

CASA

CONNECTION

County After School Activities

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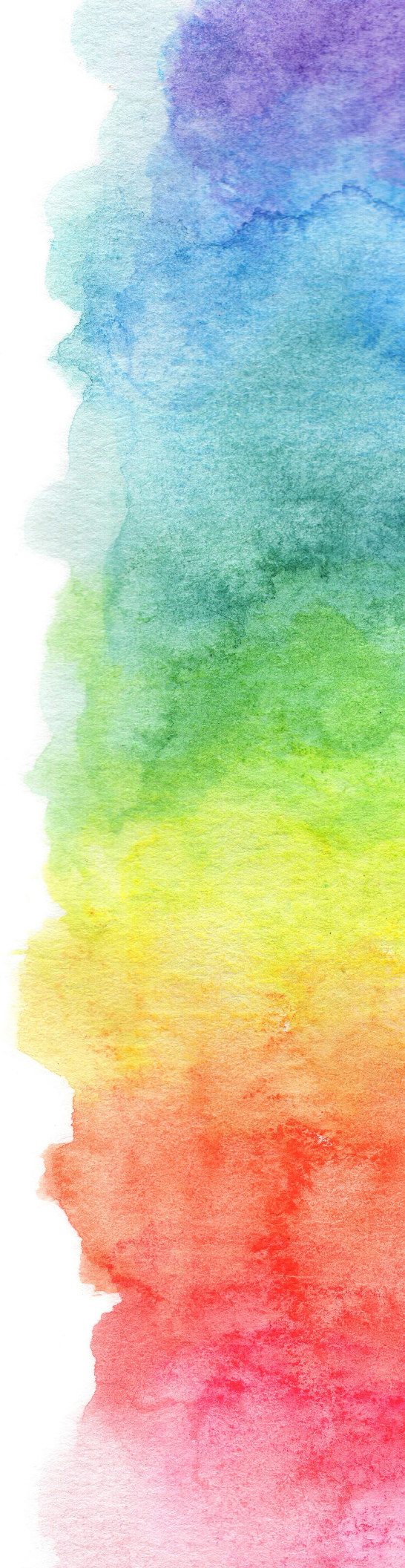
LOUDOUN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS RECREATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES

LOUDOUN.GOV/PRCS

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The Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) is open virtually while its centers are closed and programs canceled in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. "We wanted to make sure that Loudoun's citizens can engage with us during this temporary closure and that we continue creating community through people, parks and programs," said Steve Torpy, PRCS Director.

The department launched a new webpage at loudoun.gov/prcscreatingcommunity featuring video playlists, a rotating video spotlight, virtual tours, how-to guides, children's activities, community resources and more. The page includes links to all of all of the department's Facebook pages, where followers can find engaging posts and videos daily. "We're temporarily closed, but we're here for you digitally as we learn to navigate this new environment. The response to the page has been positive and we feel that it may continue to serve citizens after normal operations resume," said Torpy. County parks remain open for self-directed trail and leisure use while practicing social distancing. Visit loudoun.gov/prcs or email prcs@loudoun.gov for more information.



CASA

County After School Activities

We miss seeing you every day. We hope that everyone is staying healthy and safe. Our staff wants to help you continue to grow and learn. Please enjoy this newsletter.

CASA STAFF



The Power of the Pause: Helping Your Child Learn About Mindfulness in This Stressful Time

An article from Magination Press
Frank Sileo, PhD March 31, 2020 10:00 am

Families all over the world are experiencing increased stress and anxiety. As we all practice social distancing, our daily routines have been disrupted. While this is stressful, it also provides an opportunity to slow down, to pause, and learn new coping strategies. The post below explores the power of the “pause” and provides tips for helping your child learn about mindfulness. Now is a great time to practice mindfulness together.

For children and teenagers, learning how to take a pause requires practice and support from adults, just like learning to play an instrument or ride a bicycle. We want to encourage them to pause so they can catch their breath; be in the moment; experience what they are thinking, feeling, and doing; and regulate their emotions and behavior. Read on for some helpful tips for teaching mindfulness to children and teens.

