



COUNTY OF POLK Health Department

www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health

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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Summertime is here! While the warmer weather can mean fun outdoors, it can also bring extra dangers during extreme heat. Children are at a higher risk for heat related illness because their bodies don't cool down as fast as an adult's body. Children cannot recognize when they are getting too hot, so it is up to caregivers to take the necessary precautions to keep kids safe and healthy.

To help even our youngest community members stay safe and informed this season, we have put together this toolkit, including information for caregivers and activities to engage children in extreme heat safety!

Included you will find:

- A newsletter explaining extreme heat conditions and how recognize symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke
- Handout with tips on how to stay cool in extreme heat conditions, including information on CodeRED notification system
- List of outdoor water activities to keep kids cool while they play
- An extreme heat activity book- get kids engaged in their health!
 - Paper house activity- help kids cut out the different items and decorate their house to keep it cool in the summer!
 - A coloring book to teach children what to do during extreme heat

Please feel free to call me or email me if you have any additional extreme heat questions. Have a fun and safe summer!

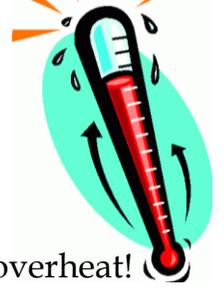
Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

Nola Aigner, Health Educator/Public Information Officer
Polk County Health Department
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Email: nola.aigner@polkcountyiowa.gov

Administration Clinical Services Community Health Education
Disease Prevention Outreach Health Planning Infectious Disease Laboratory

HOW DO I KEEP MY FAMILY SAFE FROM EXTREME HEAT?



Extreme heat conditions refer to the “Heat Index”, created by
a combination of air temperature and relative humidity.

When the heat index gets too high, it can be dangerous and make your body overheat!

Local news stations will keep you informed about extreme heat conditions, as well as visiting the National Weather Service at www.weather.gov/dmx

How do I recognize... HEAT EXHAUSTION?

If your child shows any of these symptoms, get out of the heat and **cool them down!**

- **Heavy sweating**
- Feeling weak
- Dizzy
- Headache

How do I recognize... HEAT STROKE?

Heat stroke is a very serious condition. If your child shows any of these symptoms, get out of the heat and **call 911 immediately!**

- High fever (greater than 104)
- Flushed/red skin
- **Lack of sweating**
- Muscle weakness/cramps
- Nausea or vomiting
- Seizures
- Skin that feels cool and moist
- Rapid breathing/rapid heart rate

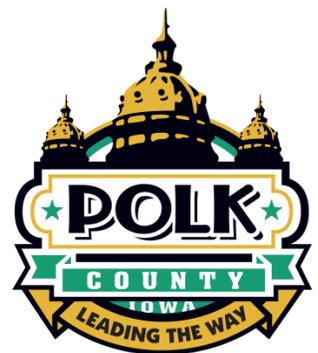
How do I prevent heat exhaustion and stroke?

If you’re going to be playing outside, be prepared! Wide brimmed hats will block the sun from your child’s face. Dress your children in light colored, loose-fitting clothes- dark colors will trap the heat next to their body and keep them hot!

When it gets too hot to play outside, there are still fun things to do inside! **Theaters, public libraries, and malls are places that provide air conditioning.** Try to plan indoor activities during the hottest parts of the day, typically 10AM-4PM.

Remember:

NEVER leave your child alone in the car- not even for a minute!



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STAY COOL.

Extreme heat can be dangerous to your health.

Stay cool this summer and stay safe!

5 ways to stay cool this summer!

1. DRINK UP

Water is the body's natural way to cool down- so drink a lot of it! You should drink at least 8 glasses a day- more if you're spending a lot of time outside. Avoid sugary, carbonated or alcoholic drinks, they can dehydrate you!



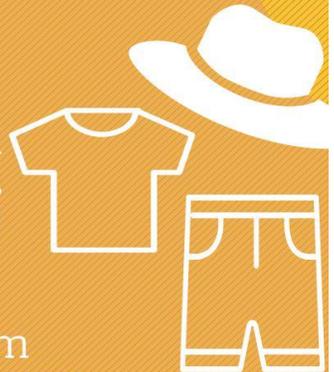
2. KEEP YOUR HOUSE COOL

Keep your house cool, even if you don't have air conditioning! Avoid using appliances like ovens or clothes dryers during the day. Keep windows closed and covered with drapes to keep the sun out.



