

A Guide to
**Magical
Creatures**
Around Your Home

PARENT GUIDE
PLAYFUL ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

BY DARREN FINK

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Creatures**
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A Playful Journey for Fun-Loving Families

Written by Darren Fink

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Foreword //

We Saw A Need With Our Foster Children

Our family loves to pretend and play games. When our children were younger, we created magical creatures that live around our home. Some of these games of pretend were derived from the needs my wife and I saw early on when our children were still in the foster care system:

1. Playful engagement

Our kids were survivors of rough situations, and they didn't have time to learn how to play. We would show our 23-month-old a toy car and he would merely express confusion. Even our five-year-old daughter would destroy toys rather than use them for games of make-believe. They would follow us around the house aimlessly. Our children needed to be taught how to play, and we as adults needed to show them how to pretend. Dr. Karyn Purvis, a leading researcher and advocate in the field of working with foster and adopted children, emphasizes the importance of "playful engagement" with "children from hard places" in order to connect and to build trust. This is an excellent way to do that!

2. Recapture the childhood lost

As I already mentioned, our children were dealing with issues of survival early on instead of playing. Many of us would consider it a crime to rob a child of that magical time when they are young and everything is possible. Discovering magical creatures around the home allowed our children to daily reclaim some of their lost childhood.

3. Explain the mysteries of everyday life

Some of the creatures help with fears such as nightmares. Many of our creatures explain certain phenomena such as:

Why do some kids wake up with tangled hair?

Why are there creaking noises around the house at night?

Why are there thunderstorms?

Our children enjoyed these creatures so much! I can't prove it, but I suspect that a couple of them even eventually caught on to the game though continued to pretend for a good many years. Even as most of our kids are now teens, they still have great fun talking about those magical creatures that became a part of their lives.

How To Use This Book With Your Child

1. Read about the corresponding creatures.

The activities in this book are intended to be done with your child(ren) after both of you have read the chapter of the corresponding magical creature in our children's book, "A Guide To Magical Creatures Around Your Home." While the children's book promotes the introduction to our stories and playful engagement, it is the activities within these pages which will allow you, the caregiver, to more successfully connect with your child.

ALREADY HAVE THE CHILDREN'S BOOK?!

You might have noticed that each creature chapter contains a "Quick Look" block of text which gives you a glance at the concept that the creature addresses when the activities in this parent guide are employed with the children's book.

You can order our children's book through Amazon, your local bookstore, or visit our website.

2. Make it more than a story!

Children often learn best through modeling. If your child comes from a traumatic background, it is possible that they were never introduced to play. It is very possible that they, themselves, could not think about pretend or play in the past as their concerns were navigating in an adult world through a traumatic experience. You, the caregiver, are going to have to model the pretend for your child(ren) by talking about the creatures from our stories and activities amidst everyday life. Do your best to show them how to pretend and have fun. This might mean that some of us, caregivers, are going to have to remember what it was like to pretend. Let our children's book and this parent guide book help you on the journey.

3. Have fun.

As you and your child(ren) go through this book, you may find that you are "learning" or creating new facts about our creatures to fit your household better. You also might be "discovering" NEW creatures altogether. If this happens, please be sure to include pictures or descriptions of your creatures with our growing community of families searching for magical creatures. You can share on our social media pages or email: info@transfiguringadoption.com

4. Is it alright for your child to know this is all a game?

Yes. Some children from traumatic backgrounds in fact may have a difficult time separating fantasy from reality. It is fine to explain from the start that your family is taking part in a pretend game and subsequent activities. This will reinforce that it is important for even adults to play. Foster and adoptive kids know that the world is full of strife, BUT you can show them that it is a joyful world as well.

NOTE: This book (and the coordinating children's book) are intended to be a creative and playful way for your family to connect and make memories while possibly tackling some serious topics. This book and its content are NOT meant to be medical advice or professional counseling advice. The authors of this book and *Transfiguring Adoption* also believe that parents should work with trusted doctors, therapists, counselors, and other professionals to successfully work through issues in life. These activities are intended to be executed with an adult. Children should not do activities alone.

Special thanks to Felecia Neil, a former foster youth and current foster & adoptive mom, who assisted us in editing while providing us with her unique perspective. Thank you for your passion for children and helping this project succeed.

Section 1.

Dipsy Toad (dɪpsi: təʊd)

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Note: These activities are intended to be executed with an adult. Children should not do activities alone.

Sweet Dreams Mixture - Great Fun For Kids Afraid To Go To Sleep //

Purpose: This activity lightheartedly helps children wind down for bedtime through calming tactile and olfactory sensory input while simultaneously creating a safe environment that provides the opportunity and encouragement for them to participate in open dialogue with their caregivers about their nightmares and other intrusive thoughts that inhibit them from falling asleep.

Suggested Materials:

- 1.Purple lotion (lavender is good for sleep and essential oil can be added if desired)
- 2.Lavender oil (If the lotion is not lavender scented)
- 3.Glass vial or any container (the more magical looking - the more fun you will have!)

Preparation:

In the absence of children, combine the lotion with a tiniest bit of the lavender oil (buying lotion already with a purple tint and lavender scent is best) before pouring the mixture into the vial or container. Consider using a medicine dropper to fill the vial if it has a narrow opening. Be sure to clean up and store all materials in a covert location.

Activity:

- Let your child know that you found a Dipsy Toad and were able to get some of the saliva.
- If you are a foster or adoptive parent, ask your child permission to use the mixture on their neck and arms before bedtime.
- WARNING: Children with a history of abuse may be very uncomfortable during this activity. Permission must always be obtained from the child and even then stick to safer areas of the body like arms, fingers, neck, and feet. You might be able to massage their face with permission. As a caregiver, you might also consider doing this activity in a common area room since sexually abused kiddos might be fearful of having an adult in their bedroom.

- Tell the child where you are going to apply the mixture before applying. This will help kiddos with sensory processing issues who can't stand something slimy feeling.
- Massage the mixture with a firm pressure to again help children with sensory issues. Ask your child often if you need to massage lighter or firmer. This also gives your foster or adoptive child a voice.
- What if there aren't good dreams?!
- If your child has bad dreams or night terrors, encourage them to talk with a safe adult about their nightmares. The magic didn't fail. Like it says above, some nightmares have to be talked about or journaled so that little by little they don't get in the way of the Dipsy Toad magic.

Toad Tongue //

Purpose: Some children who have experienced severe neglect in their past may not have been exposed to a variety of textures during their first few years of life. Thus, they may find wet or slimy textures to be alarming or unnerving. This activity playfully allows you to explore some textures with your child using our description of the Dipsy Toad.

Suggested Materials:

1. Writing utensils and paper
2. Small bowls
3. Small sponges (one for each texture)
4. Various textured substances (such as water, lotion, pudding, raw egg, vegetable oil, pureed banana etc.)
5. Damp washcloths or baby wipes - something to clean each substance from the body

Preparation:

If you have not done so already, read through the description of the Dipsy Toad in this guidebook. Before involving your child, decide on which substances you will be using and put them in your bowls. Be certain that you have a sponge for each. Place all of the items on a table in a place where you and your child can comfortably sit together

Activity:

- Inform your child that you are going to do an experiment to see which of the substances in the bowls feels the most like a Dipsy Toad tongue.
- Let your child know that they are in charge of choosing the order in which you will test the substance in each bowl as this sense of control can be an empowering comfort.
- You, the adult, will then take the sponges loaded with the contents of the chosen bowl and gently run the tip of the sponge across a small section of your child's arm. It is important to get your child's permission to run the sponge along their arm before you try each new substance.
- While applying the sponge to the arm, ask your child about how the substances feel on their skin. See if you can help them with adjectives to use. You might also try to ask your child about what emotions the textures bring about. ("Does this feel slimy? Does the slimy feeling make you want to want to laugh? Want to run away?")
- Discuss with your child if the material is how they imagine a Dipsy Toad tongue may feel.
- Get permission from your child to wipe the material off with the damp washcloth.
- You may want to rate each substance on a number system so you can declare the substance that is most like a Dipsy tongue at the end of the experiment.
- Help your child write down the descriptive words you used during the activity and include it in your own field guide.

