your backyard or neighborhood parks, purchase from a local gardening store or order composting worms online)
- **Large plastic drink bottles, plastic containers, or small aquarium**
- **Dirt** (garden soil, sand, or shredded newspaper)
- **Plastic gloves**
- **Water**
- **Food scraps**

PREP TIME:

30 Minutes

BENEFITS OF PLAY:



Creative



Cognitive



Physical



Emotional



Social



INGREDIENTS:

- Large poster board
- Pencils
- Glow paint or glow in the dark markers or crayons

PREP TIME:

None

Bedroom Planetarium

(For Ages 5+)

Kids love looking up at the stars! Help your kids learn about constellations in a new creative way while turning their bedroom into a magical place

RECIPE FOR FUN:

Step 1: Suggest constellations that have a mythological background, such as Pisces, Orion, Taurus, and Gemini.

Step 2: Allow kids time to research their chosen constellations, including how to identify the constellations in the night sky and the mythological story behind them.

Step 3: Using giant poster board, have your kids illustrate how the constellation looks in the night sky. Using glow paint, glitter, or bright markers will help make the stars stand out

Step 4: Once each poster board is dry, hang them from the ceiling.

Step 5: At bedtime, turn the lights off in the bedroom and have kids either lie on the floor or in their bed, gazing up to view their personal night sky.

Step 6: Join your kids and go through each constellation on the ceiling, asking questions. Encourage older kids to share how to locate the constellation in the night sky as well as the legend behind it.

BENEFITS OF PLAY:



Cognitive



Creative



Communication



Social



Nature Mirror

(For Ages 3+)

INGREDIENTS:

- Leaves and flowers in varying colors, shapes, and sizes
- Safety scissors
- Drawing paper
- Glue or tape
- Crayons, colored pencils, and/or markers

PREP TIME:

None

Leaves and flowers feature multiple colors, veins running through them, and/or tears in the middle or around the edges. Use additional colors or different types of crayons, pencils, etc. to create texture by adding a higher degree of design to their mirror image.

RECIPE FOR FUN:

Step 1: Collect as many different types of leaves and flowers as possible while on a walk around your neighborhood or the park.

Step 2: Select a few favorites and carefully cut them in half along one side of the stem, taking care to keep the stem intact. When using flowers, press the flower down as flat as possible to cut it in half.

Step 3: Glue or tape each leaf or flower to drawing paper and ask your child to spend time looking closely at the half they see in front of them.

Science Tip: As your child observes these objects, they can learn about their structure and identify the different types of leaves and flowers. Help point out the shape of the edges, how many points or curves it has, what colors they see, etc.

Step 4: As children begin coloring, ask them to take note of the different colors or shades in the leaves and flowers. Suggest drawing from the center of the existing leaf or flower and drawing outwards to create its “other half” that was cut off.

Step 5: Display the finished artwork around your home and/or gift it them to family and friends!

BENEFITS OF PLAY:



Cognitive



Creative



Communication



Physical



International Menu

(For Ages 7+)

Help kids learn about different places in the world and their cuisine! Encourage your kids to use their DIY meals and menus to roleplay restaurant with their friends!

INGREDIENTS:

- Playdough (different colors)
- Plastic silverware
- Small paper plates
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Crayons/colored pencils
- Old magazines/newspapers or pictures of different foods from around the world printed from the internet

PREP TIME:

20 Minutes

RECIPE FOR FUN:

Step 1: Page through magazines or search the web for international locations around the world.

Step 2: Encourage your child to research local food dishes. Find pictures for inspiration and choose as many as time allows!

Step 3: Give kids playdough to start molding and creating their meal items! Suggest making an “all breakfast” menu or an “all dessert” menu.

Step 4: Throughout the creative process, remind your child to refer to the inspirational pictures to add extra materials to make the dishes more colorful.

Step 5: To complete the menu, ask your child to write out the names of the dishes they prepared.

BENEFITS OF PLAY:



Creative



Cognitive



Physical



Emotional



Social



Communicative



The Floor Is Lava

(For Ages 3+)

INGREDIENTS:

- A variety of “safety” items:
- Cushions
- Flattened boxes
- Paper plates
- Pillows
- Small blankets

PREP TIME:

10 Minutes

This fun activity can be played indoors and outdoors. Depending on time and the number and ages of players, you can extend the obstacle course to multiple rooms in your home or larger areas outside!

