

# Houston Parks and Recreation Department

## Youth and Family Engagement Activities

**Week of October 12 – October 16, 2020**

### Squat Relay (Fun Fitness)

Have kids line up on opposite sides of the room, facing each other. On "go," all kids run toward the center of the room and meet in the middle. They do three squats, giving each other an air high-five with both hands in between each rep. Then they return to the starting point and repeat. The focus is on the air high-fives and the social interaction. If you have a large group, you could have the lines shift sideways between reps, so kids meet a different friend in the middle of the room each time.

### Child's Pose (Youth Yoga)

Sit on your heels, slowly bring your forehead down to rest in front of your knees, rest your arms down alongside your body, and take a few deep breaths.

### Heart Smart (6ft Social Distancing Fun)

Players spread out standing 6 feet away from each other. The leader calls out things that are good for the heart (walking, running, vegetables, sports, fruits, dancing). When the leader calls out an item, players perform an exercise (pushups, jumping jacks, toe touches). The leader also calls out things that are bad for the heart (smoking, germs, TV, fast food, soda). When the leader does this, players do not do anything. If a player messes up, he or she does a silly dance, then rejoins the game.

### SWAMP (Hands-on Nature)

Divide the group into teams of 4-6 people. Give each team a large piece of paper and a pen. Each letter in the word SWAMP stands for another word that describes something in nature: (S) STARS, (W) WEATHER, (A) ANIMALS, (M) MINERALS, and (P) PLANTS. On "GO", each team writes down as many words as it can think of that relate to the word STARS. The only stipulation is this: they must be able to SEE what they write down from where they are sitting (e.g. sky is where stars are seen; clouds cover up stars on a dull night). Each team has five minutes to write down as many words as possible. The next five minutes is devoted to the word WEATHER, the next five to ANIMALS and so on until all letters of the word SWAMP have been given equal time. At the end of the writing session, the leader tallies the number of words to see which team has the sharpest eyes, and the most vivid imagination. You will be amazed at your children's imaginations.

### Discover Houston (Family Engagement)

It's easy to overlook the opportunities right where you live. Sightseeing is often a must when you're traveling but checking out the history of the place you live or grew up can also be an educational and eye-opening experience. Pretend you are a tourist arriving in your town for the first time, contact your local chamber of commerce or National Historic Society, and see all that your area has to offer. Tour the most historic buildings, discover if any battles were fought where you're standing, check out monuments and statues, or visit a cemetery to search for the oldest tombstones. Every place has its own legends and history. Discovering what makes your town special can create a meaningful connection to the spot your family calls home.