

What's your happy?

Explore, create...

August 2016 Newsletter



Give a child a problem...
and you may get a great
solution

The eternal question:
Work out or sleep in?

Make your own "on the
go" first aid kit

e-Thoughts — Create
summer memories to
enjoy this winter



What we can learn from kids
about creativity
More...

Create brain games that keep
you on track to fitness
More...

It's easy to make a kit that has
items you really need
More...

One way to get ready for the
colder months ahead
More...

Getting help

Confidential support, information and resource referrals are available for a variety of concerns — both work and personal. Call for assistance for you, your household members or your adult children under age 26, whether they live at home or not. Call or visit us online today!

Give a child a problem... and you may get a great solution

August 2016 Newsletter



[Return to index page](#)

Children have amazing abilities to solve problems. Give a child a problem and you set the wheels of creativity spinning. An example was a recent “Invention Convention” in which third graders exhibited their inventions.¹

There were three steps for each invention:

1. The student’s written description of “the problem”
2. A sketched idea of how to solve the problem
3. The invention — including a live demonstration of how it works and solves the original problem

Some of the students’ inventions included:

- A backpack with a built-in backscratcher
- A lipstick-like butter stick that applies butter smoothly to bread, corn and pancakes
- A “positive message” cube that displays phrases like “You’re the best!” and “You’re a star” each time you turn it
- A scratch-less DVD cleaner made of household items
- A machine that entertains cats when owners are too busy
- A simple watering system that keeps your plants watered while you’re away
- A hand-raising machine that — according to the young inventor — takes the wear and tear out of everyday classroom participation

What did these inventions have in common?

Many were “out of the box.” When adults try to solve or invent, they often start from a familiar place. That restricts creativity because preconceived ideas can get in the way.

When kids solve or invent, their lack of experience can be an asset. They’re not used to being “in the box” like adults. Their ideas are often fresh, amazing, amusing and clever.

How can we learn creativity from kids?

Children set a good example for grown-ups. Here are some of the things we can learn from them:

- **Don’t worry about being judged.** Throw out fears about what others might think and focus on the solution.
- **Don’t expect instant success.** Be open to refining your solution until it works. Or, be willing to scrap your first try and start all over if you need to.
- **Share ideas to help yourself and others.** Brainstorming can help when looking for solutions. Talk to friends, coworkers — and your kids — to get new thoughts and ideas.
- **Get support and advice.** Teachers provide education and support for children. Adults can look to mentors, advisors and peers for similar help.
- **Think of silly or fun ideas if they spark your imagination.** “Silly” ideas have led to many successes. They include the Roomba®, a robotic vacuum cleaner that moves across the floor on its own, Silly Putty™ and the Snuggie®, a blanket with sleeves.²
- **Keep trying.** If you ever doubt the value of resilience, just Google “famous people who failed at first.”

As adults, we teach our children many things. But let’s not overlook what our kids can teach us. Children can offer fresh, interesting ways to look at the world and create.

¹South Orange School district, New Jersey

²<http://science.howstuffworks.com>

The eternal question: Work out or sleep in?

August 2016 Newsletter



[Return to index page](#)

There are many people who commit to exercising and really stick to their plan. There are probably just as many others who start out with good intentions but can't seem to stay motivated.

You've likely heard all the reasons why exercise is good for you. It can help with physical and mental wellbeing, stress control, weight management and more.

Yet there's a gap between knowing and doing. And another gap between doing and "keep on doing." After the initial inspiration wears off, it can be tough to maintain the routine.

Excuses, excuses

We're all familiar with the many reasons we "can't" work out right now. Maybe you've said something like this at one time or another:

- It's too hot, cold, windy, dry or humid
- I didn't sleep well or I overslept
- I'll exercise at lunch or after work

Sometimes you can make it all the way to lacing up your sneakers and still get a last minute pang of "do I really have to?" So what's a person to do?

Four things to tell yourself

Here are four good messages to give yourself about working out¹:

1. Focus on the feeling. Do you feel stronger after you work out? Happier? More energized? Mentally clearer? Proud of yourself? Knowing you're going to "earn" these good feelings can help motivate you more than stressing about your looks or how much weight you need to lose.