RECIPE FOR FUN:

Step 1: Choose a starting spot on one side of the space and choose a finishing spot on the other side.

Step 2: Place your various “safety” items scattered on the floor in all different directions creating your obstacle course.

Step 3: Explain to your child that the floor is hot lava and can’t be touched.

Step 4: Instruct your child that they need to navigate the obstacle course while moving and balancing from safety item to safety item without touching the hot lava floor.

Step 5: The goal is to find the best path to the other side. If a player touches the floor, they must start over. With multiple players, the winner is the one that gets to safety by touching the least number of items.



BENEFITS OF PLAY:



Creative



Cognitive



Physical



Communication



Social



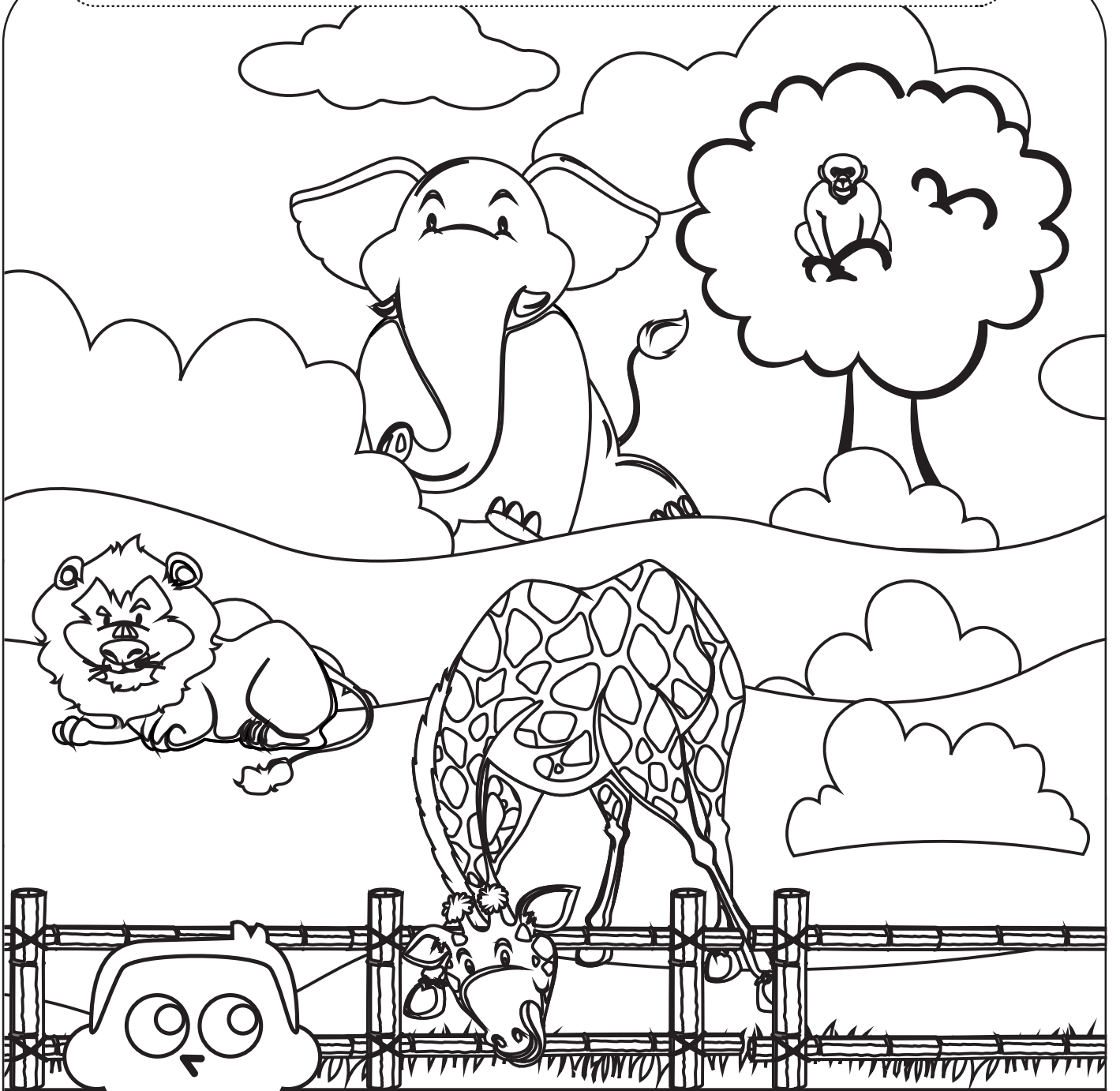
SUMMER



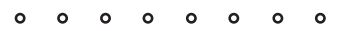
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ZOO



