

Better Homes and Gardens.

JULY 2011
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50 Ideas Under \$50

Simple Style Boosts with Paint, Paper & Fabric

Summer
Drinks

Backyard
Bouquets

Easygoing
July 4th Fun

Farmer's
Market
Supper

< Quick Pillow
Stencils p.49

< Creative Paint
Change-Ups p.54

Plus:
Banana-
Butter
Pecan Ice
Cream





Keep the ball rolling

When it's too face-meltingly hot outdoors for kids to shoot hoops or even practice catch, keep the ball in play with Kids Bowl Free: it offers **two free games of bowling every day, all summer long**. The family-friendly program takes place in more than 850 bowling centers across the country (most of which are—ahh—air-conditioned). Check for a bowling alley near you on the state-by-state guide at kidsbowlfree.com, then register online for vouchers. Most programs wrap up in August or September, so get on the ball.

Plan a relationtrip

Make a family trip a bond-building experience by getting kids involved from the get-go. Jeff Siegel, author of *RelationTrips* (Two for the Road, Inc., 2011), suggests **choosing a theme for the trip based on a common interest or theme** (ice cream! dinosaurs! baseball!) and then developing a catchy name or logo to include on itineraries, ticket envelopes, or scrapbooks. "Planning builds anticipation long before your family leaves," says Siegel. "The destination is irrelevant; it's the journey that's important."

3,500

the number of species of pesky mosquitoes found worldwide. Cover up!

Bug bites, begone

Camping, fishing, gardening—it's all good outdoor fun until someone gets bit by a mosquito, wasp, or bee. This year, put down the ice cube and calm that whopper of a sting with heat. The Therapik, a handheld tool approved by the FDA, **neutralizes itching or pain with 20–30 seconds of concentrated heat**. Increased temperature to the bite deactivates the venom (most insect venom is thermolabile, or heat-sensitive) and cuts down on swelling. \$13; therapik.com



Step it up

Not since *Mary Poppins* and the catchy tune "Step in Time" have we been so impressed with a step-counting activity. But **GeoPalz kid-friendly, adorably cute pedometers, matched with a rewards-based online game, turn the task of measuring physical activity into sheer fun**. Pick a GeoPal with your children, hook it on their shorts, and turn them loose to walk or run. Track their points online to win fitness prizes including Frisbees and soccer balls. \$20 each, geopalz.com

Dollars and sense

If your parents doled out a \$5 weekly allowance to you in the 1970s, use that as a guide to offer your children the same—adjusted for inflation. **ThreeJars free online allowance adjustor calculates the current value of your childhood handout** (for example, \$5 in 1975 equals \$10.94 today), plus makes a recommendation based on your child's age; threejars.com ■