2. Do it before you have time to think about it. If you can exercise in the morning, it eliminates excuses later in the day. Plus, if you just get up and do your workout, you'll be doing it before your brain even realizes it or has time to think up excuses.

3. Treat yourself to workout clothes. Dress for the occasion. Having a nice outfit or two for your workout can boost your self-confidence. Just putting on your exercise garb can get you mentally into "the zone" for a great workout.

4. Consider it an appointment. Don't think of exercise as optional. Think of it as an appointment. Bring the same sense of responsibility you apply to meetings and appointments to help stick to your exercise routine.

Exercise: It's a mind game

When all is said and done, exercise is really a brain game. If maintaining motivation is a problem for you, mind games can really help.

Consider exercise as a habit you have to keep up and give yourself the messages above. In other words, will yourself to do it.

Once you get moving, your body will produce "feel good" endorphins.¹ Who knows? You may even start looking forward to working out.

¹www.nj.com/starledger

Make your own “on the go” first aid kit

August 2016 Newsletter



[Return to index page](#)

You can buy simple first aid kits in many stores. Yet those may not contain the things you prefer or use most often.

Is there a better first aid kit?

Yes! It's one you put together yourself. But first, here are some items that should be included in any basic kit¹:

- Disinfecting spray to clean cuts and scrapes
- Pre-packaged alcohol swabs
- Antibiotic cream
- Band-Aids® of different sizes
- Hand sanitizer gel
- Non-stick sterile gauze pads
- Waterproof tape
- An ace bandage
- An instant cold compress
- Oral antihistamine like Benadryl®
- Lotion or cream for itchiness
- Cream or gel for burns
- Pain relief pills
- Anti-diarrhea tablets
- Tweezers
- Scissors
- First aid instruction booklet

This list features supplies to treat the most common minor injuries: cuts, scrapes, stings, splinters, burns and sprains.² Now to personalize your kit, you need to take a few more steps.

Think about your special concerns. For example, do you or a family member need a specific remedy for a food or other allergy? Do you have an illness or condition that could require prescription medication in an emergency? Be sure to include these items. Also make a list of your doctors' names and phone numbers for handy reference and put it in the kit.

As for the kit container: Something see-through is easiest to access. You can use plastic sandwich or storage bags that “zip” closed. A cosmetic bag will work too. Or invest in a small, clear plastic box with a lid.

Finally, check the expiration dates on all the items in your kit once a year. That way you can replace anything that's beyond its “best used by” date.

Stay safe and keep your personalized first aid kit handy. Hopefully you'll never need it!

¹Compiled from www.redcross.org and www.webmd.com

²www.webmd.com

e-Thoughts — Create summer memories to enjoy this winter

August 2016 Newsletter



[Return to index page](#)

Our e-Thoughts feature provides close-up views on topics and areas of interest from everyday life.

Pretty soon the squirrels will start gathering nuts and acorns, the bears will get ready to hibernate and the birds will pack up and fly south. What will you do to get ready for the fall and winter months ahead?

Here's something new I'm trying this year: I'm making an album of my summer memories. I'm taking lots of pictures at the beach, the park and in my beautiful garden.

I'm carrying my camera or smartphone to every pool party, barbeque, picnic and concert I attend. I'm going to upload or print these pictures of my friends, my family and myself having summer fun.

Then I'm going to make an online album, scrapbook or photo book of these images. I'm also going to try writing a poem or two about special things that happened this summer. And maybe some short descriptions of how I'm enjoying these "lazy-hazy-crazy days of summer."¹

Like the squirrels, birds and bears, I'm going to prepare for the long months ahead. When it's time to throw some logs on the fireplace and snuggle under a blanket, I'll smile as I look through my "summer book" and reminisce. How nice it will be to feel toasty on the outside and warm on the inside, too!

¹ www.lyricsfreak.com, from the song by Nat King Cole

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Monthly Newsletter — August 2016

[Return to index page](#)

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