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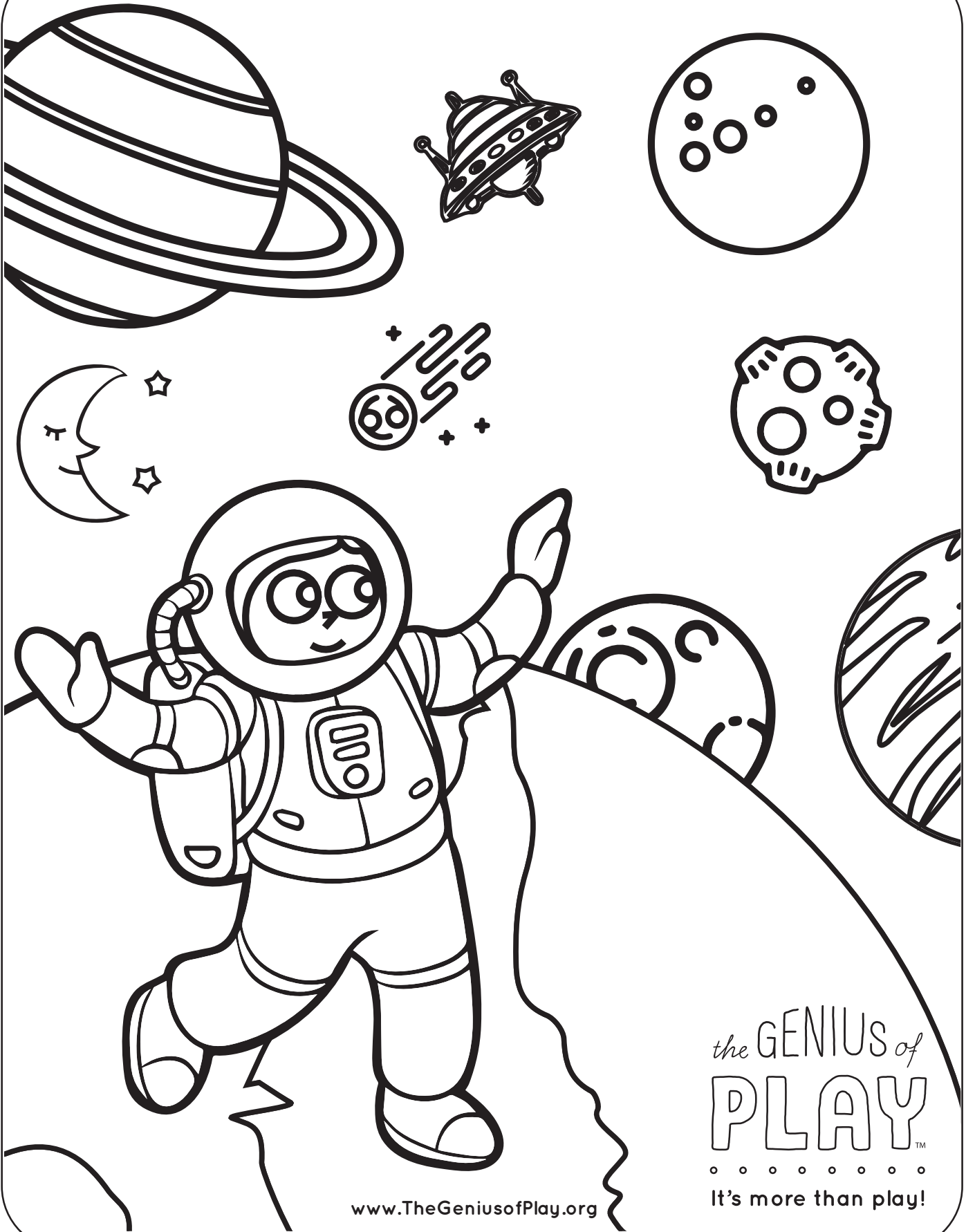
FOURTH OF JULY