Optional: Allow your child to apply each substance on your arm. This may further give them a sense of empowerment if they are in some control of the experiment. It also gives them a chance to practice asking permission while they interact within the personal space of others as you modeled earlier in the activity.

Section 2.

Tangerella (tæn-dʒər-el-ə)

Section 2. Tangerella (tæn-dʒər-el-ə)

Note: These activities are intended to be executed with an adult. Children should not do activities alone.

Beautiful Girl - Handsome Boy //

Purpose: We did this with our daughter. It's a fun way to explain the wild morning hair and one more way to tell kids how great they are. After all, if they have been through trauma in the past they may have never been told that they were gorgeous. They may even have been told that they were ugly. This Activity serves as a natural opportunity to enhance a child's self-esteem through positive affirmations while instilling pride in their appearance as well as confidence in their skills to maintain personal hygiene.

Suggested Materials:

1. Hair brush or comb
2. Detangler Spray
3. Mirror

Activity:

- When your kiddo wakes up in the morning sporting wild and tangled hair, comment that a Tangerella must have visited them last night.
- Remind them that Tangerellas seek out beautiful little girls and boys to magically maintain their beauty. Therefore, it must be true that they are beautiful/handsome.
- Encourage your child to brush/comb out their tangled hair or ask to assist if needed.
- While this task is being completed remark upon your child's beautiful attributes, inclusive of personality traits.
- If appropriate, as this may be too overwhelming for those with very low self esteem, instruct your child to look at themselves in the mirror and ask them if they see the beautiful qualities that you mentioned. Then request them to share what they see that is beautiful about themselves.

Take Care of Fairy Property //

Purpose: This activity is an easygoing opportunity for your child to practice asking caring safe adults for help while reinforcing the concepts of respecting property and helping others. It is also simply a good way for you and your

child to work on a small project, have a fun experience to talk about, and bond closer together. Additionally, once you have successfully completed the task together your child may feel a sense of pride and accomplishment of a job well done further boosting their self esteem.

Suggested Materials:

1. Flower petal
2. Flower scented oil, soap, lotion, or body spray

Preparation:

Obtain a fresh flower petal from an unapparent location and place it on your child's pillow before they wake.

Activity:

- If your child tells you about the flower petal and asks for help taking care of the fairy clothing, this is an opportunity to praise your child for coming to a caring adult for help as many children from traumatic backgrounds have not experienced caring adults who will help them.
- If your child did not notice the petal, then make your way to their bedroom after breakfast to alert them. This is a good time to ask them what should be done, pointing out that the Guide Book states that an adult should help with caring for the petal. When your child proceeds to ask for help, praise them for asking for help and reassure them that you, a caring adult, will help them with their need. If your child isn't at a point where they will ask for help, we find phrases such as:

“You know if you ask me for help, I will help you.”

“I wonder what would happen if you asked me for help?”

- Most importantly, follow through! Once your child has invoked your help, then offer your flower scented options and assist them in gently applying the product to the petal before returning the petal to where it was found.
- Throughout the day you will need to collect the petal, unnoticed, and discard of it. Be sure that the discard location is not in a place where your child will happen upon it.
- Be sure that your child is aware that the petal is gone. This means that your mission to aid the fairy was a success.

Section 3.

Little Folks

Section 3. Little Folks

Note: These activities are intended to be executed with an adult. Children should not do activities alone.

Little Folk Notes //

Purpose: This activity encourages your child's interest and ability to form trusting relationships in a way that is playful and relaxed while affirming their success. Little Folk Notes can further serve as an indirect outlet to assist your child with any tough feelings that they are experiencing, even if they are not yet ready to confide in a safe caring adult.

Suggested Materials:

1. A writing utensil
2. Small scraps of paper
3. Thread (optional)

Preparation:

Come up with names for the Little Folk around your home or use the names we came up with in ours. From time to time, casually remind your child of Little Folks at opportune moments, reiterating their skittish nature as well as their need to feel safe in a home and around its inhabitants. Your child will learn how to model such behavior from their interactions with you, a safe caring adult, and slowly learn to apply this skill around your home as well. In the absence of children, write your child a note in Little Folk handwriting before rolling it up like a bit of parchment and securing it with a short length of thread if so desired. Remember that Little Folks are small so the note shouldn't be written on a normal size piece of paper.

Activity:

- When you are certain that your child is asleep, place the Little Folk note near their bed in an easily visible location where it will not be disturbed or accidentally lost before its discovery.
- If your child does not notice the note, then bring it to their attention with a playful curiosity.
- Remind your child that they must have earned the trust of the Little Folks around your home to be receiving such a note. This is a great opportunity to reinforce those trustworthy behaviors by discussing how your child has demonstrated trustworthiness towards the Little Folks and other household members, inclusive of pets, before praising your child's success and expressing appreciation.

- If the note had the dual intention of assisting your child with any tough feelings, then take the opportunity and attempt to gently explore the topic. However, be mindful that your child still may not be ready to confide in a caring adult.

Dickle-Button Pie //

Purpose: This activity further encourages your child's interest and ability to form trusting relationships in a playful, relaxed manner while affirming greater success and enhancing their self confidence. Additionally, Little Folk gifts can serve to aid a child's feelings of love and acceptance within a home. Who wouldn't want a little more happiness added to their day with a thoughtfully handcrafted gift which SHOWS, and not just says, that someone appreciates, understands, and cares for you as an individual?

Suggested Materials:

1. Pistachio nut shell
2. A raisin

Preparation:

- In the absence of children fill the pistachio nut shell with a kneaded raisin.

Activity:

- When you are certain that your child is asleep, place the Little Folk gift near their bed in an easily visible location where it will not be disturbed or accidentally lost before its discovery.
- If your child does not notice the pie, then bring it to their attention with a playful curiosity.
- Explain to your child that they must have not only earned the trust of the Little Folks around your home to be receiving such a gift but appear to be developing a trusting, adoring, and healthy relationship with them as well. This is, again, a great opportunity to reinforce those trustworthy behaviors and you should take the time to tell your child how proud you are of them and their growth.
- Mrs. Dickle-Button left two pies and a note for our daughter during a difficult night for her. It was great to see our daughter's smiling face and excitement the next morning. Can your child verbalize how receiving this gift made them feel or why it brightened their day?

Go to Bed and You Just Might See...//

Purpose: Our foster and adoptive children never wanted to go to bed for normal kiddo reasons and for traumatic reasons as well. Some evenings I could tell some of our kids that if they remained quiet and still enough, the Little Folks might think they were asleep and come out into the open. This brief activity serves as a sleep-aid that redirects your child's focus and energy into a fun goal which requires them to implement their ability to regulate their breathing and control their bodily movements thus aiding their ability to fall asleep.

Preparation:

Regularly work with your child to find a calm breathing technique that works best for them.

Activity:

- Remind your child that if they appear to go to sleep then they just might see a Little Folk making its way out into the open.
- Encourage them to do this by lying still in their beds while practicing their calm breathing techniques.
- I have never had a child able to stay still, quiet, and AWAKE long enough to see a Little Folk.

Paperclip Ladders //

Purpose: This activity is simply fun and can create a great memory for you and your child to talk about for years to come.