3. DRESS LIGHT

Dressing in light colors and cotton fabrics will allow your body to stay cool. If you're outside, don't forget sunscreen and a wide-brimmed hat!



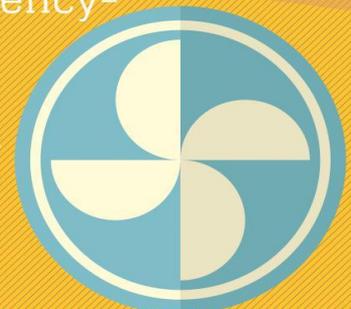
4. SIGN UP FOR CODE RED

CodeRED automated notification system sends out notifications during emergency situations, including extreme heat. To sign up, go to www.polkcountyiowa.gov/emergency-management



5. COOL OFF

Spending 2 hours a day in air conditioning keeps heat related illnesses away! Call 211 to find out the cooling center closest to you.



www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health

HOT OUTSIDE? KEEP YOUR KIDS COOL.

Outdoor activities

Kids can get restless if you keep them inside all day, so have a plan!

Splash Pads

There are many no-cost splash pads in Polk County. They have simple water features for children to play in, with little to no standing water. Visit <http://dsm4kids.com/cool-off-at-one-of-these-28-des-moines-area-splash-pads-wading-pools/> to find locations and hours of a splash pad near you!

Ice age bin

Freeze a container with water and small plastic dinosaurs, shells, “treasure”, etc. Children can then use plastic syringes with warm water, sidewalk salt, and kids’ plastic knives to try and free the treasures.

Sprinklers

Water activities don’t need to be elaborate. Attaching a sprinkler to a hose is a simple way to entertain kids-and keep them cool!

Toy wash

Like a carwash! Take the kids’ washable toys (hard, plastic). Fill buckets with soapy water and sponges, let children play with the bubbles while cleaning their toys at the same time!

Sponge fights

Fill several buckets with water. Throw wet sponges at players to get them wet! Using sponges instead of water balloons is a safer and more eco-friendly option as broken water balloons pieces can be a choking hazard to children and wildlife.

Slip and slide

A plastic tarp with dish soap and running water makes the perfect surface to slide down!

Duck , Duck, Splash

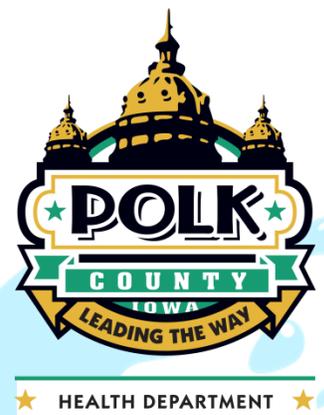
A twist on a classic kids’ game, the player who is ‘it’ holds a cup of water, circling the others players sitting on the ground. The child then dumps the water on an unexpected player and tries to make it around the circle back to that spot before the other player can catch them.

Drink up!

Have your child help you make flavored water by cutting up different fruits (oranges, lemons, blueberries, strawberries, etc.) and putting them in pitchers of water. **Remind your children to drink water, even if they are not thirsty!** Avoid sugary or carbonated drinks; they don’t hydrate your body. High water content fruits and veggies like watermelon, cantaloupe, strawberries, peppers, cucumber, and broccoli are a tasty way to stay hydrated!

Tips and Tricks!

Dress kids in light colored, loose clothing, with a wide-brimmed hat. Apply sunscreen, at least SPF 15, every 2 hours. Take breaks in the shade, and watch for signs of heat exhaustion.



