



## **10 TIPS ON ENHANCING CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION**

**By Mary Goulet and Heather Reider, MomsTown Founders**

1. **Go-Slow-Mo.** Our busy lives have had the unfortunate consequence of ushering time for creativity out the door. We schedule our lives and our kids' lives right into the ground so that we spend a lot of time rushing from one activity to the next. We recommend scheduling a slow day. This is a day where you don't have anything scheduled at least for the afternoon. It can be during the week or on the weekend. Creativity and imagination needs time to breathe, and should not be rushed. Make a promise to yourself and your kids that you will slow the pace, you'll be glad you did.
2. **Power Off.** If it has moving pictures, sounds, bells, and whistles, and a joystick, turn it off. Turn off the television and the electronics and watch your kids' creativity and imagination kick in. It's also been our experience that when the television is off our kids fight less. Weird but true. With no television they are forced to play together.
3. **Be a Creativity Model.** Kids learn from parents. If you immerse yourself in creative pursuits your kids will see it and you will provide a great model for your kids.
4. **"If I Were....."** This is a game we like to play in the car. Creativity and imagination can even go with you on the road. Say to your kids, "If I were \_\_\_\_\_" Have them fill in the blank and then create a story. For example, "If I were an astronaut I would...."
5. **Get toolled.** Provide the tools to enhance your child's creativity and imagination. Construction paper, crayons, glue sticks, markers, blocks, LEGO bricks. If kids have the right tools they can create all kinds of imaginative sculptures and artwork.
6. **Play Music.** Play music in the house instead of always having the television on. Kids love music. It will also put a dance in your daily step.
7. **Characters in a box.** Have a trunk or a drawer dedicated to dress up. Let your kids become the characters they dream about. Grown up clothes, tooling, natural fabrics, hats, wands, and other clothing items allow kids to dress up their imagination.
8. **Garden Time.** Have a place in your yard, no matter how small it is, to plant something, make a mud-pie, make a river with the hose or look for bugs.
9. **Get Messy.** Let them make a mess. Mud, baking, paint, chalk. It all goes in the bathtub and washing machine anyway.
10. **Read and Picture.** Read a lot of stories to your children, preferably with few or simple pictures. This allows them to come up with characters in their own imagination.

*Mary and Heather founded MomsTown.com in 2003, a virtual community for moms and a weekly Internet radio show. They also appear regularly on Dr. Phil, and are working on their second book. For more information, click here: [www.momstown.com](http://www.momstown.com).*