Suggested Materials:

1. Paperclips

Activity:

- While your child is asleep, have some fun.
- String paper clips together and hang them around the room.
- In the morning you can explain that these are the ladders that the Little Folks use during the night.

Section 4.

Fleet Birds (fli:t bərdz)

Section 4. Fleet Birds (fli:t bərdz)

Note: These activities are intended to be executed with an adult. Children should not do activities alone.

Fleet Light Jar //

Purpose: The Fleet Light Jar is an activity that allows you to spend time with your child while making a craft that could function as a nightlight after it is finished. Our family likes to pretend that the glitter is magic sun dust that comes from the Fleet birds. You can also pretend that the glowing stars are specially made to absorb sunlight just like the feathers on the body of the Fleet. The great part about the finished jar is that your child can control this item as opposed to maybe turning on all the lights in the middle of the night and awakening other people. We have also found that our foster and adoptive kids tended to like having the responsibility of putting their jar in a sunny window to collect sunlight for the next bedtime.

Suggested Materials:

1. Clear plastic jar - such as a 16oz peanut butter jar
2. Baby oil
3. Water
4. Glitter - as many colors as you would like
5. A tablespoon
6. Plastic glow-in-the-dark stars
7. Craft feathers
8. Glow-in-the-dark paint
9. Sealant spray (optional)
10. Superglue

Preparation:

Be sure you have talked about Fleet Birds with your child prior to this activity. Ready a workspace and gather your Fleet Jar materials before asking your child to join you for this project. If you choose to coat craft feathers with glow-in-the-dark paint or use sealant, then be sure to do so enough in advance to ensure adequate dry time as per label directions. Lastly, as to not ruin the illusion, you may wish to consider relocating your individual glitter options into an unmarked container void of any store labels or markings.

Activity:

- You may choose to tell your child that the glitter is “sun dust” or you may choose to tell them that it has similar properties to “sun dust.” Either way

you are preparing your child to make a magical light jar which shines with the power of the sun.

- Have your child choose which colors of glitter they would like to put into the jar.
- Note: 1 tablespoon of glitter goes a LONG way. The more glitter you have in the jar, the harder it will be to see the stars you add to the jar. We also suggest that while your child can be empowered to choose the glitter you, the adult, should be the one to add the glitter to the jar.
- Next, have your child pick out the stars that they would like to have added to the magical light jar.
- Add 3 parts of baby oil and 1 part water to the jar leaving approximately 1/4 of an inch at the top of the jar when filling it as there needs to be an air pocket to help move things around in the jar.
- Secure the lid on the jar.
- Swish the jar around gently to see if everything is moving around the way you like.
- This is a good time to add more glitter or stars if you desire more.
- Once you are satisfied with your Fleet Light, the lid should be superglued to the jar.
- (It isn't necessary to glue the jar shut. It simply avoids the incident of a child opening the jar and spilling the contents.)

How Are You Flying? //

Purpose: Many children from traumatic backgrounds will find it difficult to self-regulate on their own and rely on safe & healthy adults to help them. This activity serves to assist you in discussing various activity levels that your child should congruently experience during different situations and will help you guide your child in recognizing their personal activity level in the moment and if it corresponds appropriately with the situation they are experiencing.

Suggested Materials:

1. 4"x 6" piece of cardboard
2. 1 pipe cleaner
3. 1 bead
4. Markers (Red, Orange, Green, Blue, Black)

Preparation:

In the story/description of the Fleet birds you have seen that these creatures are required to have a large amount of energy if they are going to fly non-stop during the day or they sleep for several days when they are exhausted. This comparison in activity level will be used for this activity to talk to your child about their energy levels. If you have not yet done so, read through the chapter on Fleet Birds.

Ahead of time, hold your piece of cardboard vertically and create a single hole both near the top and bottom center. The holes should be large enough for the pipe cleaner to pass through.

Activity:

- Share with your child that you are going to be making a “Fleet Activity Meter” together.
- Leaving about 1/4 inch of space on both sides, help your child to draw a rectangle with the black marker that spans the length of the cardboard. The rectangle should encompass both of the holes.
- Starting towards the top, use the black marker to draw 4 horizontal lines within the rectangle to divide it up into 5 equal bars.
- Color in the top bar with a red marker and the second bar with the orange. Skip the third, or center, bar before coloring the fourth bar green and the bottom bar blue.
- With the black marker label the bars with the following labels starting from the top and working your way down to the bottom: “Very High,” “High,” “Medium,” “Low,” “Very Low.”
- Thread the bead onto the pipe cleaner and move it to the center.
- Thread the ends of the pipe cleaner through the front holes of the cardboard and fasten/twist the pipe cleaner in the back. The pipe cleaner should not have much slack to it and the bead should be on the front of the cardboard within your rectangle.
- Check to ensure that the bead is able to move freely up and down the pipe cleaner and make any needed adjustments.
- Discuss with your child the difference in energy level that a Fleet has when flying or when resting. (Naturally, it is appropriate for a Fleet to be at a very high energy level when it is flying but inappropriate when resting.)
- Have your child slide the bead on the cardboard to match the appropriate activity level that a Fleet would need for various activities.

- Talk with your child about the problems that would occur if a Fleet were to have high energy during rest times or low energy during flight times. Again use the bead on the cardboard to mark congruent energy levels as you discuss these ideas.
- Now, talk to your child about how people also have needs for proper energy levels during various activities. You may wish to choose to teach the term “self-regulation” to give your child vocabulary for talking about having the proper energy level for a situation.
- Place the bead at “Very High” and have your child name situations in which they would need to have high energy. (i.e. playing basketball, playing tag at recess, exercising, etc.)
- Continue this process as your child slides their bead down the descending activity levels of their Fleet Activity Meter.
- Next, discuss with your child ways that people might calm themselves or “pump” themselves up.
- Finally, ask your child about their energy level at the moment. You’re having a conversation with them so they should be at “medium.” Have your child move the bead where they think their energy level lies. If your child comments that they are at an energy level that you disagree with, suggest to them that they are at a different level (move the bead) and give reasons such as “Actually, I think you might be at “High Energy” because you don’t seem able to sit still at the moment and you’re speaking really fast and loud.”
- Explain to your child that you are going to be using the Fleet Activity Meter in the coming days to check in and see how they are flying.
- Periodically ask your child to move the bead on the chart and take the chance to agree or disagree before discussing together if the energy level matches the situation.

Section 5.

Sunburst Dwarves (sən-bərst dwɔrvz)

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Note: These activities are intended to be executed with an adult. Children should not do activities alone.

Discover the Constellations //

Purpose: We can take for granted many of the activities we have done growing up as children such as looking at constellations in the sky. Some foster or adoptive children have never been told basic fairy tales or taught common childhood games. We have found that kids enjoy learning the different pictures in the sky and it gives them a common experience of looking for constellations such as the Big Dipper or Orion like their same age peers.

Suggested Materials:

1. Water and snacks (protein is best)
2. Glowstick, flashlight, or lantern
3. Comfort/security items if desired

Preparation:

If your child can feel safe with you outside at night, find a comfortable area.

If your child cannot feel safe outside at night, purchase the Cloud B Twilight Ladybug (or Twilight Turtle) to use indoors if desired.

https://www.fatbraintoy.com/toy_companies/cloud_b/twilight_ladybug.cfm

https://www.fatbraintoy.com/toy_companies/cloud_b/twilight_turtle.cfm

Activity:

- Sunburst Dwarves are constantly watching the skies to make sure that Fleet birds are not in danger of falling. For fun, tell your kids that you are going to help the Sunburst Dwarves around your home and watch for Fleet.
- The most important part is to keep looking for a shooting star as this is a weary Fleet falling from the daylight.
- While you're watching for these creatures in the sky, it can be quite fun to learn the constellations and find any planets that are visible.