Extreme Heat Activity Book



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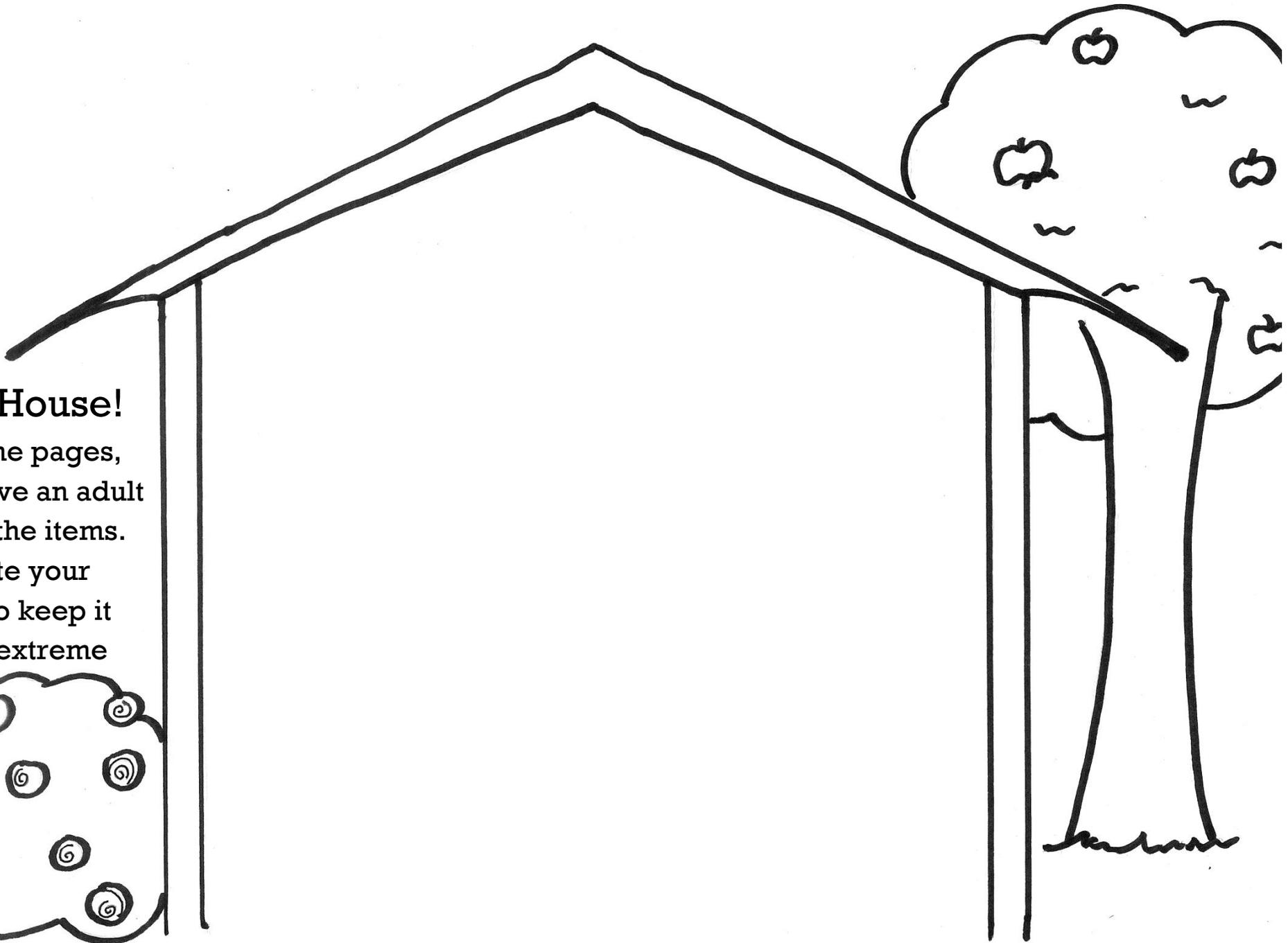
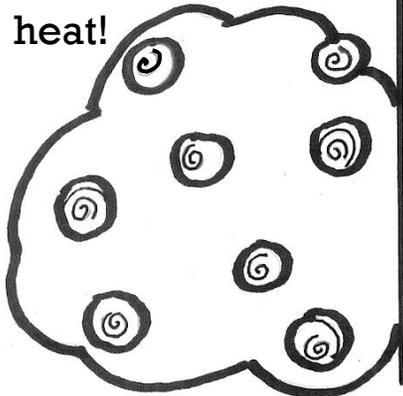
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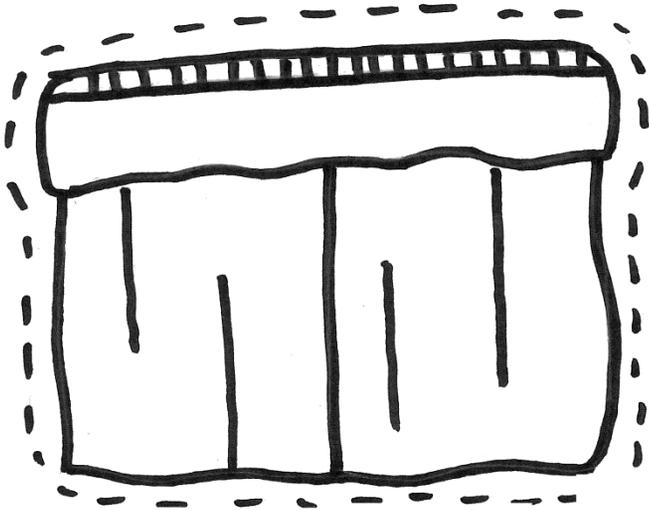
Cool House!

