



Ashley's Angel Gram

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Encouraging Your Child's Sense of Humor



Children, the Best Medicine

Children, on average, laugh 200 times per day. Adults laugh 15 to 18 times a day. Having a child gives you the chance to make up a pretty big humor deficit!

A sense of humor can brighten family life. You can blow raspberries on a baby's belly, put on a silly hat and chase a 3-year-old, or pretend to fall into a pile of leaves to amuse a first-grader.

As kids grow into preteens and teens, you can share puns and jokes as their sense of what's funny grows more sophisticated.

Laughing together is a way to connect, and a good sense of humor also can make kids smarter, healthier, and better able to cope with challenges.

We tend to think of humor as part of our genetic makeup, like blue eyes or big feet. But a sense of humor actually is a learned quality that can be developed in kids, not something they're born with.

Kids with a well-developed sense of humor are happier and more optimistic, have higher self-esteem, and can handle differences (their own and others') well. Kids who can appreciate and share humor are better liked by their peers and more able to handle the adversities of childhood — from moving to a new town, to teasing, to torment by playground bullies.

And a good sense of humor doesn't just help kids emotionally or socially. Research has shown that people who laugh more are healthier — they're less likely to be depressed and may even have an increased resistance to illness or physical problems. They experience less stress; have lower heart rates, pulses, and blood pressure; and have better digestion. Laughter may even help humans better endure pain, and studies have shown that it improves our immune function.

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Announcements

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Humor Basics

Be a humor model. One of the best things you can do to develop your child's sense of humor is to use your own. Make jokes. Tell funny stories. Laugh out loud. Deal lightly with small catastrophes like spilt milk.

Take kids' humor seriously. Encourage your child's attempts at humor, whether it's reading (potentially unfunny) jokes from a book or drawing "funny" pictures of the family dog. Praise your child for trying to be funny and be open to surprise — the first time your child makes you laugh is one of life's great pleasures.

Teach kids that adults are funny — and that they can be too. Make humor a part of your day-to-day interactions with your kids and encourage them to share funny observations or reactions, even when you're around other adults.

Create a humor-rich environment. Surround your kids with funny books — for toddlers and preschoolers these include picture books or nonsense rhymes; older kids will love joke books and comics. Also check out funny TV shows, movies, and websites for all age groups — help your child make good choices and then enjoy them too.

All-Star Fudgy Baseballs

Ingredients:

- 1 cup Carob powder
- 1 cup Water
- 1/4 cup Peanut butter (smooth or crunchy)
- 1/4 cup Honey
- 3/4 cup Wheat germ
- 3/4 cup Rolled oats
- 1/2 cup Unsweetened shredded coconut
- 2 Tablespoon Dry milk powder
- 1/2 teaspoon Grated orange rind (optional)
- 1 teaspoon Cinnamon (optional)

Directions:

1. In a small saucepan, combine the water and carob powder. Bring to a boil over low heat, stirring constantly.
2. Add the peanut butter and honey, continue cooking for about 5 minutes, or until syrup is slightly thickened.
3. In a large bowl, mix together the milk powder, wheat germ, oats, coconut, cinnamon, and orange rind (if being used).
4. Pour about one cup of the syrup over the dry mixture, to make a dough-like consistency.
5. Pinch off pieces of the dough and roll each piece into 2-inch-long tubes. Roll the rest into the shape of balls.