

Sparks

Exploring Possible Sparks with Your Mentee

The best spark gift you can give your mentee is to provide him or her with lots of opportunities to try or experience new things; that way, each child has a good chance of finding his or her own special interests. The more he or she can try, the better!

You can use this chart to help you expand your mentee's spark options. Check off the activities your young person has experienced at least once, but remember that repeated experiences will also be useful. You can also check the chart for new ideas when you're ready to plan an activity for or with your mentee.

None of the activities has to be expensive or hard to do. Use these tips to help you:

- Libraries often have free passes to local museums, parks, or events; ask the librarian at your local library what they have to offer.
- Libraries also provide books on every spark under the sun. A librarian can steer you to the appropriate section for browsing. Remember that your best bet might be a magazine or web site, not only a book.
- After-school programs offer a variety of activities that can help kids explore new interests; after you fill on the chart on the back, think about what group might offer programs that match the activities named by your mentee.
- Keep an eye out for holiday or festival events that are free to the public. If your town has a Cinco de Mayo celebration, or other ethnic events, you and your mentee likely can experience a great variety of dance, song, and food there.
- College campuses can offer a range of possibilities. They often have free art galleries, arts events, sports events or practices to watch, science displays in the science buildings, etc.
- Many parks are free to the public; and walks in the park together cost nothing. If your mentee has an interest in the outdoors, or geology, or birds, or running, parks offer many options to explore.

Activity Ideas for Exploring Possible Sparks

Activity	Done it!	Activity	Done it!
Strummed a guitar, played a piano, beat on a drum		Painted a picture, molded something out of clay, drew a picture	
Saw a band concert, listened to an orchestra, sang in a chorus		Attended a play, attended a musical	
Read or heard poetry, then wrote his/her own		Read or heard a story, then wrote his/her own	
Saw different kinds of dance, including ballet, flamenco, ballroom, modern		Learned words in a language other than their family's main language	
Learned how to cook or bake something		Learned how to build or repair something	
Tried karate, break dancing, or rapping		Tried a team sport like soccer, basketball, or softball	
Played tennis or attended a gymnastics class		Gazed at the stars and tried to find the constellations	
Went swimming or rock climbing		Saw a parade or was in a parade	
Went to an art museum		Went to a children's museum	
Went to a science museum		Went horseback riding	
Helped choose a pet to adopt & care for or visited a humane society		Helped with planting, weeding, and watering a garden	
Visited a farm or a zoo		Danced to music	
Played age-appropriate games on the computer		Told a joke or put on a play for an audience	
Took photographs or made a video		Picked up rocks and identified what type they were	
Volunteered to help people or animals in need		Picked up litter to make the neighborhood look nicer	
Went hiking or camping		Ran in a race	
Took apart an old radio or iron or other mechanical object to see what was inside		Helped two friends resolve an argument	
Did something nice for an elderly neighbor		Made a model airplane, boat, or car	
Tried sewing or knitting or crochet		Learned origami	