Color the pages,
then have an adult
cut out the items.

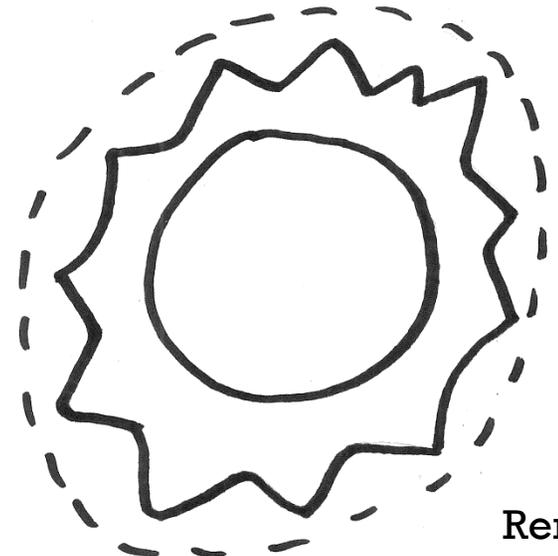
Decorate your
house to keep it
cool in extreme
heat!



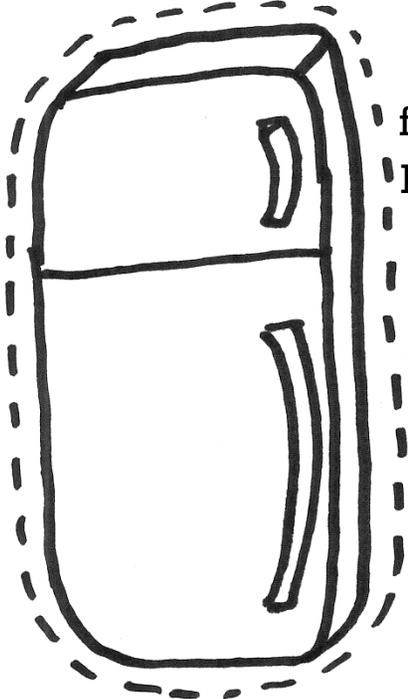
DAY



Keep your windows closed and covered with blinds to keep the sun out!



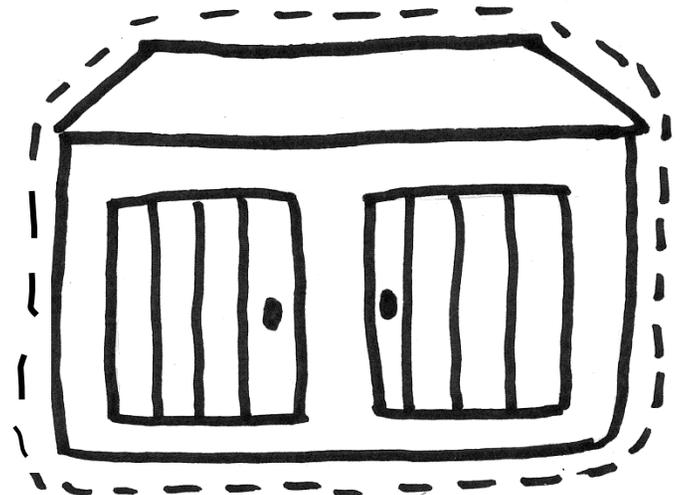
Remember to drink a lot of cold water during the day!



