

the arts

SICK AND TIRED

It's that time of the year. Colds, flus and strep — oh my! If one child is well, the other is sure to be sick. If both children are well, that means Mom and/or Dad are walking around in a cold medicine daze.

If your toddler is sick enough to be subdued, count yourself lucky. It's that in-between stage of "not really well but just sick enough to be in a bad mood" that usually hits my family. What can you do with a kid who is too sick to run around in the yard but not sick enough to forget how to whine and throw temper tantrums? You keep him so busy with quiet activities that he forgets he is unhappy!

If you are trying to keep your child in bed, activities that have a prize attached are more likely to keep his attention. Get an empty egg carton and a bag of M&Ms. Depending on the age of your toddler, you can group the candies together by color or put a specific number of candies in each indentation. You can also make a game of it where they have to answer questions to get an M&M, which they then must collect in the appropriate indentation. The great thing about this activity is that you get to eat the results!

Another bed rest activity is finger puppets. First read your toddler's favorite book to him, or you can surprise him with a new book. A few good ones that



lend themselves to finger puppets are "My Life With the Wave" by Catherine Cowan and Octavio Paz, illustrated by Mark Buehner, "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle, and "Where the Wild Things Are" by Maurice Sendak.

To make finger puppets you need some felt, yarn, glue, markers, scissors, and cardstock paper. To make felt finger puppets, trace your child's finger onto the felt, making sure to leave plenty of room. Cut this out, or let him if he is of an appropriate age or if he feels that he is at an appropriate age and you just don't feel like fighting about it. Then make another identical one. You can then stitch up the sides using color coordinated thread and a perfect sewing stitch, and then send your beautiful creation to Martha Stewart to showcase on her talk show. She might even ask you to be a guest! However, if you are an average mom who knows that finding a needle in your house is about as easy as finding a needle in a haystack, you can do what I do and just glue the sides together!

If your child is frequently sick or has been sick for awhile and you've had time to plan ahead (my condolences to you), you can get some googly eyes to glue on. Hopefully this is a temporary setback for your energetic angel and you won't be that organized. In that case, have them draw eyes or whatever the person or animal needs. For finger puppets to reenact "My Life With the Wave," you will need a

mom, a dad, a boy, and a wave. The mom, dad and boy are pretty easy with the felt. You can add yarn for the hair, or just draw it on for the males, unless of course you envision the father as a Fabio kind of guy, in which case you will need a flowing mane of honey-colored locks.

For the wave you might consider using the cardstock. Figure out how large your child would like the wave to be, then have him draw it on the cardstock. When cutting out the wave, add a long rectangle that extends about one inch on each side to the bottom of the wave. This part will be wrapped around your child's finger and glued where appropriate in order to fit snugly but with enough room to slide on and off.

Your child can also create backdrops for his story with the cardstock by drawing different scenes from the book. Encourage your child to use his imagination to create scenes not contained in the book. If the fever has robbed him of his imagination, or if he is at that age where he perceives that any idea you have must have come from the devil, let him copy scenes directly from the book.

Let your child put on his own "Masterpiece Theatre" for you, playing out the story in the book and coming up with new endings or new chapters. Once your little one is up scampering about you can put your little felt playhouse away until the next bout. It's only November — cold season has just begun.

IS THREE TIMES A CHARM

"People say greyhounds are born and bred to run," comments Co-Chair of the Committee to Protect Dogs, Christine A. Dorchak. "My response is, 'Sure, but they are not born and bred to run around in circles.'"

This greyhound advocate is leading a grass-roots effort, once again, to save the 1,000 or so greyhounds maintained at each of the two active Massachusetts dog tracks, Wonderland Greyhound Park in Revere and Raynham Park in Raynham-Taunton, by putting an issue on the ballot which will phase out greyhound racing in this state by 2010.

Ask any rescue greyhound owner about their dog, and you will get an earful about what wonderful pets they are. Although most greyhound owners have never visited a dog track, they have a good idea about their dogs' previous life and the conditions they endured because the dogs know nothing about living except spending 20 or more hours a day in a small cage barely large enough for them to stand up or turn around in. Their human contact is limited, their socialization and enrichment skills are non-existent. To keep costs down, they are fed raw meat deemed unfit for human consumption.

Betsy Johnson knows firsthand about the plight and conditions of many of these dogs coming directly off the track because she was kennel manager for Fast Friends, a greyhound rescue group in New Hampshire. She taught numerous greyhounds rudimentary skills like climbing stairs, playing with toys and riding in cars. Two years ago, she adopted her own personal greyhound, Carly, a beautiful black



female. "I grew up with labs," Betsy explained, "and so Carly's personality - really sweet, responsive and friendly - seemed a natural fit for me. And it was the right time for me to bring a dog into my life." They live on Nantucket but go everywhere together, "Have dog will travel," Betsy claims.

Carly is one of the lucky ones. Tens of thousands of greyhounds are bred each year to produce a few good racers. Puppies may be killed or culled out if they lack potential, and at any time, if injury or a slowdown occurs, a dog's days are numbered. Because there is limited kennel space at these tracks, greyhounds entering the system displace an equivalent number of racing dogs. According to GREY2K statistics, some 15,000-20,000 animals drop out of the system, unaccounted for, each year.

Nationwide, dog racing is a dying industry. Now permitted in only 16 states, with two of those states closing all tracks, in recent years, greyhound racing has been banned in several states through legislative measures. In Massachusetts, during the last four years, total dollars gambled declined 57 percent at Wonderland and 35 percent at Raynham. Unbelievably, in 2001, track owners and managers asked for, and received, a \$5 million tax break from Bay State legislators by stating their industry was in trouble. Fact is, Americans just prefer less controversial and more humane forms of gambling.

The proposed Greyhound Protection Act is now in its initial phase, petitioning. Statewide, volunteers are working to obtain the 120,000 signatures they have determined are needed by November 21 to propose the Act for inclusion on the ballot in next November's election.

This is now the third time advocates are working to achieve their goal of closing down the

Massachusetts tracks. In the year 2000, in the closest election in state history, the ballot question to phase out greyhound racing in this state, resoundingly supported by Nantucket voters, was defeated by less than a two percent margin statewide.

Last year, a properly supported initiative to put the question to a vote once again was dismissed by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court on a technical disqualification because the Act addressed more than one issue, even though past multi-issue measures had been allowed.

Older and wiser now, the greyhound advocates refuse to be deterred. The Committee to Protect Dogs, a coalition of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Humane Society of the United States, and greyhound protection group GREY2K USA, has limited its ballot issue, the Greyhound Protection Act, to just one topic, phasing out dog racing by 2010. They are certain that by educating the Massachusetts voters about the conditions endured by these sweet-natured and graceful animals in the name of sport, the dogs will finally receive the protection they deserve.

These beautiful, innocent greyhounds need your help. Sign a petition at either Geronimo's or the Nantucket MSPCA, or volunteer to help gather signatures yourself. There are still two weeks left and just one more signature can make a difference. ■

Jan Jaeger is owner of Geronimo's, Ltd., Nantucket's pet supply and gift shop, and is a member of DWAA and CWA (Dog and Cat Writer's Associations of America). Her pets at home are Junior, a Chesapeake Bay Retriever, and three cats. At the shop are cats Messrs. Fish and Chips, Flower bunny, Millie guinea pig and two budgies. Send e-mail to jan@geronimos.com.