Be Patient

Children—especially young children—may initially become frustrated when learning to take a pause. Your patience with them will help them feel more confident about relying on taking a pause when things get difficult. Be aware that children may give up easily or make negative statements like “This is boring!” “Why do I have to do this?” or “I feel silly!” If your child says such things, don’t dismiss her. Acknowledge her feelings and tell her that taking pauses might seem strange in the beginning. Focus on the effort made by your child and the positive results that come from engaging in mindful pausing. The more your child practices taking pauses, the more comfort and success she will experience. Have her choose a pause that she enjoys or one that has worked for her before. Your attitude about taking a pause is key to her success, as well. Encourage her to practice, and practice together. After all, pauses are good for everyone!

Acknowledge Differences

Some children and teens may have an easier time pausing than others. The pauses you use should be based on your child’s age and developmental level. Children with certain clinical issues such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or problems with impulse control, emotional regulation, executive functioning, depression, or anxiety may have more difficulty slowing down to pause, even while they have a greater need for taking pauses in their daily lives. Learning to successfully pause and be mindful may greatly impact a child or teen’s overall emotional and behavioral functioning.

Know When to Pause

Anytime is a good time to take a pause! Initially, however, it's a good idea to introduce pauses when your child is calm. He will be much more focused and compliant, and more likely to be successful. If you try to teach a pause when your child is already upset, he may not be able to properly process what you are trying to teach him. Be aware of the emotional and behavioral triggers in your child. For example, if your child struggles with homework, remind him ahead of time about taking a pause or two. If he starts to get upset, help him acknowledge what he's feeling and thinking without judging himself, and then implement a pause. You could say, "I know math frustrates you. Math can be a frustrating subject. Let's take a moment, realize you are frustrated, and then we can take a pause by washing our face." Once your child knows how to pause, it will be easier for him to apply it to more emotional situations. But pauses are not just to be taken when things are not going well for your child—a pause when he's feeling good helps him to appreciate the moment and even remember it better in the future. If you are at a carnival, encourage your child to pause and take in the smell of the cotton candy, the sounds, and the sensations of the rides.

Children Learn from You

Children and teens alike notice how adults around them deal with frustration, anger, disappointment, and difficulties in their lives, as well as how they express positive emotions like joy, love, contentment, and peace. The manner in which you handle difficult emotions and situations will greatly influence how children will react when met with challenges of their own. Share with your child something that is difficult for you. Let her know that you are taking a pause to get in control and to handle the situation better. You might say, "I am feeling stressed about the traffic today. I am going to take a pause and go for a walk before I make dinner." When you are experiencing a positive emotion or situation, also model taking a pause. One example might be to say, "I had such a great day, I am going to put on my comfy pajamas and snuggle with the dog to really enjoy this feeling."

Endless Possibilities

These ideas are only a few that can help your child or teen as he learns to become more mindful. After reading and trying these, foster discussion with your child about other pauses he can try. Encourage him to use his imagination and creativity. Make it fun and playful—try to make your child curious about pauses. Start slowly and gradually build on the concept of regularly taking pauses in life. Being mindful and engaging in mindfulness is a way of being, not just an activity! Note that taking a pause should never replace other treatment modalities, such as psychotherapy or medication if needed. If your child or teen continues to struggle emotionally or behaviorally at home, in school, or in other settings, it may be appropriate to seek a consultation from a licensed psychologist or other licensed mental health professional. As you begin to practice mindfulness with your child or teen, you might want to try yoga or breathing exercises. You can also explore mindfulness books for children available from Magination Press.



BREAKFAST BANANA SPLIT

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 BANANA
- ½ CUP STRAWBERRY
- GREEK YOGURT
- ¼ CUP BLACKBERRIES
- ¼ CUP RASPBERRIES
- ½ CUP GRANOLA
- MINI CHOCOLATE CHIPS
FOR GARNISH

DIRECTIONS

1. Place container of yogurt in the freezer until firm, not frozen solid, just scoop-able.
2. Scoop out two scoops of yogurt and place each scoop in a separate paper muffin liner.
3. Put back in the freezer until ready to use.
4. Split banana in half.
5. Add 2 scoops of frozen yogurt
6. Add berries, granola and chocolate chips
7. Serve immediately.