Dwarves' Squishing Technique //

Purpose: Children who have sensory processing needs or who have come from a traumatic background have a difficult time regulating themselves. This easy to manage activity is a good way to empower your child with a tool they can use to help calm themselves when they get worked up. However, doing this activity

once is not the “magical” part to helping your child. It is a process of helping them to notice when they are becoming dysregulated or having issues with sensory input. When they can begin to notice this independently, they can turn to this activity by themselves. Until then, they will require you, the caregiver, to step in and carry out the process with them as a healthy role model.

As simplistic as it may seem, this activity will help stimulate your child’s proprioceptive system - muscles and joints - which will have a calming effect and is a handy go-to if you are under a time restraint or in a public setting with limited coping options. You can also carry on this activity several times until you notice that your child has calmed down a bit.

Note: A good activity to pair with this one is “How are you Flying?” under the Fleet Bird section.

Suggested Materials:

1. A regular (4oz) canister of playdough - one for each participant (it is recommended that you do not use the mini canisters)

Preparation:

Optional: There are recipes on Pinterest for making your own playdough if you don’t wish to purchase playdough. Similarly, you can research recipes for making homemade slime on Pinterest and use this instead of playdough.

Activity:

- Explain to your child that while the Sunburst Dwarves have a very important job that it can be quite stressful due to all the loud noises that their rockets make. The Dwarves frequently squish balls of clay to help them calm down after a long shift of work.
- Let your child know that you are both going to take a different ball of playdough and pretend like it is one of the Dwarves’ clay balls.
- Next, you and your child are going to try and squeeze your playdough ball as hard as you can to make the ball as thin as possible.
- After about fifteen seconds lay your playdough on the table and see whose looks the thinnest.
- Roll your playdough up into balls again and repeat the process.

Section 6.

Drleck (drlɛk)

Section 6. Drleck (drlek)

Note: These activities are intended to be executed with an adult. Children should not do activities alone.

What Do Drlecks Feel Like //

Purpose: Some children who come into foster care have not been bathed in a frequent manner while others have not been exposed to watery textures very often which can make bathing uncomfortable and frightening for them. The goal of this activity is to familiarize your child with the texture of water and help alleviate some of their fears by enhancing feelings of safety.

Note: We are assuming that as a caregiver you know the appropriate way in which your child should do this activity with you to ensure that they are properly safe and cared for.

Suggested Materials:

1. Bucket (a large, deep bowl can also work)
2. Warm water
3. Towel for drying off after activity
4. Safety Bath Ducky (optional)
5. Tear-free bubble bath (optional)

Preparation:

Fill a bucket part way with comfortably warm water. If you would like to provide a visual safety aid to assure your child that the water is a safe and comfortable temperature then you may wish to purchase a Safety Bath Ducky ahead of time. This appears to be an ordinary rubber ducky but has the added feature of a safety disc on the bottom. Depending upon the brand, the safety disc will reveal the word “hot” and/or change color (typically from blue to white) if the water is above a safe temperature.

Activity:

- Remind your child of the Drleck creatures living around your home and share with them that you are going to practice scouring through the water in search of one to see what it feels like.
- Together, dip your fingertips or hands into the water. Allow your child to designate the depth to which they feel comfortable doing this.
- Take turns with your child describing what you feel. Then ask if they can detect any friendly creatures moving around in the water.

- Next, gently encourage your child to push past their comfort zone and put their hand lower into the water. The goal is to gradually reach the bottom of the bucket and search for the Drleck.

Activity Addition:

If your child is comfortable with the water texture, then add some bubble bath to the bucket. Create suds and help your child attempt to make their own Drleck!

A Calming Drleck Bath Time Game //

Purpose: The goal of this activity is to spend time with your child while utilizing a naturally occurring situation to play a control game that will help you work together as they build upon their self-regulation skill set. Playing this game will require that you intentionally escalate your child's activity level before guiding them through a series of deep breaths to achieve brief periods of behavioral regulation while focusing on having fun as you discover more about the Drleck.

Note: We are assuming that as a caregiver you know the appropriate way in which your child should complete this activity with you to ensure that they are properly safe and cared for - i.e. Is the child old enough that they need to wear a bathing suit with you present? Is it appropriate for the opposite sex parent to be present? Did the child give you permission to play this activity as it could potentially make them feel very vulnerable? Is the water temperature safe for your child?

Suggested Materials:

1. Lavender oil
2. Bathing suit for your child
3. Towel for drying off after activity

Preparation:

Ensure that your child knows about the Drleck from their description earlier in the book. Draw a warm bath and add enough of the lavender oil to the water that it emanates a faint aroma. Children with sensory issues can be sensitive to scents, so a little may go a long way. Remember, children from traumatic backgrounds can struggle with self-regulation. They often need a safe and stable adult to help them co-regulate; therefore it is important that you perform a self-check prior to involving your child in the game as to avoid becoming frustrated during the activity.

Activity:

- Have your child jump up and down 15 times OUTSIDE of the bathroom to get some of the wiggles out - you're purposefully trying to get your child hyper so it's alright if they are silly during this time.
- Explain that there are Drleck in the bath water and remind them that you know this because the water smells like lavender.
- Next, explain to your child that it's important that they be calm for the creatures.
- Before they get ready to enter the water with the Drleck, take a few slow, deep breaths together to begin calming your child.
- Once they are in the bathtub, challenge them to lay or sit still in the water for 20 seconds while continuing to take deep breaths together and encouraging your child to benefit from the calming scent that the Drleck have provided.
- If you know your child is not yet able to manage this length of time then set the limit lower - 10 seconds, 5 seconds, etc. If your child is unable to get into the tub due to sensory issues allow them to just stick their feet or hands into the water instead.
- Set your expectations for completing this activity low so that YOU are not disappointed. Sensory issues can be powerful and your child is brave for simply attempting the activity. Also, remember that the main goal is to have fun and bond with your child as you explore our magical creatures.
- Tell your child what a good job they did and how you noticed they were calm.
- Next, while sitting together, sing a song. Be loud and silly. Splash about a bit if your child is able to do so. You want to escalate your child enough that they can practice their ability to regulate their own behavior without reaching the point that they are completely unable to regain a level of control that is conducive to completing the activity safely.
- Once again let them know that they need to be calm for the Drleck and repeat this process for five more cycles. As they gain confidence in their ability to control their body movement, playfully challenge them to increase the time they can be still while staying calm.
- Once you have completed the activity or your child is ready to get out, whichever comes first, be sure to assist them in calmly exiting the tub and drying off completely while being mindful of slip, trip, and fall hazards.

What Do You Hear? //

Purpose: This activity creates a positive bonding experience with your child that promotes the value of self care while providing some foundation for future coping strategies as they enhance their self regulation abilities.

Note: We are assuming that as a caregiver you know the appropriate way in which your child should do this activity with you to ensure that they are properly safe and cared for.

Suggested Materials:

1. Lavender oil
2. Epsom Salt
3. Bathing suit

Preparation:

Discuss with your child that the Drleck experiences many different feelings as they go about their day given their intuitive and empathetic nature. Thus, when they are not helping to calm others they take regular opportunities to engage in self care activities of their own as to prevent all of those emotions from becoming too overwhelming.

Activity:

- Draw a bath of warm water deep enough to cover your child's ears when they are laying in the tub.
- Add in lavender oil and epsom salt as desired.
- Using your proper adult judgment you will help your child lay down in the tub of shallow water.
- While laying in the tub, ask your child to close their eyes and listen.
- Your child should describe to you what they hear under the water. This can be similar to pretending to see pictures in cloud formations only with sound.
- Remember, if they hear singing or humming noises it means a Drleck is in the tub. Your child should practice staying calm as to not frighten or distress the creature(s) while they relax with them.
- Allow your child to calmly soak for as long as they are able before assisting them safely out of the tub. Thoroughly dry off your child while being mindful of any slip, trip, and fall hazards.

