

Make a Native American Talking Stick

A Native American talking stick is used to signify who has the right to speak during sacred council ceremonies and meetings. The tribe chief holds the stick as he starts the discussion and then passes it to the next person to share their sacred viewpoint. Only the person holding the stick is allowed to talk, encouraging others to direct their full attention to the speaker.

Your child can learn more about Native American traditions and hone his listening skills through making a talking stick of his own. Using some string and various nature items, he'll construct a beautiful talking stick that's perfect to use at your next family meeting!



What You Need:

- Small stick
- Colorful string
- Feathers
- Beads
- Scissors

What You Do:

1. Look at examples of talking sticks online with your child to see what talking sticks look like. Traditional talking sticks include feathers, string, beads, and other various nature items. What would your child like to include in his stick?
2. Take a nature walk with your child to search for a nice stick and some items that can be used for decoration.
3. Once all the materials are gathered, invite him to begin winding string around the stick, then tying the ends to one of his items or in a knot, a great way to boost his fine motor skills. He can even wrap a small rock or nutshell with lengths of string and attach them to the stick.
4. Encourage him to take his time while working and think of the power of the natural elements he's incorporating into his talking stick. Native Americans would decorate their talking sticks with symbolic items that were meaningful to them. For example, a feather is a symbol of spirit and flight. What do your child's chosen items mean to him?

Once your child has finished his talking stick, gather some friends and family to see how it works. Encourage your child to hold the stick first and lead the discussion by sharing something of his choosing, and then have him pass the stick. Not only will everyone have a chance to share, they'll all hone their listening skills, too!