EASY KOOL-AID SHERBET

step by step directions
on the following page

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 PKG KOOL-AID MIX ANY FLAVOR
- 1 CUP SUGAR
- 3 CUPS MILK

EASY KOOL-AID SHERBET



1. In a large bowl, whisk together all three ingredients until sugar and Kool-Aid mix is dissolved. Pour into a shallow dish, cover and then place in the freezer for about 2 hours, or until mostly set.



2. Place the partially frozen sherbet back in a bowl and mix with an electric mixer until smooth. Refreeze in the covered, shallow container until set (at least a few hours, I freeze mine overnight). Set the sherbet out about 10-15 minutes prior to serving to make it easier to scoop.





Rock Art

*Read ahead for
activity directions!*

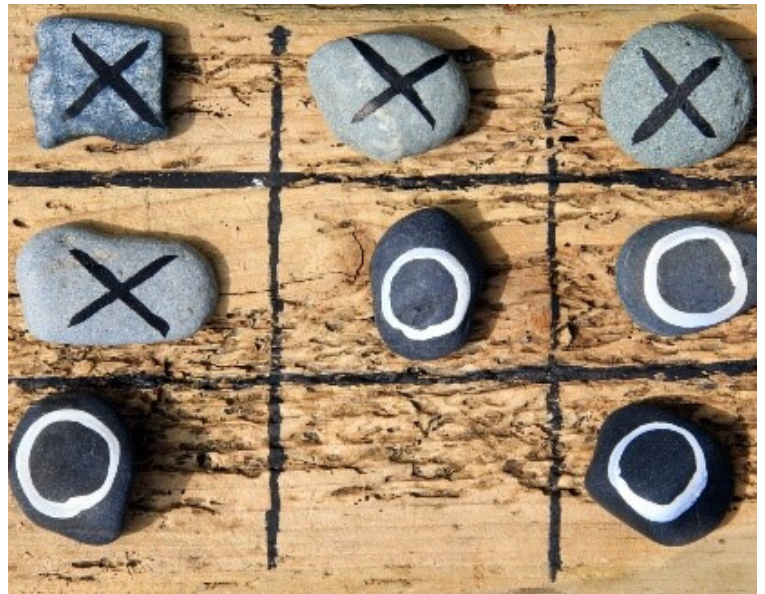
Materials

- Rocks
- Paintbrush
- Acrylic paint or permanent markers
- Clear protectant spray (optional)

Rock Art

1. Find smooth, flat rocks from your yard or neighborhood. Tip: It's harder to decorate very small rocks or ones with ridges and think about the shape of the rock for designs. For example, bumblebees may be easier to paint on oval-shaped rocks, while rocks of similar size and shape work well for a tic-tac-toe game.
2. Wash rocks with soap and water to remove dirt and then allow time for the rock to fully dry before decorating.
3. Use Acrylic paints or permanent markers to create your design. If you make a mistake, quickly wipe it off with a wet paper towel.

Have a blast learning
how to paint rocks!



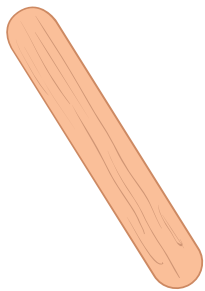


LYMRICK RHYMING JARS

Rhyming is an important component to learning to read, specifically phonological awareness (or the knowledge of sounds letters in words make) and it's also really fun! This game is designed to work with word families, working on reading (decoding unfamiliar words) and rhyming. For children not yet at this level of learning to read this game can be adapted using pictures. That way they can still group and sort by rhyme without the frustration of trying to decode words they are not able to yet.

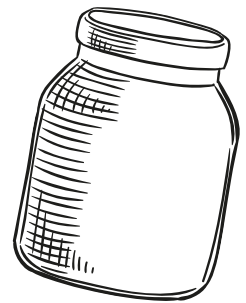
Read ahead for activity directions!