You may also try listening for Drleck in a pool if your child can safely hold their breath underwater.

Section 7.

Charmyrl (tʃa:rmərl)

Section 7. Charmyrll (tʃɑ:rmərɪ)

Note: These activities are intended to be executed with an adult. Children should not do activities alone.

Personal Space Like A Charmyrll //

Purpose: For a myriad of reasons, children who have experienced trauma may struggle with understanding appropriate personal boundaries causing it to be difficult for them to consider the physical and material space of others. This activity is a fun and interactive visual illustration for further bonding with your child while utilizing relationship building skills to enhance their awareness of respecting and maintaining healthy boundaries.

Suggested Materials:

1. Hula hoops - one for each participant

Preparation:

Choose an activity location that has a sufficient amount of space to accommodate all participants and place the hula hoops on the ground.

Activity:

- Ask your child to step inside of their hula hoop and then hold it around the midsection of their body as you do the same.
- Explain to your child that you're pretending to be Charmyrlls before asking them to share what they recall of the creature's natural discomfort and caution of unknown humans. Be sure to fill in any key information that would be pertinent to the activity.
- Discuss with your child that as you get to know and feel comfortable with a person or Charmyrll that the other person can CHOOSE to let you closer into their space without feeling too nervous.
- Next, set a goal dependent on the comfort and appropriateness level of your child.
- (i.e. Let's get close enough to high five, shake hands, give a quick hug, etc.)
- Share that each of you must tell the other person something about yourself and then ask a corresponding question. (i.e. My favorite food is pizza. What's your favorite food? I don't like country music. Do you dislike a type of music?) Each time someone shares/asks a question they move the hoop closer to their stomach.
- Decide how many times each person must share/ask so that the hoop is close enough to the stomach to perform your goal.

- Finally, tell your child that permission must be given before the goal can be performed. (i.e. May I give you a high five? May I give you a hug?)

Note: This activity can be done with personal items too. For example, you may put a hoop around your phone or wallet. Then teach your child that even your personal belongings deserve space and even permission before they can be accessed.

Charmyrll Safeguards //

Purpose: Many children, particularly those with ADHD or low self-esteem, have a difficult time understanding the social consequences of oversharing with peers and/or the dangers of sharing too much personal information with people they may barely know. During this activity you will have a fun opportunity to bond with your child while teaching them to identify what constitutes personal information and helping them explore the appropriate amounts of information that should be shared with various people at differing relationship levels.

Suggested Materials:

1. Paper
2. Markers
3. A prepared story about a fictitious person's life - sample included below

Preparation:

You're going to help your child make a stop sign on a piece of paper for them to use later in the activity. While making the sign, discuss the differences between a stranger, acquaintance, good friend, and close family member with your child. Be sure to give plenty examples for each. Remind your child that Charmyrlls need people to respect their privacy and safe spaces just the same as their personal space. If someone were to push the limits of a relationship with a Charmyrll, they would frighten the creature to the point that it would lose control of its body temperature. Connect that we can also make people feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, scared, etc when we share too much information. Let your child know that a person could even use too much information to hurt others. Thus, just like a Charmyrll uses good boundaries to stay safe, we should also practice those boundaries. Explain that you are going to be telling a story in a moment about a pretend person. Tell your children that they are going to take turns playing the role of a stranger, an acquaintance, a good friend, and then a close family member. When the child thinks the story shares too much information for their character to know, they need to hold up their sign and yell "Stop!"

Activity:

- Inform your child of which role they are pretending to play - stranger, acquaintance, good friend, or close family member.
- Remind your child that he/she is to yell, "STOP," when they learn more information than their character needs to know about.
- Tell a story about a fictitious character who is introducing themselves to your children.
- (We have provided a sample story for you. You can use it multiple times for this exercise or you can create your own. Just be sure that your introduction begins with general facts and continuously gets more personal.)
- "Well, hello there! My name is Arnold Fawkes. I'm from a place called Clover Island. Have you ever heard of it before? It is warm on Clover Island in the springtime. This is my favorite type of weather, mostly because the sky is usually a beautiful blue on the Island in the spring. I also like to play soccer with other kids my age. We have a very popular soccer team on Clover Island. Last year I was sad that I couldn't play on the soccer team because I was failing my math class at Cottontail Elementary School. My friends, Orion and Lavender, who are 8 years old like me, were really upset that I couldn't play on the team. I didn't want to disappoint my friends so I worked on homework everyday when I got home at 185 South Burrow Lane. I even did homework during my birthday on March 23rd. I still had time to go to the park and play everyday because Acorn Park is only a block from my house. They have the best soccer fields and swing set so I still go there every day from 4-5pm and play before dinner. Oh, look at the time! I need to get going home. I'm sorry I couldn't talk more. My phone number is 609-555-0186 if you want to call me so we can chat more. Can I give you a hug before I go?"
- Discuss the situation when your child stops you or when you make it to the end of the story.
- "Why did you stop me?" "What could I have said instead?" "What would you have done?"
- Allow your child to choose the role that they would like to play next and repeat the story process.

Note: This activity can easily be altered for teenagers. You may want to offer that your fictitious character is talking to them online in a chat room or on social media.

Cloud Messages //

Purpose: Children who have been through traumatic situations many times were lost out on opportunities to simply be a child as they may have had to play the role of “safe adult.” It is beneficial and healthy to allow them times to simply play and reclaim some of their childhood. Many children enjoy looking at clouds and seeing if they can point out animals from the shapes in the sky. This activity will take this common childhood activity and add a purpose to it. This is a great opportunity for you to model play for your child as they may not be completely sure how to play or it might be unfamiliar to them. As with all of our activities, go into this with low expectations. Frustration in an activity often comes into play when we, the caregiver, have our expectations unmet. It is a major success if you are able to demonstrate pretend play to your child. Even if your child doesn't join in the play, it is a major victory for them to see that it is healthy for even adults to play.

Suggested Materials:

1. Several sheets of blank paper
2. Crayons, markers, paint
(Whatever you, the caregiver, are comfortable with for this activity)
3. **Optional:** Popsicle sticks, glue, and tape

Preparation:

Read the description of the Charmyrll prior to this activity with your child. Set up an area to be able to create posters prior to asking your child to participate.

Activity:

- Explain to your child that you're going to pretend that a Charmyrll around your home needs help. The Charmyrll has seen a creature that is NOT dangerous to people but might hurt other magical creatures.
- Thus, the Charmyrll needs you to make “Watch Out” posters for the creatures around your home.
- Next, you and your child need to look at the clouds (either out the window or go outside) and see what images you can make out of the shapes - you're looking for some sort of animal or monster that would be dangerous to magical creatures. This could be a real animal or imaginary. It might be one of the creatures from our Guide Book or it might be a new discovery.
- Go to your station with the poster-making supplies.
- Write “Watch Out” at the top or bottom each piece of paper you're turning into a sign.

- Next you and your child are going to work on drawing the dangerous creature on your own pieces of paper.
- Once the drawings are completed, take time to explain your drawings to each other.
- (i.e. Why did you use red? What do you think is the scariest part of your creature?)

Optional: Hang the posters somewhere to pretend that you're warning the other creatures around your home. You may also want to glue large popsicle sticks to the back side of your drawings so that the signs can be stuck in the dirt around your home to warn creatures that live outdoors.

Section 8.

Moat (məʊt)

Section 8. Moat (məʊt)

Note: These activities are intended to be executed with an adult.
Children should not do activities alone.

