

Pointers For Parents

Fun, Environmentally Friendly Craft Projects

(NAPSA)—A growing number of parents are using a little creativity to cure childhood cases of “cabin fever,” brought on by bad weather or an illness.

By getting the youngster(s) involved in games and projects the whole family can enjoy, it’s possible to turn down time into fun time. Even video games can spark a child’s creativity and provide ideas for craft projects based on his or her favorite game.

For starters, take a favorite character parents remember and children love: Mario, the world’s most recognizable video game character and star of an all-new adventure. Nintendo’s *Paper Mario* for the Nintendo 64 can keep youngsters busy and happy for hours, while parents will appreciate the refreshing appearance of this family-friendly game.

Children are sure to enjoy watching the scenery “unfold,” as paper-thin, two-dimensional characters flip, flop and flutter their way through a three-dimensional storybook adventure.

After experiencing the wonderful Mushroom Kingdom on your TV, why not bring the game to life? Take children on another “paper” adventure and create 2-D and 3-D arts and crafts. Use what’s around the house to create paper dolls, paper airplanes or even papier-mâché. A little imagination can save you money and



Inspiration for fun craft projects can come from surprising sources, such as video games.

help the environment by encouraging kids to reuse paper instead of throwing it away.

Reusable paper products can be found all over your home by sleuthing through closets, drawers and cupboards for different types of paper to use, such as newspapers, old office paper and even used holiday wrapping paper.

Inspired by *Paper Mario*, try these paper-related therapies to engage children in quality, creative activities. Gather paper—remember, recycled paper is preferred—crayons, scissors, markers, glitter and glue. Create whatever you want, but here are some ideas to spark your imagination.

- Take the Sunday comics section and create your own customized comic books. Cut out and then glue the characters on construction paper and use markers to draw in the scenes.

- Use your creativity to make your own *Paper Mario* story and build your own Mushroom Kingdom filled with your favorite video game characters. Here are five easy steps to get you started:

1. Start by making the characters. Visit the Web site at www.papermario.com and print cut-outs of Mario, Princess Peach and all the others on old office paper.

2. Using scissors, cut around the characters you’ve just printed, or trace them on your own and color in with crayons and markers. Use Popsicle sticks as handles so your characters become puppets.

3. With used shoeboxes, build a theater to represent the Mushroom Kingdom. Color trees inside the boxes with brown and green crayons or markers.

4. Create your own castle by cutting cardboard shapes and drawing in the windows. Make an entrance with markers.

5. Add whatever else you want to the scenery in your kingdom—such as animals, flowers and houses.

From favorite video games to creating arts and crafts with paper, being “stuck” in the house can be fun, with a little imagination and quality family time. By using paper products found in the house, parents can cut down on entertainment expenses while teaching their children simple lessons to help the environment.