Rhyming Jars



MATERIALS:

baby food jars or other containers
Popsicle sticks
masking tape
markers.



DIRECTIONS:

I started by writing the words to match to on the tape. I find it easiest to put the tape on the table, write then rip it off. You may want to use painters tape like I did if you do it this way. If all you have is regular old masking tape, write it on the roll, then rip off. Add it to your jar.

Now write the words on the sticks. I started by doing it right onto the stick, and it ran weird. Learning to read is hard enough let's not make it harder with weird writing... so instead... I wrote it on more tape and wrapped it on the end of a stick. I wrote some words starting with uppercase and some with lowercase. I did this deliberately because my son was asking if they make different sounds. I put them both in to show him that the word still sounds the same.

Time to play. Games and activities like this should be marketed to your kids as that, play. If these tasks aren't fun try to find some way to make it fun or find other tasks they like and adapt. When learning is attached to play, the lessons stick and learning is fun not a daunting task.

Encourage them to say the words out loud to match up the sounds.

Keep sounding them out and matching them up. After you have sorted them into the jars, choose a jar and practice writing a limerick!



Washing hands with gratitude

During these difficult times washing hands is obviously important. You are already teaching children the correct technique, and now you can add some mindfulness to it if you wish to build resilience and help them feel better.

Purpose: Mindfulness of emotions, gratitude and joy

Simply do your preferred hand washing protocol and while you lather your hands with soap, think of five things you are grateful for. When finished, check in and see how you feel. Do you feel any different after this short gratitude practice?

Examples:

I'm grateful for the sunny weather.

I'm grateful for the yummy breakfast that I had.

I'm grateful for the dinner my parents are preparing.

I'm grateful for my Legos.

I'm grateful for bedtime stories

Fishing 101

During this time of Social Distancing, it is important that we get outside while self isolating. A good way to enjoy the outdoors safely is to go fishing. Fortunately the Loudoun community has a number of ponds that provide excellent bass, catfish and sunfish fishing.



If your local pond is open for use, please remember that safety is first.

- Keep your hooks secure when not fishing.
- Watch for others when casting.
- Keep at least 10 feet between each other.
- Always go with an adult.

Fishing is an excellent way for the entire family to get outside and enjoy nature!

Equipment:

Rod & Reel (A Zebco 33 is a quality metal reel that will last for years.) • Bobber (A weighted medium foam bobber is a good choice.) • Small Hook (My favorite is a "Trout Magnet") • "Split Shot" sinker • Worms (Red worms are best. For nightcrawler, break of a small section large enough to cover the hook)



Fishing 101

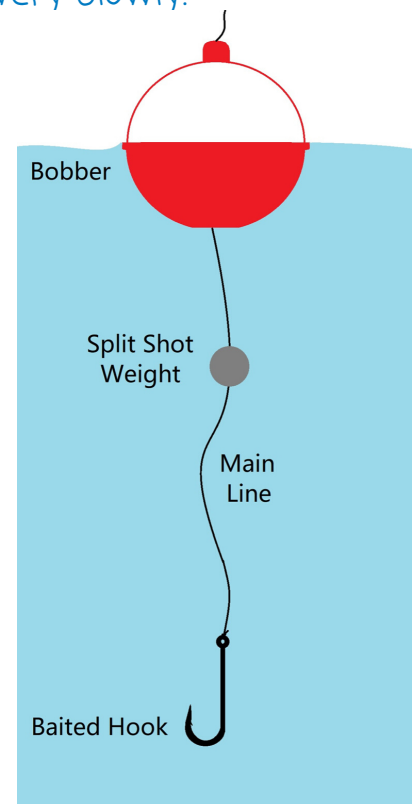
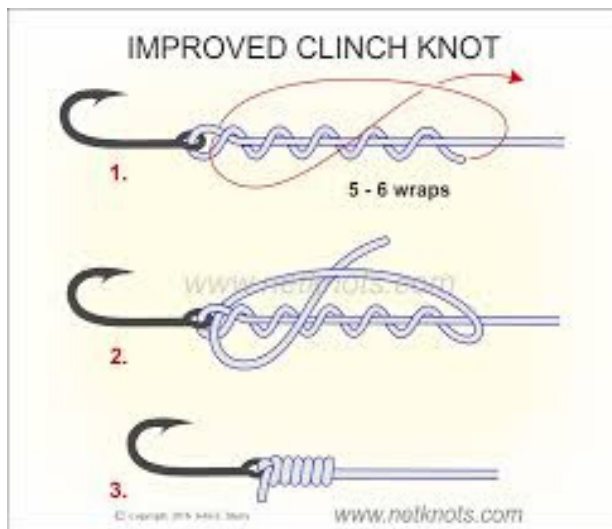
The basic fishing technique for fishing the Loudoun ponds, is using a simple hook/bobber/sinker rig. (See illustration). The basic knot is an "Improved Clinch Knot" (See illustration).

