

## “ To Infinity and Beyond ” Barbara Pergar, Coordinator The Early Learning Institute—Ohio Valley Learning Center

For our summer programming, we do a different theme each week. One of our favorites from last year was "To Infinity and Beyond" when we explored space. I have listed some of the activities we did:

- Construction of a space ship which all of the learners in our school contributed to in some way. The main components were large appliance boxes. At the end of the week when we had completed the project, each child dressed up in a space helmet (a bike helmet they covered in aluminum foil) and a space suit (an old Halloween costume from our dress-up area) and had his/her picture taken in our space craft.
- We bought a blow-up solar system (Oriental Trader) and hung it in our lobby. Everyday we laid down and looked up to our universe and talked about the planets and sun.
- We have a hand-crank solar system which was available for all of the children to explore.
- We have a water rocket that we had a lot of fun launching outside.

We made many different kinds of rocket models. A really fun one was the ones we made using Polident, water, plastic film containers with tight lids, and space stickers. The learners decorated the containers with the stickers. The staff put the Polident & water in the container and the lid on. The learners shook the containers, put them on the ground and watched them launch.

Studying space is great fun, because there are so many aspects to explore. I hope this helps someone else to get started with some wonderful projects.

### Create a Newsletter that will Inform and Involve Parents

1. Keep your newsletter brief, less than 3 pages.
2. Include a calendar of important events, closings, celebrations.
3. If you serve lunch or snacks, include a menu.
4. Use the front page for policy reminders or important announcements.
5. Encourage input from both staff and families.
6. Include children's artwork.
7. Highlight milestones and accomplishments of children and staff.
8. Be sure to welcome newcomers (staff and families).
9. Invite parents to write a feature, or post a newsworthy item...this promotes interest and involvement.
10. Newsletters are great marketing tools. Share them with prospective families, local agencies and businesses.

Joni Levine...www.childcarelounge.com

### How to Build the Greatest Sand Box Ever!

Mary Glover,  
Family Child Care Provider  
Jeannette, PA

In all my 25 years of family day-care the number one best idea I had was to make this sandbox (actually my husband made it). It is the best thing we ever did for the kids. Just a thought, you might consider asking some of your parents to take on this project too!

Use two- 12 foot long 6x6 timbers and two- 8 foot long 6x6 timbers. Lay them out and level to make a 12 x 9 foot rectangle. Cut re-bar to about 12 inch lengths and drill holes into timbers every few feet. Hammer re-bar into holes and into ground to hold in place. Lay garden fabric down in sandbox first, then fill with builders sand. Put a 9 x 12

screen house over and staple gun the edges (all around) to the timbers, leaving open from zipper to one corner. The screen house keeps out the critters and provides some shade. It also keeps the kids from taking the sand out. Add some sand toys, shovels and buckets, trucks and a sand-water table. The fun lasts for hours! So far I've had to buy a new screen house ever year since it gets dry rotted from the sun but the cost is well worth the fun!

