

Activities For Children To Do With Maps

Create Your Own Treasure Hunt:

Suggested for children Grades PreK-3

Invite your child to bury an imaginary treasure, and together make a simple map and provide clues to its location.

What you need: Paper, Pencil and small “treasure” to bury. (optional).

Decide on a secret location in which to “bury” your treasure. If possible, you may wish to actually hide a small prize in that location. Create a treasure map that shows how to travel from a starting point (such as the front door) to the buried treasure. This map can provide clues to the treasure’s location such as “Go 5 steps towards the back yard” or “Turn left at the kitchen table.” Can someone use the map to find the treasure? The map could be given to a parent, a sibling or a friend. (Taken from Scholastic: www.scholastic.com)

After School Activity:

Suggested for children Grades 1-3

Take a sheet of large paper that the children can draw treasure maps on. Spread the sheets out on the table and let them use markers, paints, crayons, etc. to create their maps. Then take turns following each other’s maps. This activity allows them to find their imaginary treasures and allows children to take turns being the leader. (Taken from Family Fun: www.familyfun.com)

Fun Ways to Keep Your Family Fit & Healthy:

Suggested for children Grades PreK-3

1. Go for a walk, but make it a journey, especially for little ones. Say you want to walk to the park: Make a map and include several points in between – stop sign, bridge, playground. The kids see you are making progress and learn at the same time.
2. When the whole family is home, take a walk around the neighborhood. Stop and chat with friends, play a game called “I SEE” (take turns saying what you see as you move along – you begin to get creative and look for new things after you’ve passed the same spot 100 times!) and just enjoy being together as a family. How often is the family out of the house, exercising together, breathing fresh air and NOT in front of the TV? (Taken from Family Fun: www.familyfun.com)

Create a Postcard Journal:

Suggested for children Grades K-12

Help kids remember a special trip or summer vacation activities in their own words. Buy postcards of the places you go and have them write on the backside anything they wish to remember. At the end of the trip punch a hole in the corner of the postcards and put them on a ring so they have special memories of their vacation. To make this activity appropriate for older students, consider buying a travel journal and use the postcards as inspiration for daily entries. Or use the postcards to create a scrapbook of the trip. (Taken from North Dakota Pathways Newsletter: www.ndpti.com)

In the Right Direction:

Suggested for children Grades 2-5

In order to talk and learn about places, and to locate themselves and others in terms of place, children need to understand and be able to name geographic directions.

What You Need: Maps of your state, a globe or atlas. Paper and crayons or colored pencils.

- Sit with your younger child at a table or on the floor so that you can both see a map of your state. Point out where you live, explain the directional signs on the map: north, south, east and west. Mention several nearby towns or cities that your child has visited or knows about. Point to one of these and say, for example, "Granddad lives here, in Memphis. That's north of our town." Have your child use her finger to trace the line from your location to that place. Continue by pointing out places that are south, east and west of your location. When your child catches on to directions, ask her to point to places that are north, south, east and west of where she lives.
- For your older child, make the map activity into a game. When you have made sure that she understands directions, pick a place on the map and give clues about its location, for example, "I'm looking at a city that is west of St. Louis and east of Kansas City." (You can also name rivers, lakes, mountains or other geographic features that can be seen on the map.) When your child gets the right answer, have her choose a place and give directional clues for you to use to find it.
- Help to make directional words a part of your child's vocabulary by using them yourself in daily conversation. Rather than saying, "We're turning right at the next corner," say, "We're turning east at the next corner." Encourage her to use the words as well.
- Give your child blank paper and crayons or colored pencils and ask her to draw a map of your neighborhood showing important buildings and landmarks (churches, schools, malls, statues, rivers, hills and so on). Remind her to include an indicator of direction on the map. After she's finished, talk with her about what the map shows and have her give specific descriptions about the locations of various places on it. (Taken from *Helping Your Child Learn History*, US Department of Education)

On-line Activities and websites to further learning:

- www.kids.ct.gov
All sorts of Connecticut related activities including; puzzles and games, state symbols, history, etc.
- www.mapquest.com or www.mapblast.com
Need a map? These are a good resource. Whether you are simulating a trip to another country, a vacation to Canada, or a local excursion, these websites have the map for you. They also create driving directions between points and can help you locate all kinds of points of interest. Links to regional weather and news will help students in researching a specific city and its climate.
- www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/atlas
A great resource for printable maps and activities.
- www.letterboxing.org/kids
"Letterboxing Kids!" is a great place to learn how to go on a real-life treasure hunt with your friends and family.

Suggested grade levels provide a range for the activities, feel free to expand or simplify activities as needed. Many of these activities relate to Content Standard 12: Human and Environmental Interaction from the CT Framework K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards. *Students will use geographic tools and technology to explain the interactions of humans and the larger environment, and the evolving consequences of those interactions.*