After tying on the hook, place the split shot sinker about 3 feet above the hook. (Start at 3 feet, but vary depth from 2 to 4 feet until the fish start biting. It is important that you always keep the line tight so that you are ready to "set the hook" when the bobber goes down. Set the hook by sharply tugging back on your pole.

To cast a spincast, push down on the button and release the button to loose the line. You can practice casting in your yard using only a bobber. With a little practice you will soon become an expert caster.

This rig is good for sunfish and catfish, and will catch bass. To fish for Largemouth Bass, you can use a plastic worm (See Illustration). To catch the most bass, use the worm or lizard without a singer and reel in very slowly.

Good luck catching fish!





floating **sea turtles** craft

MATERIALS

GREEN CRAFT FOAM

PLASTIC CONTAINERS FROM
APPLESAUCE OR FRUIT CUPS

GOOGLY EYES [OPTIONAL]

CRAFT PAINT

GLUE

TURTLE TEMPLATE

CONTAINER FOR WATER -

*Read ahead for
step by step
directions!*

Floating Sea Turtles Craft

1. Make sure your fruit cup is cleaned and ready to go.
2. Paint your fruit cup and shade of blue or green.
3. While paint is drying, use the turtle template to outline a turtle shape on the foam. You can also use laminated construction paper.
4. Glue fruit cup on to foam and decorate.
5. Once the glue is dry, take your turtles for a swim!
6. Check out some cool facts about sea turtles.

*Sea Turtles have been on Earth for more than 220 million years. •Yes million years. That means that sea turtles were around when dinosaurs roamed the Earth!

