

# Houston Parks and Recreation Department

## Youth and Family Engagement

### Activities

**Week of December 14 – December 18, 2020**

#### Elevator Breathing (Fun Fitness)

Practicing deep breathing (“elevator breathing” or moving the breath to all parts of the body) helps improve memory as well as emotional control. Kids love doing this, so do it often. Start out by having your child sitting in a cross-legged position or lying down and breathing naturally. After she has practiced breathing naturally, say: Imagine that your breath is like an elevator taking a ride through your body. To start the elevator, I want you to breath in through your nose. Now breath out all your air. Now breath in and take your elevator breath up to your chest. Hold it. Now breath out all your air. Now breath in and take your elevator breath up to the top floor, up through your throat into your face and forehead. Hold it. Now breath out and feel your elevator breath take all your troubles and worries down through your chest, your belly, your legs and out the elevator door in your feet.

#### Unicorn Pose (Youth Yoga)

From a standing position, step your right foot back into a lunge with your left foot directly over your left knee and a straight back leg. Inhale and take your parallel arms straight up overhead to be like the horn of a unicorn. Open your chest, look up, and take a few deep breaths. Switch sides and repeat the steps.

#### Lawn Letter Scramble (6ft Social Distancing Fun)

Prep for this activity by writing the letters of the alphabet on large pieces of paper and come up with a list of age-appropriate words for the participants. Then have your child and their friend(s) sit in your lawn in 6 feet apart spots and scramble the letters in one of your words in front of them in a line and give them a hint (person, place or thing; or Disney character, sport, name of a state). One child gets up at a time to move one letter to its correct spot. For every word that can't be figured out, tell players they must do something silly like dance in place for one minute.

#### Backyard Ecosystem (Hands-on Nature)

Take a white or a light-colored sheet outside and lay it on the ground, under a tree. You can use towels or an old t-shirt, too. Shake the branches, lightly, to see what comes out. Are there seeds? Are there leaves? Is there pollen? Are there bugs? Why do you think there are more bugs in one place versus another? If you did this in the spring, what would fall onto the sheet? (This is a great chance to talk about seasons.)

Once you have a little pile of objects on the sheet, try to build a little fairy or gnome house out of them. Pick a tree to lean your house against, and use sticks, rocks, leaves, and moss to create a house. Don't forget to name your fairy or gnome!

#### Handprint Candle Holder Keepsake (Family Engagement)

Supplies:

- air dry clay, craft paints, paint brush and tea candles

Shape clay with your fingers. Press the hand on the clay firmly, to leave a handprint. Press down the candle in the clay in the center of the palm. Once dry, allow kids to paint their handprints. Let the paint dry. Place the candle on its designated spot (you can even secure it with some glue).