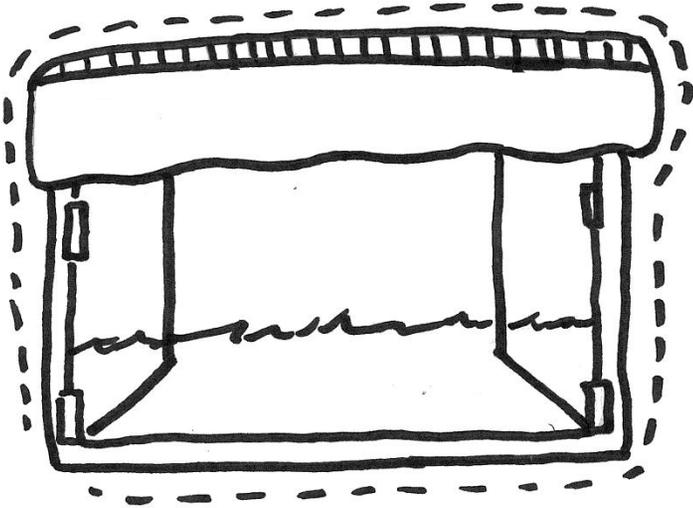
Keep your freezer closed- leaving it open can actually heat up your house!



Try to avoid using ovens and laundry machines during the day- they can make your house even hotter!

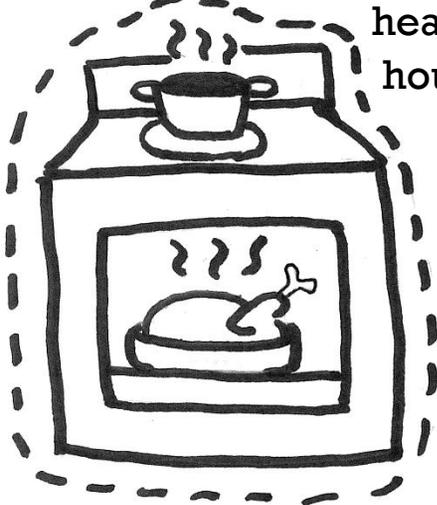


Opening windows at night will let hot air out and cooler air into your house!



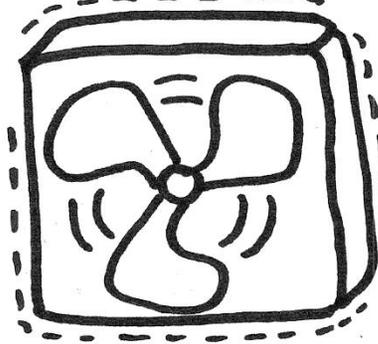
Try to use the oven and clothes dryer only at night- they can

heat up your house!



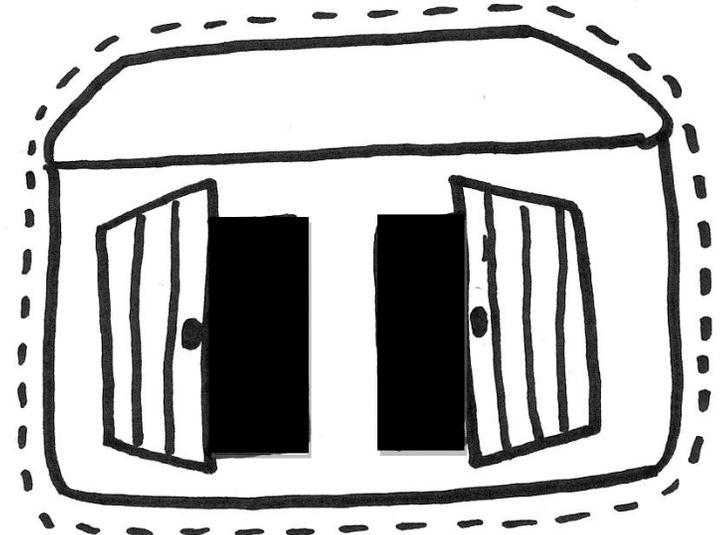
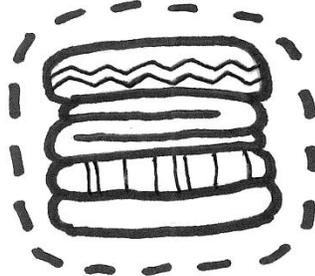
NIGHT