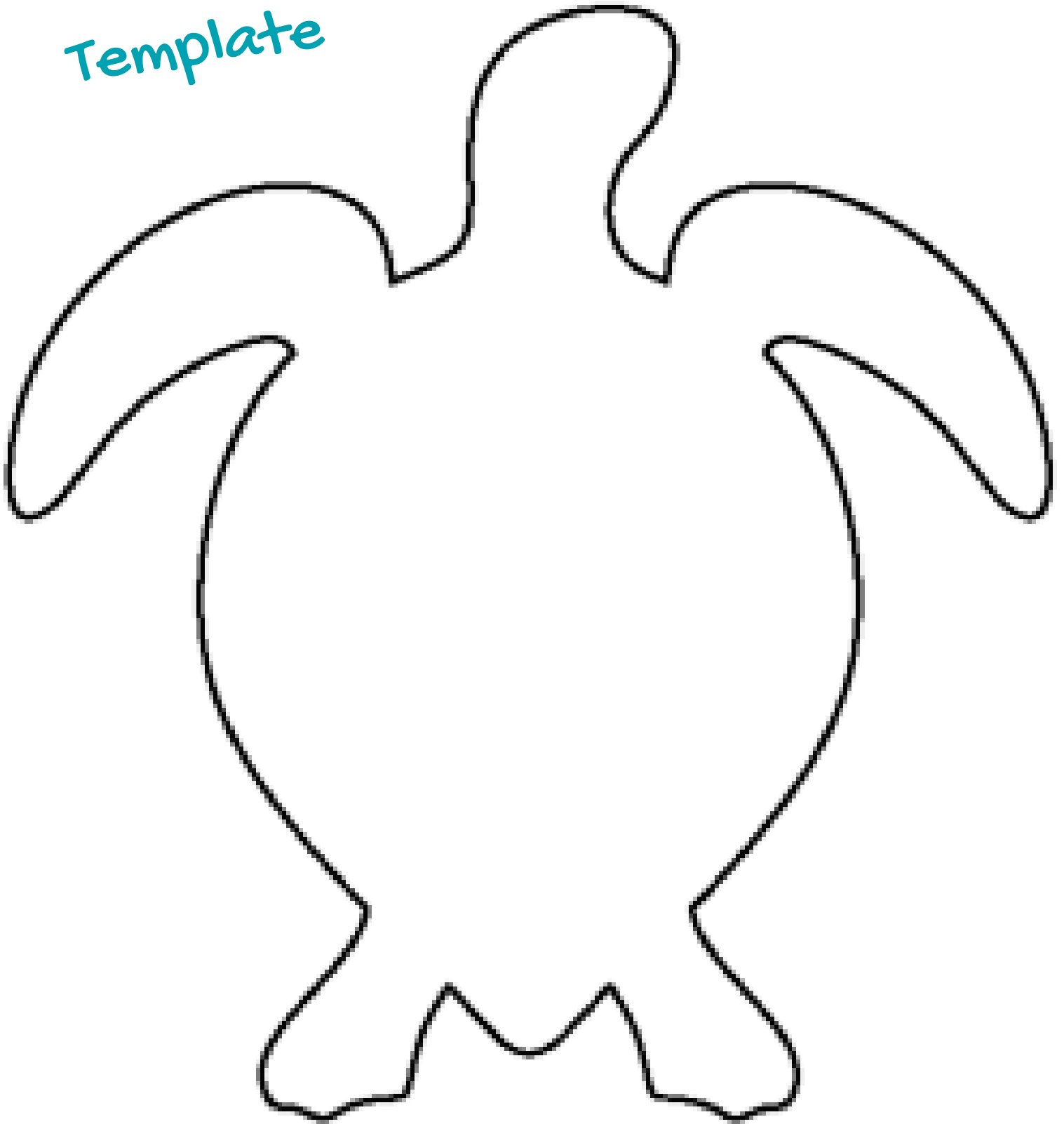
*Sea Turtles can live to be 100 years old.

*Sea Turtles have a form of GPS. • OK, maybe not exactly like the navigation systems we have in our cars, but sea turtles do use vibration to know where they're going. They also have excellent eyesight and sense of smell.

Visit the link below for more fun sea turtle facts!



Sea Turtle Template





Additional Learning Resources

BAMBOO LEARNING OFFERS FREE, VOICE-BASED EDUCATIONAL APPLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES K-5:

[HTTPS://BAMBOOLEARNING.COM/RESOURCES](https://bamboolearning.com/resources)

BEANSTACK DISTANCE LEARNING READING CHALLENGE:

[HTTPS://BLOG.BEANSTACK.COM/ZOOBEAN-ANNOUNCES-BEANSTACK-DISTANCE-LEARNING-READING-CHALLENGE-IN-PARTNERSHIP-WITH-LERNER-4B33F614DD9F](https://blog.beanstack.com/zoo-bean-announces-beanstack-distance-learning-reading-challenge-in-partnership-with-learner-4b33f614dd9f)

LET'S MOVE

JULIANNE HOUGH WILL LEAD STUDENTS THROUGH MOVEMENT DESIGNED TO SHOWCASE THE POWER OF MOVEMENT FOR YOUR MIND, BODY, AND SOUL. STUDENTS WILL BREAK A SWEAT, CRACK A SMILE, AND SEE FIRSTHAND HOW ENDORPHINS LEAD TO CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION:

[HTTPS://WWW.VARSITYTUTORS.COM/CLASSES/STAR-MOTION-WITH-JULIANNE-HOUGH](https://www.varsitytutors.com/classes/star-motion-with-julianne-hough)