No Hoarding - No Gorging //

Purpose: Children who have come from backgrounds of malnourishment can be consciously or subconsciously concerned about food stores depleting in their home. This activity will allow you to use our story of the pretend creature, the Moat, to foster an atmosphere where you can have a healthy conversation about the fear of going hungry.

If your child has issues with food, it is important that you know how powerful this issue can be. While it is the intent of this activity to help your child with this issue, it is best to set the bar low for accomplishment.

Suggested Materials:

1. A variety of snacks that are usually in your home
2. 2 pieces of paper
3. Marker

Activity:

- Moats never know when they will have food again and their minds are constantly telling them that they are going to go hungry. Explain to your child that sometimes people who haven't had enough food for a long time start to think like a Moat. They can't walk through walls to get into a pantry. However, they might sneak food or hide it in their bedroom. They also might eat so much food at a meal that their tummy hurts but they still keep eating. Tell your child that you're going to do an activity to see if either of you is thinking like a Moat.
- Take your child to a place in your home where your child has access to snacks.
- (In our home the bottom two shelves in the pantry are ALWAYS stocked with snacks for kids to help themselves to.)
- Talk about the food in the snack area:
- How much food is there?
- What happens when you get low on food?
- What is your favorite snack? Why?
- Do you think a Moat would eat all the snacks?
- If a Moat ate all the snacks, what would the family do?
- (Make sure your child knows the food would be replaced.)

- Each of you pick one of your favorite snacks and take it to a counter or table.
- At the table have two pieces of paper and a marker. Each of you should draw a large circle on your piece of paper. Also write your name on your paper.
- Explain to your child that you are going to see if either one of you is thinking like a Moat - worrying about food too much.
- Declare that each of you may eat half of the snack - the other half will be placed on your piece of paper and inside the circle.
- Tell your child that you both are going to leave the snack for a set amount of time.
- (You must know your child at this point. Leaving food may really stress some children with food issues. It could be leaving the snack for five minutes is a struggle for some while leaving it for half the day is good enough for another.)
- After the allotted time has passed, come back together to your circles.
- While eating the other half of your snack you might talk about these questions:
 - Did you think someone was going to take your snack?
 - If someone did take your snack and you were hungry, what would happen?
 - If someone took your snack, would there still be food in the house?
 - What would a Moat think if someone took its snack?
- Depending on your child and their issues, you might try the activity again to see if you can increase the amount of time. You might keep the time limit low and repeat the activity several times (not in the same day of course) so your child has a set time to focus and think directly about the fact that there is always food in your home.

Note: Transfiguring Adoption believes that any eating or food disorder can be quite serious. The activity and playful character is not in any way being suggested as use for treatment or replacement for consulting professional help. It is the intent for this creature to give a caregiver a playful way to bond and begin a healthy dialogue about this unhealthy issue.

Safety Stash //

Purpose: Many children who have come from backgrounds of malnourishment have a fear of going hungry. This can be a powerful fear and may cause a child to hoard food - especially in their bedroom. As a foster or adoptive parent, it is common to want to stop this behavior for various reasons, including the fact that rotting food is not quite conducive for a healthy and sanitary living environment.

During our story of the Moat this creature constantly worries about getting its next meal. A child also can worry (possibly subconsciously) about their next meal. This activity is designed to open up conversations about this worry as well as give your child a reason to lessen their worry about this topic.

Suggested Materials:

- 1.Small tupperware container with an airtight seal
- 2.An assortment of food items that are in snack-size packaging and will not spoil(i.e. crackers, raisins, fruit snacks, etc. - choose foods your child likes)
- 3.Items to decorate your plastic container
(i.e. stickers, sharpies, glue, pipe cleaners, colored paper, etc.)

Preparation:

Set up all the craft materials and plastic container before involving your child in a space both you and your child can work in together.

Talk to your child about the need for a Moat to constantly worry about eating all the time.

Ask your child how they think that must feel.

Ask your child how they would help a Moat not be so worried.

Explain to your child that you don't wish for anyone to be as nervous as a Moat about food in your house. Thus, you are going to make a special container with a stash of food that they can get into anytime they want during the day or night.

Optional: You may want to add the only stipulation is that the container be kept closed before and after getting food and that all wrappers be thrown away properly.

We also added that our children needed to alert us when the container needed refilling so we, the parents, could fill it again.

At the beginning you may find that the food is cleaned out quickly. However, as the weeks progress the "novelty" of the container will wear off and you will be asked to fill it less and less often.

Activity:

- Decorate the container with your child with the materials that you chose to be made available. This CAN be a good time to bond and talk about their likes and dislikes. It can also be a good time to compliment something that your child is doing well and help build self-esteem.

- Let your child choose from the snacks you made available, which ones will go into the container.
- You may have wanted to decide ahead of time how many snacks they are allowed to put into the container at a time.
- Close the lid to the container and reiterate that you do NOT want anyone to worry about food in your home. Quiz your child to make sure they understand WHEN they can get into the container, WHAT they should be sure to do with the lid, WHERE wrappers go, and WHO they seek out when they need more food in the container.
- Finally, you are going to let your child choose where the container is kept in their room. You have final say on the location but let them have as much power as possible to choose the location.

Section 9.

Doat (dəʊt)

Section 9. Doat (dəʊt)

Note: These activities are intended to be executed with an adult. Children should not do activities alone.

Blindfolded Like A Doat //

Purpose: This activity will allow you to present new and different foods to your child in a playful manner as opposed to the manner many of us grew up with - simply setting it on their plate and demanding that we try three bites. As with all of our activities, the main goal is to have fun and connect with your child.

Note: If your child has issues with food, it is important that you know how powerful this issue can be. While it is the intent of this activity to help your child with this issue, it is best to set the bar low for accomplishment.

Suggested Materials:

1. Small journal or piece of paper - One per participant
2. Pencil or markers - One per participant
3. Blindfold - One per participant
4. Plate with identical types and quantities of food for each participant.

Preparation:

Place a small journal or notepad next to your child's plate with a pencil.

In the absence of your child prepare their dinner plate with enough of one kind of food to give them a few mouthfuls.

Activity:

- Before your child enters the dining room, explain that you're going to play a game and pretend to be a blindfolded Doat.
- Explain that after you blindfold your child and seat them at the table, they will get to eat the food on the plate; it might be something they have eaten before or something new.
- Tell your child that part of the game is to guess the food they are eating.
- Lastly tell your child that when they are done tasting the food, they will get to write about it in their food journal.
- If your child cannot write well, they should draw a picture of the food and rate it using various smiley faces or other emoji-type faces.
- You may also choose to pre-write the meal at the top of one of the journal pages.
- As your child tries the food, ask them questions. for example:

- Does it taste salty?
- Do you think it's chocolate?
- Is it meat or a vegetable?
- Once your child has tasted the food let them remove their blindfold and journal about the food.
- Let your child know that your family can use the journal so you know what foods to make in the future.

The Doat Food Prep Activity //

Purpose: This activity will allow you and your child to explore a food that they might not be fond of due to texture or taste. Sometimes putting a child in control of preparing a food will give them the courage and motivation to try the food item. The main goal of this activity though should simply be for you and your child to spend time together and create a memorable moment.

Set your expectations low for this game. If you go into the game expecting your child to suddenly conquer their dislike of a food item, it will more than likely fail. Simply attempt this activity again hoping that it will create a moment for you and your child to laugh and smile together.

Suggested Materials:

1. Food item that your child is not fond of which is prepared and ready to eat
2. Edible items (at least three) which could be added to the initial food item (i.e. salt, chocolate syrup, peanut butter, cane sugar, ketchup, soy sauce, BBQ sauce, or whatever you might feel would be good to try)
3. Bowls - one for each edible item
4. Silverware and plate - depending on your initial food item
5. Journal or piece of paper
6. Colored pencils or emoji stickers

Note: This activity assumes that the safe adults preparing it will assure the necessary steps to make it safe for children at their age level and abilities - no scalding hot foods that burn skin or items that will choke a young child.