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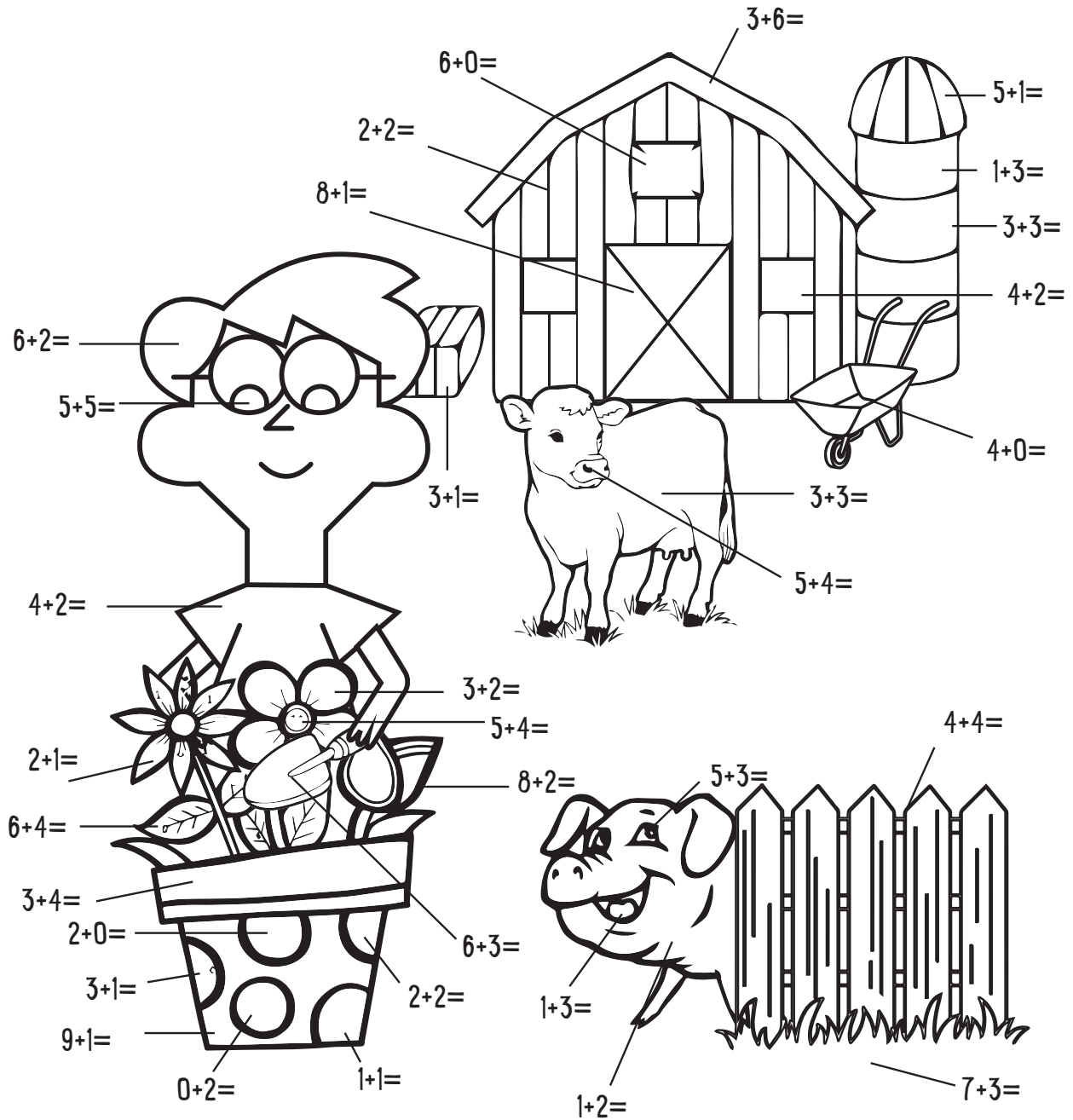
SPACE



