

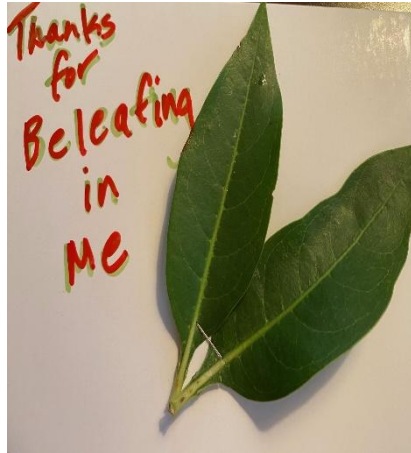
Activity: Creative Expression Goal: Social Populations: Children & Youth

TH Activity Plan – Father’s Day Cards Featuring Plants & Puns

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Photo by L. Fleming

Adapted from Whitehouse, P. (n.d.). Simple Father’s Day Nature Cards the Kids Will Decorate Themselves.
Mother Natured.com



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will make Father’s Day cards using plants & materials from nature.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Foster brain development with puns; practice reasoning & decision-making skills

Physical: Strengthen fine motor skills; strengthen pincer grip

Psychological/Emotional: Strengthen social emotional behaviors; demonstrate gratitude

Sensory: Practice hand-eye integration; self-select sensory breaks

Social: Work independently with reducing number of cues; practice positive relational functioning gifting the card; participate in a community service project

Materials

Bags to collect nature items

Cards, envelopes, glue, stapler, markers, pens, scissors

Items from nature: leaves, bark, stones, ferns, flower petals, feathers

Wipes

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Gather materials except items from nature. Make a sample card. Facilitator needs to be sensitive to all types of family units, and participants who may not have a father figure to make card for. In this case offer an alternative of making a card to be sent to a senior’s home.
2. Facilitator begins session by suggesting making Father’s Day cards using nature items. Grandfather cards or family cards too! Show sample card.
3. Step 1 – As a group, come up with puns that use nature items like leaves, bark, rocks as inspiration for the cards. See text box below.
4. Step 2 – Go outside to collect items. Suggest the number of cards each person will make & discuss amount of nature materials they may need.
5. Step 3 – Set up work areas, distributing craft materials & cards, with each person laying out their gathered nature items. Sharing is encouraged. Before gluing/stapling, suggest cards by planned, printing done, and finally, nature items glued into place. Let dry.
6. Step 4 – Group share. Everyone takes a turn at sharing their card, with a fun fact about their dad, grandad, recipient (see comment in pre-session about participant without a father).

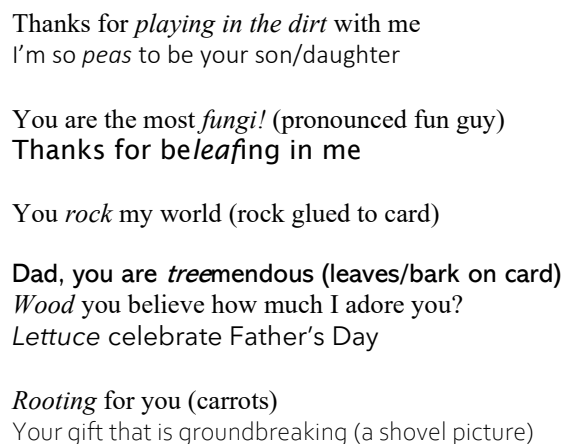
APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: Activities that can strengthen social interactions and relationships contribute to healthy functioning. TH activities can do this, for example, by demonstrating gratitude, especially for family members. Making Father’s Day cards (or Mother’s Day, Grandparent cards) can integrate several key social attributes and can address a range of therapeutic goals depending on the participant’s age, stage of development and personal circumstances. For example, in a classroom setting, making cards with nature items

can strengthen social behavioral skills when the group works together identifying or creating puns, practice accepting and not criticizing others, sharing nature items, and praising finished cards. Sensory goals for students who find handling sensory items like peas or pinecones challenging can be done discreetly. They can be encouraged to take self-selected sensory breaks (perhaps practicing this from previous interventions). Psychological goals of [demonstrating gratitude](#), and affection for others (like the cards' recipients) can be discussed with groups able to understand these concepts, or can be left unstated, with the cards conveying the emotional connections to the father figure.

Creative expression is used across therapeutic disciplines including [art therapy](#), recreation therapy and horticultural therapy. Benefits of creative activities include mechanisms for expressing emotions including gratitude, building self-esteem, problem-solving skills and self-discovery, as well as supporting brain development, emotional processing, feelings of accomplishment, and wellbeing (Foundation for Arts & Healing, 2025). The science related to benefits of creative activities have identified making new neurological connections which improve mood, mental flexibility, as well as physiological benefits of relaxation, lowering blood pressure and muscle tension (Lucchesi, 2021).

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Facilitators are responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts. Use of scissors or small items may not be appropriate for some individuals or populations.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Mid Atlantic Horticultural Therapy Network (newsletter) identified free [nature printables from Mother Natured](#). Other creative ideas can be found searching the internet including puns with prompts of holiday cards, nature cards, DIY cards and puns.



Thanks for *playing in the dirt* with me
I'm so *peas* to be your son/daughter

You are the most *fungi*! (pronounced fun guy)
Thanks for *beleafing* in me

You *rock* my world (rock glued to card)

Dad, you are *treemendous* (leaves/bark on card)
Wood you believe how much I adore you?
Lettuce celebrate Father's Day

Rooting for you (carrots)
Your gift that is groundbreaking (a shovel picture)

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

American Art Therapy Association. (2022). [What is art therapy?](#) Arttherapy.org.
Foundation for Arts & Healing. (2025). [Creative expression approach](#). Artandhealing.org.
Lucchesi, M. (2021). [The power of creativity for our mental health](#). My Michigan Health University of Michigan Health.
Soto, J. (2024). [80 best Father's Day puns that are sure to make him laugh](#). The Pioneer Woman.com.

Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2025.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2025.