Preparation:

After reading through the directions, make sure that your setup is completed before having your child join you for this activity.

1. Explain to your child that you are both going to pretend that you're in the C.O.P.A.D.H. (see information on the Doat for more info.) and you are going to try to make cooked spinach (or whatever item you have chosen) actually taste good so that a Doat might try it.

2. Inform your child that they need to choose an additive item to add to the spinach and let your child know that you, the caregiver, the new concoction. Your child then needs to mark results on the piece of paper using a sad face for something that a Doat wouldn't eat, a "meh" face for something that is just okay, and a smiley face for something that is delicious.
- **Note: It will be important for your child to have the power to make the food choices and to record the answers. During the tasting step you will offer your child to join you with tasting but will NOT push the issue if they do not want to taste the food.**
3. Let your child choose the first item to pair with the spinach (or whatever your item may be).
4. Mix the two items together.
5. Before you, the caregiver, take a sample bite, ask your child if they would like to try as well.
6. If your child will sample a food, be sure to offer A LOT of verbal praise. You might even want to bring up the topic throughout the day such as later at the dinner table or at bedtime - "I am so proud of you for trying that food today. You are so amazing."
7. The caregiver will try a bit being sure to keep your negative body language under control. If you do not like something, you are simply going to finish and swallow the bite and state something such as, "I don't think a Doat would like this. Do you know why?"
8. If an item tastes delicious you may simply ask your child one last time if they would like to sample it.
9. This step is a GREAT opportunity for you to be silly by over-exaggerating the positives. After all, the biggest goal is for you and your child to spend time together, bond and create silly moments that you will talk about in the future.
10. After sampling is complete, talk about the texture and taste with your child.
11. If your child also sampled the food, avoid simply reporting how you felt about the food and ask questions such as, "Did you notice that the salt made it gritty?" or "I think the chocolate made it taste sweet but do you think it tasted better?"
12. Next your child will need to make the final decision on how to grade the food with an emoji.
13. Go back to Step #5 to repeat the process with a new pairing.

The Un-Doat Game //

Purpose: This activity will introduce your child to several textures and sensory experiences while giving the opportunity to taste new foods. The messy nature of this activity can also create fun and laughter to give you and your child fun memories to talk about in the future.

It is worth noting how powerful food issues can be among adults and children. Be sure to have your expectations low for this activity so that YOU'RE not disappointed. If your child attempts to eat some of the food items, that's great. There should be lots of verbal praise. If your child just doesn't want to go that far, no big deal. You're all being silly and spending time together and that's a BIG win as well.

Suggested Materials:

1. Blindfolds (enough for each child/participant to have one)
2. A set of index cards
3. A marker
4. Set of bowls for each participant - each bowl will hold a single food item
5. At least four unquantifiable foods which are prepared, ready to be eaten and handled by bare hands (i.e. rice, applesauce, peanut butter, cream corn, chocolate syrup)

Note: This activity assumes that the safe adults preparing it will assure the necessary steps to make it safe for children at their age level and abilities - no scalding hot foods that burn hands or items that will choke a young child.

Preparation:

1. Setup the activity before asking your child to participate.
2. This activity can be messy. You may want to lay down newspapers or garbage bags on the floor to catch messes. You will more than likely want your child to wear older clothes or protect their clothing with an apron.
3. Take your foods which are ready to be eaten and each individual food in a bowl. Each participant should have their own set of bowls with each food item.
4. Make a set of index cards which have one of the food items written on a card.
5. Call your child(ren) to come over to begin the activity.
6. Let your child sit down at the activity space and see all the food items BUT do not let them touch them.

7. Explain that at the beginning of the activity you are going to blindfold them.
8. After blindfolding is complete, you will mix up the bowls and have them within arms reach of your child.
9. Next you, the caregiver, are going to draw a random index card and read outloud the food item on the card.
10. Your child(ren) then need to feels through the bowls to find the food that you called out.
11. Finding the correct food earns a participant 100 points.
12. If your child will try the food, they earn 500 points.
13. After your child finishes a round, remove the blindfold and check in with them.
14. How did things feel? How did things taste? Throw in a good dose of verbal praise no matter the outcome and find reasons to smile together.
15. Get your child's permission to play another round and start again at Step #7.

Section 10.

Golem (ga:lʌm)

Section 10. Golem (ga:lAm)

Note: These activities are intended to be executed with an adult. Children should not do activities alone.

Band-aids To The Rescue //

Purpose: The saddest thing about a Golem is that they will never feel guilty about hurting another person/creature and they will never apologize. Unfortunately, many children from traumatic backgrounds have had to be stuck in a survival mode that leaves only time and energy to look out for themselves. This activity is specifically to help your child practice the art of tending to another person's hurts and hurt feelings. It is important to note that you, the caregiver, will need to lead and model this activity because your child may not have had a prior adult model sympathy or empathy. The secondary effect of this activity will be showing your child that YOU really do care about their hurts and help you to bond.

Suggested Materials:

1. Box of band-aids

(Different colors, patterns, cartoon characters on the band-aids make this activity more appealing but standard band-aids work as well.)

Preparation:

- Prior to the activity you and your child should have gone through our Magical Creature Guide Book section about Golems.
- Have your band-aid boxes out and ready for the activity.

Activity:

- Explain to your child that the saddest and meanest part of a Golem is the fact that they will never feel bad for hurting someone else.
- Have a quick discussion about why it's important to care about other people's hurts or to apologize when you accidentally hurt someone.
- Since it's not good to only care about yourself like a Golem, this activity will help us learn to care about others.
- Take turns talking to each other about anywhere on your body (obviously being appropriate) that hurts.
- This doesn't have to simply be physical hurt. Your heart might hurt because of a mean comment someone directed at you. Your stomach/head might hurt because you're worried about not having enough food in the house.
- After each person shares a hurt/worry, the other person should ask if they

can put a band-aid where it hurts (again, using appropriate actions and judgment).

- While placing the band-aid, it would be good to practice validating how the other person feels. (i.e. That must have really felt bad. I can imagine you must feel scared.)
- Make sure your child practices this and let them know that it helps the hurting person to feel good that someone is trying to understand their feelings.

Note: As stated within the activity, we are assuming that you, the caregiver, will be able to use good judgement for making this activity appropriate and safe for all who are participating.

The “I Love You Even If...” Activity //

Purpose: Children from traumatic backgrounds are often coping with insecurities with trust and self-worth. Caregivers will find that it is imperative to verbally (and through actions) let children know they are important and loved. This activity will allow you and your child to explore various situations that your child might find themselves. You and your child will be able to discover how you, the caregiver, will react and to learn that they are still loved.

Suggested Materials:

1. A calm area with as few distractions as possible
Optional: A fidget for your child or maybe a weighted blanket.

Preparation:

- Assure that you and your child have read about the Golem creature in our Guide Book section of this book.
- Set up an area that is as calm and as free from distractions as possible.
- This can be a great activity to do as a part of bedtime ritual. Allowing your child to have a fidget or put a weighted blanket on their lap is a great way to help them to focus during this activity.

Activity:

- Remind your child that most Golems are mischievous and like to play practical jokes. While they might find these jokes humorous, these actions tend to hurt other people.
- Explain to your child that sometimes our actions can hurt other people emotionally or physically. It is important to be vulnerable and let your child know that ALL people cause hurts, even you.