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AT THE FARM



Color the formula with:

- The sum of 2 - Orange
- The sum of 3 - Pink
- The sum of 4 - Red
- The sum of 5 - Purple

- The sum of 6 - Yellow
- The sum of 7 - Blue
- The sum of 8 - Brown
- The sum of 9 - Black
- The sum of 10 - Green

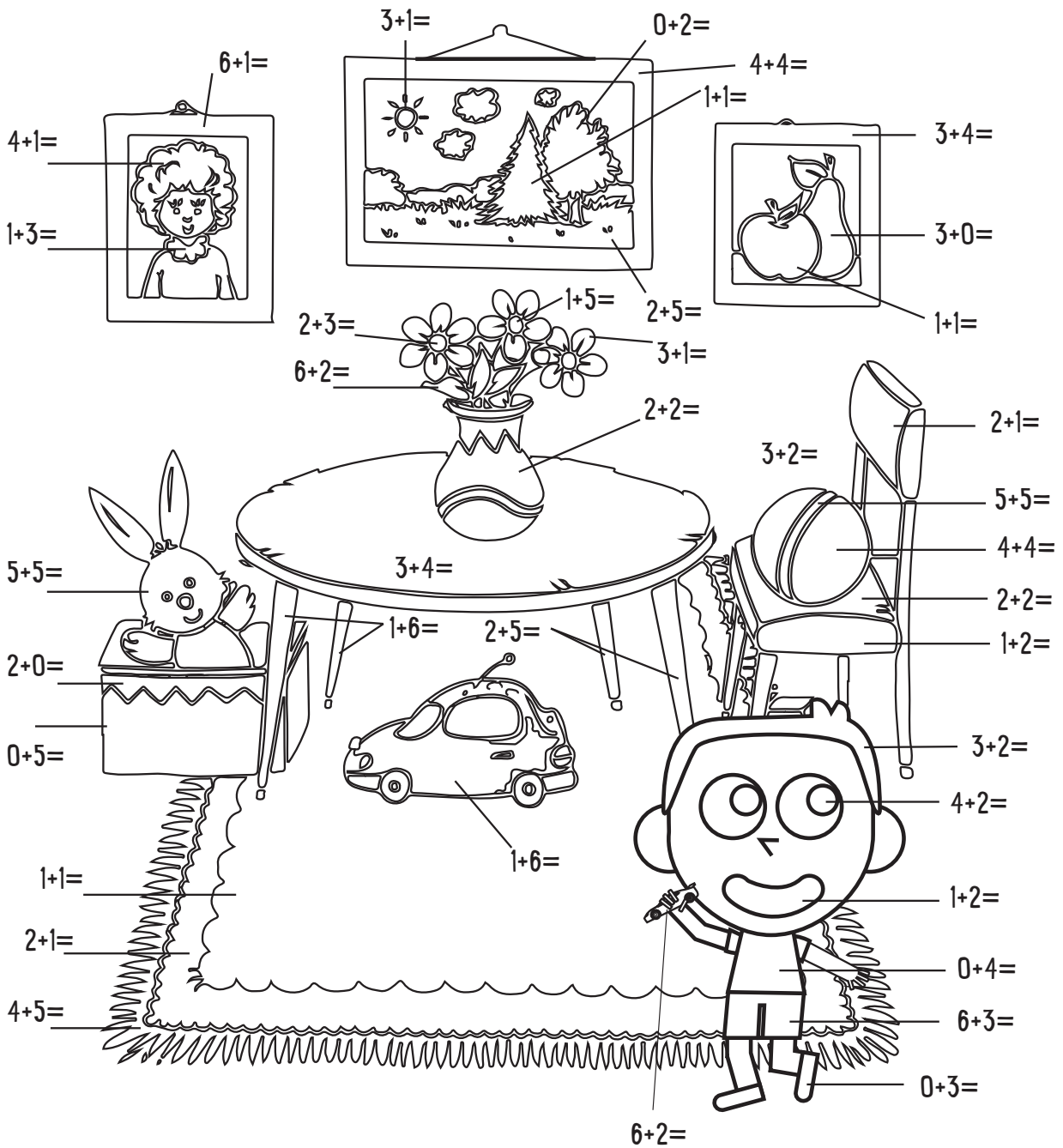
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AT THE PLAYROOM



