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from the pages
of....



EXTRAORDINARY MINDS,
PURPOSEFUL PLAY... ORDINARY STUFF

THE ASPERKID'S GAME PLAN

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EXTENSION ACTIVITIES
FOR:
COVIDO #1: BUBBLE WRAP

WHAT WILL YOU IMAGINE?

Show us your non-lame learning fun!

Tag us anywhere and use the hashtag:

#COVIDeoGifts

Thanks to Jessica Kingsley Publishers for the excerpts.

Activity 3

PERMISSIBLE BREAKTHROUGHS: NINE WAYS TO PLAY WITH BUBBLE WRAP

Ready, Set

Here's what you'll need:

- bubble wrap
- index cards
- permanent markers.

Go!

Usually, when you hear the word "break," whatever follows isn't going to be good. Break up. Break down. The one exception, though, is breakthrough. Asperkids are magnificent, talented people. Sometimes, though, it can be hard to hear their ideas above the meltdown. Or to listen to their dreams when anxiety keeps them sequestered.

NTs have a common misconception that we, Aspies, don't really want friends. That we are fine being alone. But those are two very different things.

Yes, Asperkids require more alone time than other kids. That is NOT the same thing as not feeling lonely. Aspies want friends; often, though, we don't really know how to choose good ones. When you feel anxious, rejected or afraid, the want of companionship can feel bottomless. So it's easy to compromise who we are and accept far less kindness than we deserve. I know. I've been there. I've accepted bruises and excused them. I've been the popular one too, standing in the center of the crowd, yet feeling utterly alone.

How do you make a friend? In the end, it's really very simple. You decide to take a chance. You say, "Hi." You may be ignored. You may fall in love. There's no way to tell. In fact, **2** only this is certain: every friendship, every love, every adventure and reunion began with a risk and a single simple word. Everything wonderful begins with, "Hello."

And every “hello” gets us one step closer to those Asperkids. Breaking through those protective walls, letting our love in and their brilliance out.

On the surface, none of these activities is about friendship or inflexible thinking. That’s good. Sometimes, a direct hit to someone’s defenses will make him fight or flee with greater vehemence. Be subtle. Just mention, as you go, how piercing, popping and punching through can be good—in fact, with the right people, at the right times, it can even be great.

Bubble Wrap Fabulosity

I love Alfred Fielding and Marc Chavannes. Odds are your Asperkid does, too. In 1957, these two engineers harnessed the beauty of the bubble, creating the now-beloved packaging hero: bubble wrap. Now, there are even online, virtual bubble wrap websites. But, I really don’t think they even come close to the real poppety-pop-pop fabulousness. Other people must agree: Office Depot, for example, sells enough bubble wrap each year to wrap around the earth. Twice. There are more than 250 Facebook pages devoted to bubble wrap, and an entire tome—*The Bubble Wrap Book* (Green 1998)—was even published, full of (crazy?) ingenious possibilities for the stuff, from bicycle helmet construction to low-tech burglar alarms.

What’s the allure, the big draw of these sheets of plastic blisters? “The act of popping Bubble Wrap is almost like a catharsis,” one marketing executive said during the 50th anniversary celebration a few years ago. “It’s a little indulgence in some small act of destruction that is neither dangerous nor offensive” (Fernandez 2004).

Pop. Pop.

Don’t tell the Asperkids, but bubble wrap is also a ridiculously awesome way to give proprioceptive sensory input (which is calming) underfoot or in-hand, strengthen the pincer grip (which affects handwriting), coordination and visual perception. And if a child’s pincer (pointer plus thumb) isn’t strong enough, all you need to do is guide him to pop bubbles with his thumb, index and middle fingers (and ring finger, too, if necessary).

