

# Sparks

## Exploring Possible Sparks with Your Children

The best spark gift you can give your children is to provide them with lots of opportunities to try or experience new things; that way, each child has a good chance of finding his or her own special interests. The more he or she can try, the better!

You can use this chart to help you expand your child's spark options. Check off the activities your child has experienced at least once, but remember that repeated experiences will also be useful to your child. You can also check the chart for new ideas when you're ready to plan an activity for or with your child.

None of these activities has to be expensive or hard to do. Use these tips to help you:

- Libraries often have free passes to local museums, parks, or events; ask the librarian at your local library what they have to offer.
- Extended family, friends, and neighbors might really enjoy developing a special connection with your child. For example, if an aunt loves reading and so does your child, suggest that they set up a special time each week to do it together. This is especially helpful when parents are very busy with jobs and other family responsibilities.
- After-school programs often try to offer a variety of activities for kids to explore; share this chart with any program or organization (YMCA, YWCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.) where your child spends time.
- Keep an eye out for holiday or festival events that are free to the public. If your town has a cinco de mayo celebration, you and your child likely can experience a great variety of dance, song, and food there.
- Sign your child up to have a mentor! Then give this list to the mentor to provide ideas for some of the activities he/she does with your child.

Many parks are free to the public; and walks in the park together cost nothing.

### Activity Ideas for My Child

Activity	Done it!	Activity	Done it!
Strummed a guitar, played a piano, beat on a drum		Painted a picture, molded something out of clay, drew a picture	
Seen a band concert, listened to an orchestra, sung in a chorus		Attended a play, attended a musical	
Read or heard poetry, then written his/her own		Read or heard a story, then written his/her own	
Seen different kinds of dance, including ballet, flamenco, ballroom, modern		Learned words in a language other than your family's main language	
Learned how to cook or bake something		Learned how to build or repair something	
Ran in a race		Tried a team sport like soccer, basketball, or softball	
Played tennis or attended a gymnastics class		Gazed at the stars and tried to find the constellations	
Went swimming or rock climbing		Saw a parade or was in a parade	
Went to an art museum		Went to a children's museum	
Went to a science museum		Helped with planting, weeding, and watering a garden	
Helped choose a pet to adopt and care for		Went horseback riding	
Visited a farm or a zoo		Danced to music in your own home	
Played age-appropriate games on the computer		Told a joke or put on a play	
Took photographs or made a video		Visit a synagogue, mosque, church, or other place of worship	
Volunteered to help people or animals in need		Picked up litter to make the neighborhood look nicer	
Went hiking or camping		Tried karate, sewing, break dancing, or rapping	