Color the formula with:

- The sum of 2 - Green
- The sum of 3 - Red
- The sum of 4 - Yellow
- The sum of 5 - Orange

- The sum of 6 - Black
- The sum of 7 - Brown
- The sum of 8 - Purple
- The sum of 9 - Blue
- The sum of 10 - Gray

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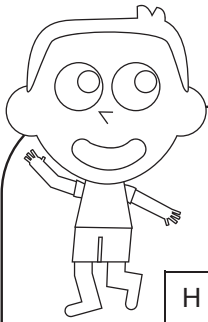


Sports Word Mix

Use the mixed-up letters to create the real sports related words!

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Mixed-Up Letters	Real Word Answers
1. LLBA	1.
2. NWMMISGI	2.
3. RYUBG	3.
4. EBALBSAL	4.
5. UNR	5.
6. NIW	6.
7. WHRTO	7.
8. AKBSLLTAE	8.
9. ELOS	9.
10. TBA	10.
11. INGGGOJ	11.
12. AKRTAE	12.
13. OPLIYCMS	13.
14. EACR	14.
15. CHTCA	15.
16. FGLO	16.
17. UPJM	17.
18. PNISRT	18.
19. MTEA	19.
20. NEICPOOITMT	20.



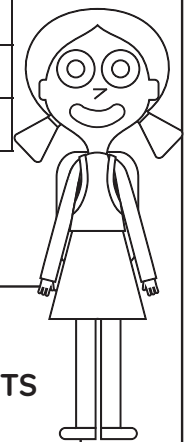
Family Time Word Search

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H	W	D	M	N	H	H	V	G	K	R	M	H	T	T	I	M	X	S	W
I	R	J	C	J	Y	N	C	P	Y	W	P	S	C	G	X	G	Y	W	N
N	S	E	V	S	J	B	I	R	T	H	D	A	Y	S	D	A	F	E	N
R	N	W	T	K	O	M	M	J	O	Z	P	R	A	O	D	V	U	F	Y
T	L	C	P	S	Q	D	N	T	E	H	E	S	I	I	K	K	N	H	X
W	C	Y	E	K	I	Y	O	C	N	H	K	Q	L	P	M	P	C	O	R
T	M	N	H	B	I	S	G	J	T	P	E	O	R	R	Y	Y	L	P	Y
A	F	M	W	S	N	A	S	O	C	G	H	S	W	E	E	Q	E	L	L
T	Z	N	M	S	M	Y	R	F	K	M	G	P	C	S	Y	H	K	Z	P
Z	N	F	B	E	T	B	A	B	K	U	R	Y	G	E	S	F	T	W	A
S	C	U	S	D	N	M	V	A	U	K	A	L	Z	N	I	W	N	O	C
Z	H	P	A	G	I	H	I	R	N	F	N	M	M	T	I	D	V	O	M
X	P	P	D	L	L	V	E	B	U	O	D	O	D	S	X	K	W	O	L
L	K	A	Y	N	L	H	B	E	S	L	P	E	N	N	L	V	O	M	J
O	D	M	S	M	T	L	X	Q	P	A	A	N	N	Y	A	P	D	O	H
B	U	I	N	A	D	X	K	U	L	Q	N	J	G	I	D	R	B	F	C
H	V	O	F	T	Y	U	B	E	A	K	G	D	Z	V	S	A	G	D	E
X	G	G	A	O	P	N	P	E	Y	J	W	C	D	J	D	U	L	W	Y
D	O	O	F	Y	J	Z	X	I	T	E	U	W	E	N	W	U	O	Q	U
L	R	Z	E	S	Z	O	C	I	S	O	F	E	T	E	C	R	K	C	A

Words are hidden forwards, backwards, diagonally, up and down.
Circle each word in the puzzle until you find them all!

- | | | | | |
|-----------|---------|---------|----------|----------|
| AUNT | COOKING | FOOD | HOLIDAYS | PRESENTS |
| BARBECUE | COUSIN | GAMES | MOTHER | SISTER |
| BIRTHDAYS | FAMILY | GRANDMA | PHOTOS | TOYS |
| BROTHER | FATHER | GRANDPA | PLAY | UNCLE |





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