Variations on the Fun

Using colored permanent markers, bubble wrap can become almost any kind of fun you want—just remember to throw in the occasional remark about a hug, a hello or a smile

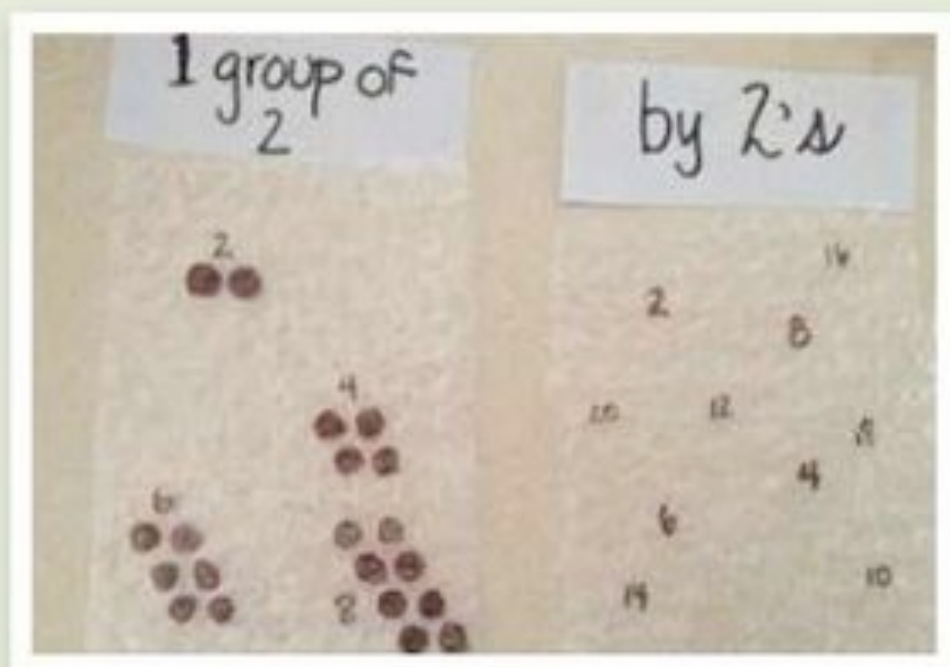
acting like “people poppers,” breaking through sad moods or scared feelings and letting in the fun. Try some of these ideas with the Asperkids in your life:

- **Travel bingo:** Make travel time more fun! On large bubbles, draw stop signs, school buses, a garbage truck, trees and anything else you’d like the Asperkids to “spy” during a car trip, time in the airport or even on a train. When they see a real stop sign or tree or truck, POP! You can offer a prize for when it’s complete: a clear sheet for free popping!
- **Letter match:** Write capital letters on a stack of index cards and lots of different lower-case letters on individual bubbles; then let the Asperkid go through the cards one by one, only popping the letter matches. Use the same idea to practice print-to-cursive recognition by writing a letter in cursive on the bubble wrap and in print on the paper. Find the match and pop!
- **Geometry pop:** Write out the name of a shape (like quadrilateral or hexagon) and on the bubble wrap, write number choices. The Asperkid has to correctly identify the number of sides or corners for the shape in question. Beginners can look at outlines to help remember



or count; challenge more advanced learners to draw out their own models, if they're needed.

- **Quantity comprehension:** Show a number and ask the Asperkid to pop that many bubbles, practicing their understanding of one-to-one correspondence.
- **Word to number:** Display the written word "two" or "seven" (etc.) and mark the bubble wrap with numerals. The goal is to match the number to the word (i.e. "six" and "6").
- **Color search:** Using different markers, color in the bubbles so that they look like confetti. Show the Asperkid color words (you can even begin by writing "pink" in pink letters, and so on, as a clue for emerging readers), and ask her to pop the color you've named.
- **Multiplication set-up:** Color in multiple groups of the same quantity of bubbles (numerous pairs of two darkened bubbles, for example). Then, show a card which says "Three groups of two (3×2).\" The Asperkid can pop each set of the multiplicand, skip counting or count one by one to get to the product. \"Two (pop, pop), four (pop, pop), six (pop, pop). Three groups of two is six.\" You can also practice basic skip counting by writing the multiples of any number which the Asperkid then pops in order (throw in decoy answers when he's ready!): 4, 8, 12, 16 and so on...



More "breakthrough fun" on the next page, too!