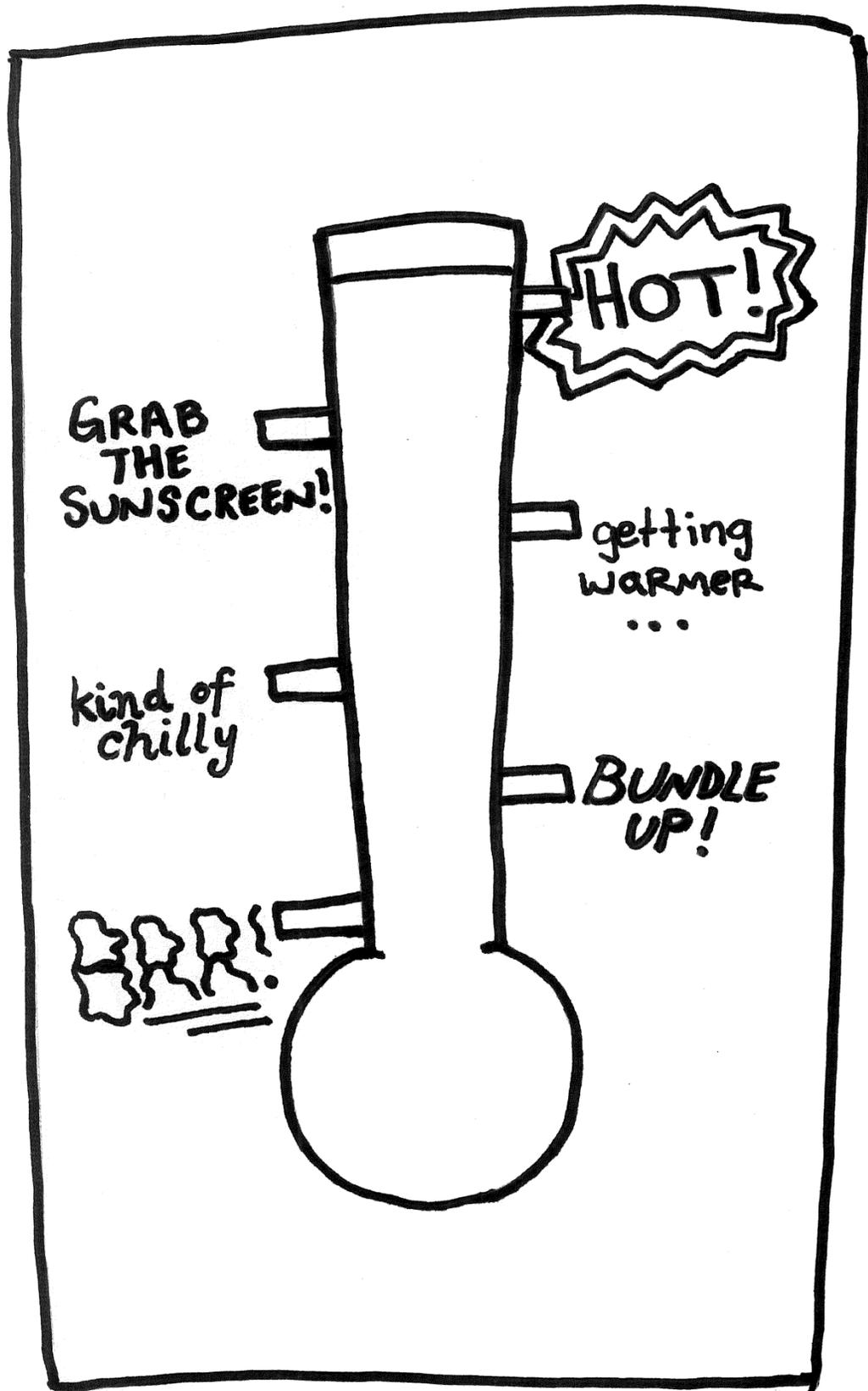
Put a fan in the window, with a frozen water bottle in front, to cool a house down without air conditioning!



