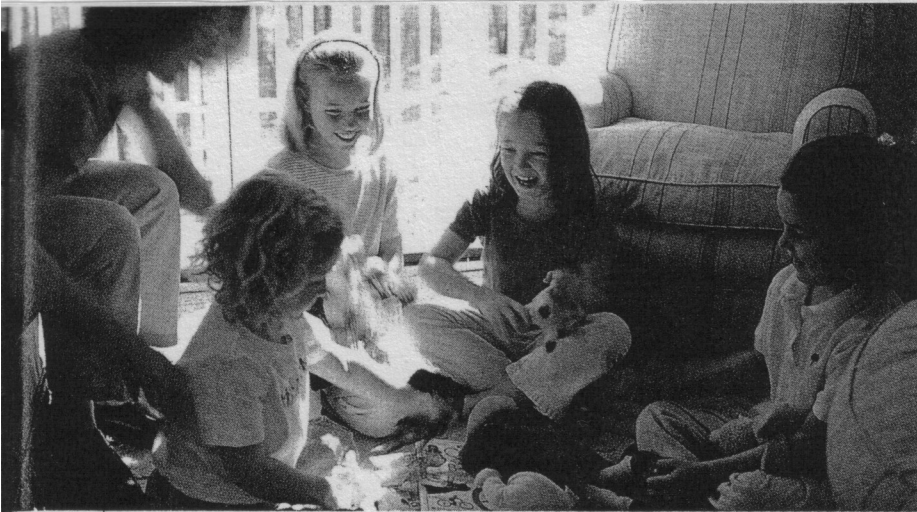


FUN STUFF

CRAFTS & ACTIVITIES



exchange
our cast-
offs for
new toys

How to Host a Swap Party

Hosting a swap party is the easiest—and least expensive—way for a family to restock its video and CD racks, bookshelves, and toy chests. An informal gathering where each family contributes things it no longer wants and comes home with

things they desire, a swap party can be tailored to your needs. How can you organize one? **Involve the kids.** Encourage them to gather their no-longer-used possessions to trade. **Inform guests** that they should only contribute things they truly no longer want. **Keep it fun.** Don't stress over the planning. Serve simple

refreshments and have space for the youngsters to play. **Anticipate no-shows** by having extra swapping material on hand. Stash a few spare contributions in a secret place and add them to the pot if needed. **Consider guests' suggestions** on how to divvy up the loot. Some people like to sit with their stuff in front of them and make individual trades with other guests. Another method is to put everything together and allow each family to take turns choosing.—Lisa Palazzo

Take a Family Hike!

You don't have to travel anywhere special or buy new equipment besides a good pair of sneakers or boots to go hiking. To get little legs (and your own) moving, keep the following in mind:

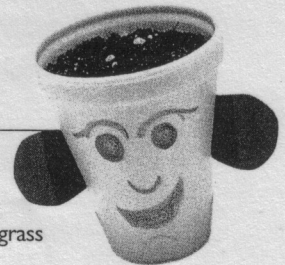
- The shorter the better. Seven-year-olds can usually handle 4 miles round-trip (about 2 to 3 hours) on fairly level ground without flagging, according to the American Hiking Society.
- Avoid an endless march. Play a game along the way such as finding the tree that matches the leaf you spot. Use a guidebook to identify birds and flowers.
- Have a goal. Head to a local landmark, a great view, a picnic, a playground, or even a swim in a lake.
- Don't forget the essentials. Pack bottled water, sunscreen, hats, and portable snacks like granola.



GRASS HAIR

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- white Styrofoam cups
- pens, markers, stickers, and other decorating items
- pencil
- potting soil
- grass or cat grass seeds



- 1** Draw funny faces on the cups using pens and markers. You can also add stickers, glitter, ears, and googly eyes. Be creative with your cup.
- 2** Poke three or four holes in the bottom of each cup with a pencil to allow for water drainage.
- 3** Fill the cups with potting soil. In each one, plant a handful of grass seeds about ¼-inch deep. Water them gently. Set them in a sunny place to grow.
- 4** In about 4 to 7 days, your Styrofoam heads will begin to sprout green hair! Water them a little bit every day, and give them lots of haircuts as the grass grows taller.—Jacqueline Leigh Ross