- Next you are going to let your child know that even though their actions might hurt you, you're always going to love them.
- This is a good opportunity to ask your child what "love" means.
- (Focus on the fact that "love" is being committed to a person no matter what; it's not simply hugs and kisses.)
- Now you are going to begin telling fictitious scenarios of a way your child might hurt you or disappoint you with their actions in the form of "What would I do if..." questions.
- Begin with a light scenario and work your way toward bigger offenses.
- (i.e. What would I do if you lied about drawing on the walls? What would I do if you cheated on your spelling test? What would I do if you stole a monkey from the zoo?)
- End EACH scenario by asking:
- "Would I still love you?"
- "How would you still know I loved you?"

(When first doing this activity a child may state that you really would not love them in the situation. It is important for you to reiterate, "Yes, I would still love you." You might also have to share examples of how your actions will show you still love them. After doing this activity several times, your child will start to pick up on the fact that the answers are always stable and the same.)

Note: Some children from traumatic backgrounds have been disappointed by several adults. Whether you perform this activity or not, caregivers shouldn't be surprised if a child puts them to the test to see if you REALLY WILL love them through tough situations. The magic comes along after you "say" that you will love them and then "show" your child you love them through a tough situation.

Help! Get Me Away From The Golem //

Purpose: Often children from traumatic backgrounds have trouble trusting other people due to all the circumstances and events in their life. This activity will give your family a silly activity to foremost bond over and secondly build trust in each other.

Suggested Materials:

1. Objects that can be scattered around on the ground and will not injure someone if they fall on top of or against it (i.e. stuffed animals, pool noodles, bounce house balls, etc.)
2. Blindfold

Preparation: In a large and safe area scatter your objects on the ground so that they form a maze or obstacle course. In other words a person should not be able to simply walk from one area of the room or space to the other without having to dodge objects on the floor several times. Be sure you and your child have read the Golem section of the Magical Creatures Guide Book.

Activity:

- Explain to your child that Golems are usually playing practical jokes so much that no one feels like they can really trust them.
- Talk to your child about the importance of being able to trust people and being able to trust the people you live with.
- Let your child know that you're going to play a game which will help build trust between the two of you.
- You're going to pretend the objects on the floor are traps set by the Golem.
- For the first time you, the caregiver, are going to go to one side of the playing space and let your child know that they will have to talk you through the traps to get where they are standing, which is on the opposite side of the playing space.
- You will now put on the blindfold and let your child know when you are ready to be talked through the traps.
- If your child walks you into a trap, have some fun. Over exaggerate falling down or getting caught in a trap. Create a moment for both of you to laugh.
- If your child can talk you through the playing space successfully, over exaggerate a celebration.
- When it is your child's turn to walk through the traps, be a good judge of whether putting the blindfold on might be asking them to trust you too much at the moment. You might simply walk them through without the blindfold.
- You can still have all the same over exaggerated fun.

Section 11.

Walluping Wallop (wa:lʌpi:ng wa:lʌp)

Section 11. Walluping Wallop (wa:lɒpi:ng wa:lɒp)

Note: These activities are intended to be executed with an adult. Children should not do activities alone.

Talk Like a Wallop //

Purpose: Blowing air through a straw is a calming sensory activity. Professionals or other books suggest having your child take a straw and blow a light item such as a cotton ball across a table. To add a bit more fun and bonding to this concept, you need to explain to your child that you are going to practice talking like a Wallop in case you should ever meet one in your home. After your initial time of doing this activity, this could be a useful way to redirect a child who is dysregulated. (i.e. Hey John. We both need to calm down. Let's practice talking like a Wallop for one minute and see if we're ready to go back to playing.)

Suggested Materials:

1. Glass or cup halfway filled with water
2. One for each participant
3. Straw (bigger circumference work best) - one for each participant

Optional: Food coloring, Cheerios, or Goldfish crackers

Preparation:

You will need to have read through the description of the Walluping Wallop with your child and have discussed the creature prior to this activity. Get a glass for each participant and fill it/them halfway full of water. (If you want to get more creative, you may color the water or put Cheerios or Goldfish crackers in the water. This merely makes the bubbling water a bit more interesting to watch. Kids have fun making the Cheerios go all over the place.)

Activity:

- Let your child know that you are going to be trying to communicate with Walluping Wallops that might be living in the home. This will be done by talking and blowing air through the straw into the glass of water.
- Next, explain that you must test the water to see if it is working properly.
- Say the following phrase through the straw while blowing bubbles: "Hello to all the Walluping Wallops that can hear my voice."
- You really want your child to blow good bubbles through the straw. If you're not seeing bubbles created, then tell your child that the water doesn't seem to be working and try again. The test naturally worked if your child is making many bubbles in the glass.

- Lastly, have your child come up with something to tell the Wallops.
- Continue to practice Wallop language for a minute or two. Then assess if your child has been able to calm themselves.
- You may determine that you need to continue this activity for a few more minutes.

Listening to Wallop Noises //

Purpose: Sleeping in a new house or even a hotel room can be a challenge for anyone. One issue is that there are so many new and subtle noises. Sometimes it can be easy for an imagination to run wild and think there are prowlers in the home or maybe folks that would cause more abuse. This activity is intended for you to take a little time with your child before bed and playfully listen to the noises around the home at night.

Preparation:

Assure you have read the Walluping Wallop section of the Magical Creatures Guide book with your child.

This activity is best performed in your child's bedroom since that is naturally where they will be sleeping and hearing noises that may bother them.

If it is not appropriate for you to perform this activity in your child's room or your child doesn't feel safe, you may use any location in your home where they feel safe.

Activity:

- Explain to your child that Wallops tend to bump into things at night and make noises. You both are going to listen to noises and see if you can guess what the noises are. If you can't figure out where a noise came from, it might be a Wallop.
- Next, explain that you are both going to close your eyes and keep the lights on as you listen to the noises around you.
- It is imperative that your child feel safe during this activity. You might need to ask them if they would feel better if you stood by the doorway or sat beside their bed. You may need to explain that the lights will stay on during this whole activity and the bedroom door will remain open. Since they will have their eyes closed, it might be unnerving to feel like they are trapped in their bedroom.
- Quietly listen for a bit to the noises.
- Take turns explaining noises you hear and then together identifying the noise. (i.e. Do you hear the air blowing noise? It's the air coming out of the a/c vent.

- Do you hear that tapping noise? (It's the wind tapping a tree limb against the side of the house.) If you are unable to identify a noise, you can pretend that a Wallop is doing something to make the noise. This is good because it means the Wallops are awake and healthy. If they visit you in the middle of the night, it will actually help you to sleep and have happier dreams.

(As a therapist has pointed out, some foster/adoptive children may have trouble distinguishing fantasy from reality. You may not want to add this story to the activity if it will be a hindrance for your child.)



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ACTIVITIES TO ACTIVATE HEALING AND BONDING WITH YOUR CHILD

This guide contains the powerful activities that accompany the pretend creatures introduced in our book, “A Guide to Magical Creatures Around Your Home.” It is common for children from traumatic backgrounds (including foster and adoptive children) to have been asked to give up pretend, play, and childhood in order to survive in an adult world. While children might be removed from the cause of chronic trauma, the concept of play will not come naturally for them. Employing the playful ideas in this book empowers caregivers to be able to help children reclaim the childhood they had to leave behind while helping them to more successfully conquer trauma-caused issues in relationships.

WHAT PROFESSIONALS ARE SAYING...

“For many people who have been around children for any length of time, they will tell you that children best communicate through play. Oftentimes the children that enter our lives through foster care and adoption have experienced trauma that they are unsure how to manage. This book is a great way to help the children in our community feel safe in their new home while also giving them the ability to create great memories with their caregivers. Every child should experience having a magical childhood and this book is a great resource to help ensure that each child whom comes through your doors will leave with joy and excitement from the memories created.”

— Pattie Moore, RMFTI
Marriage & Family Therapist