Cabinets can trap heat during the day, so open them up at night to let the heat out!

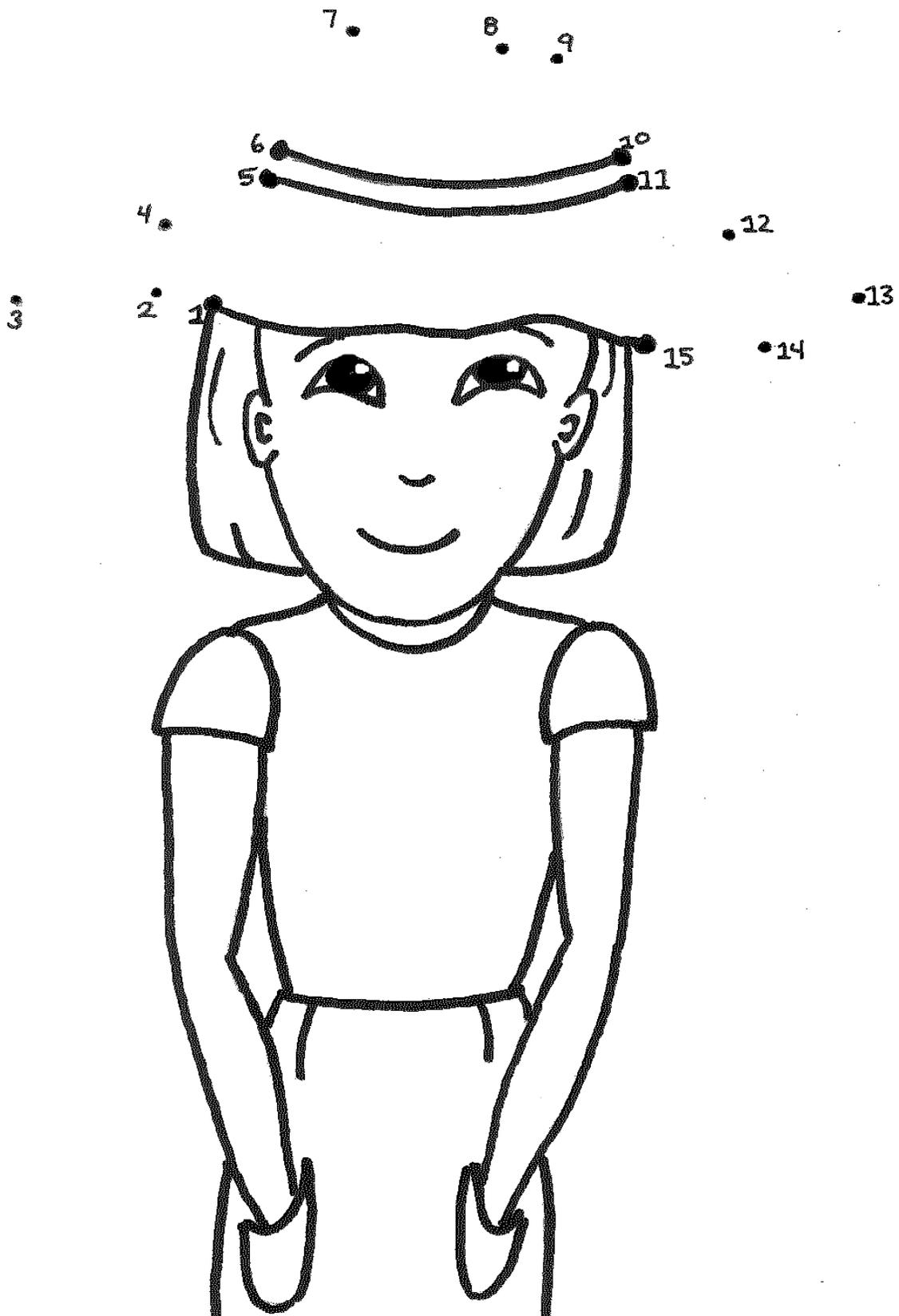
Take extra blankets off your bed to keep you cool while you sleep!





WOW! It's going to be hot outside today!

Staying cool keeps us safe, so we can keep playing!

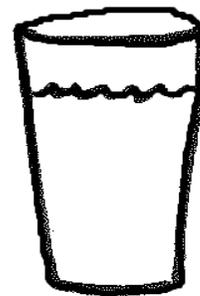
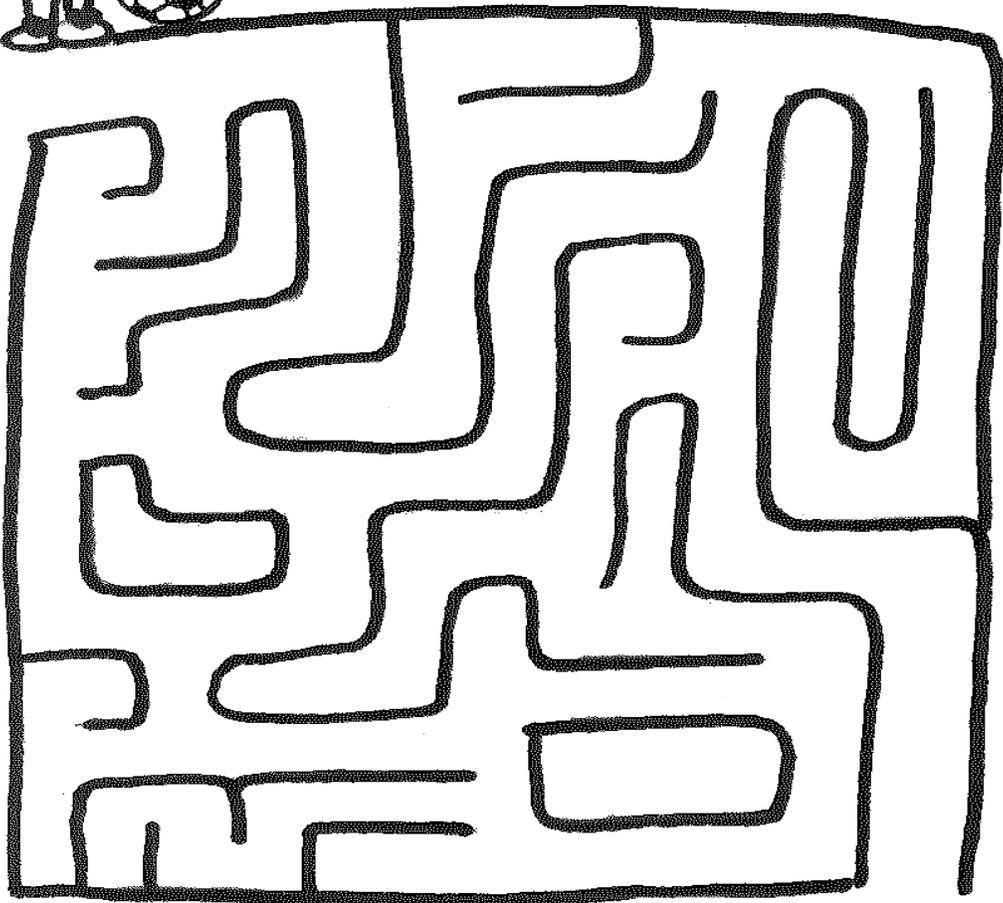


Before we go outside, we need to get dressed!

Don't forget to wear sunscreen and a hat!



There are fun ways to stay cool, but I make sure to take breaks in the shade!



I need to drink a lot of water to stay cool.

Get me through the maze!



When it gets too hot outside,
there are still ways to have fun inside!