

BIG PLAYDATE, BIG FUN!

CREATIVE DRAMATIC PLAY FOR BIRTH-FIVE

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Delta Township District Library
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BIG PLAYDATES

LEARNING GOALS:

- Importance of play
- Tips for hosting a Big Playdate
- Ideas, ideas, ideas!



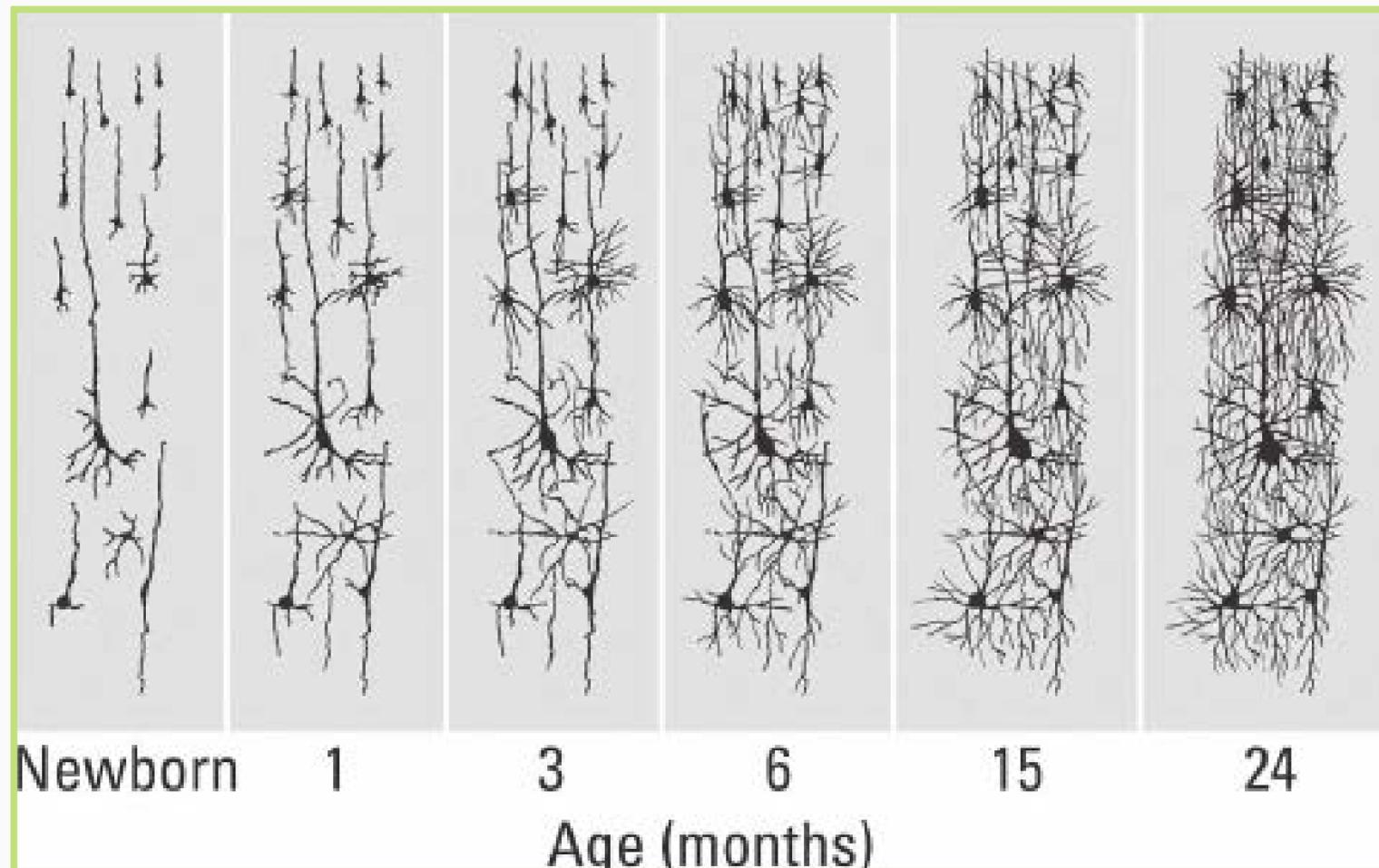


PLAY IS A CHILD'S WORK

“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning. At various times, play is a way to cope with life and to prepare for adulthood. Playing is a way to solve problems and to express feelings. In fact, play is the real work of childhood.”

-Fred Rogers

You Are Special: Neighborly Words of Wisdom from Mister Rogers



Source: Conel, J. L. (1939–1967). The Postnatal Development of the Human Cerebral Cortex. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

PLAY IS CRITICAL

Playing literally wires the brain for the skills we use our whole lifetime – physical agility, social confidence, emotional regulation, creativity, and resilience.

National Institute for Play

COGNITIVE

- Figure out how things work
- Use their imagination
- Solve problems
- Acquire new vocabulary
- Practice language skills

SOCIAL

- Learn conflict resolution
- Learn to cooperate
- Practice sharing
- Practice taking turns
- Build confidence

BENEFITS OF PLAY

PHYSICAL

- Build strength
- Develop agility
- Improve motor control
- Build an active, healthy body

EMOTIONAL

- Express emotions
- Develop empathy
- Practice self-advocacy
- Discover areas of interest
- Practice self-regulation



REDUCTION IN FREE PLAY TIME

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

Despite the benefits derived from play for both children and parents, a variety of factors have reduced time for free play:

Hurried lifestyle

Changes in family structure

Increased attention to
academics and enrichment
activities

Passive entertainment
through screen time



BIG PLAYDATES

Inspired by Brooklyn Public Library's Read, Play, Grow initiative

“Research has long supported the importance of play in early literacy, yet many parents remain mystified about how to engage with young children in fun activities, particularly at the pre-verbal stage. Enter the library.”

“Read, Play, Grow!: Enhancing Early Literacy at Brooklyn Public Library” by Rachel G. Payne (School Library Journal, July 2013).



BIG PLAYDATES

LOGISTICS

- 2-3 times per year (winter is great)
- Saturday mornings, 1-1.5 hours
- Targets birth-5, all ages welcome
- Registration?
- Staffing
- Space
- Budget



ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION

- Sensory overload
- Think through activities in terms of differing abilities and mobility
- Activities for babies & toddlers
- Signage in other languages
- Variety of stations - different forms of play



FORMS OF PLAY

PLAY STRUCTURE

Free play, guided, structured

STAGES OF SOCIAL PLAY

Solitary, parallel, cooperative

TYPES OF PLAY

- Motor/physical
- Constructive
- Imaginative/pretend
- Creative
- Games with rules



The background is white and decorated with various colorful, hand-drawn abstract shapes and patterns. At the top, there are shapes in pink, yellow, blue, and green. On the right side, there is a blue spiral and a yellow shape. At the bottom, there are shapes in blue, green, yellow, pink, and red. The central text is flanked by two sets of three black diagonal lines, resembling a stylized sunburst or starburst.

**BIG PLAYDATES
IN ACTION**

TAPE TOWN



TAPE TOWN



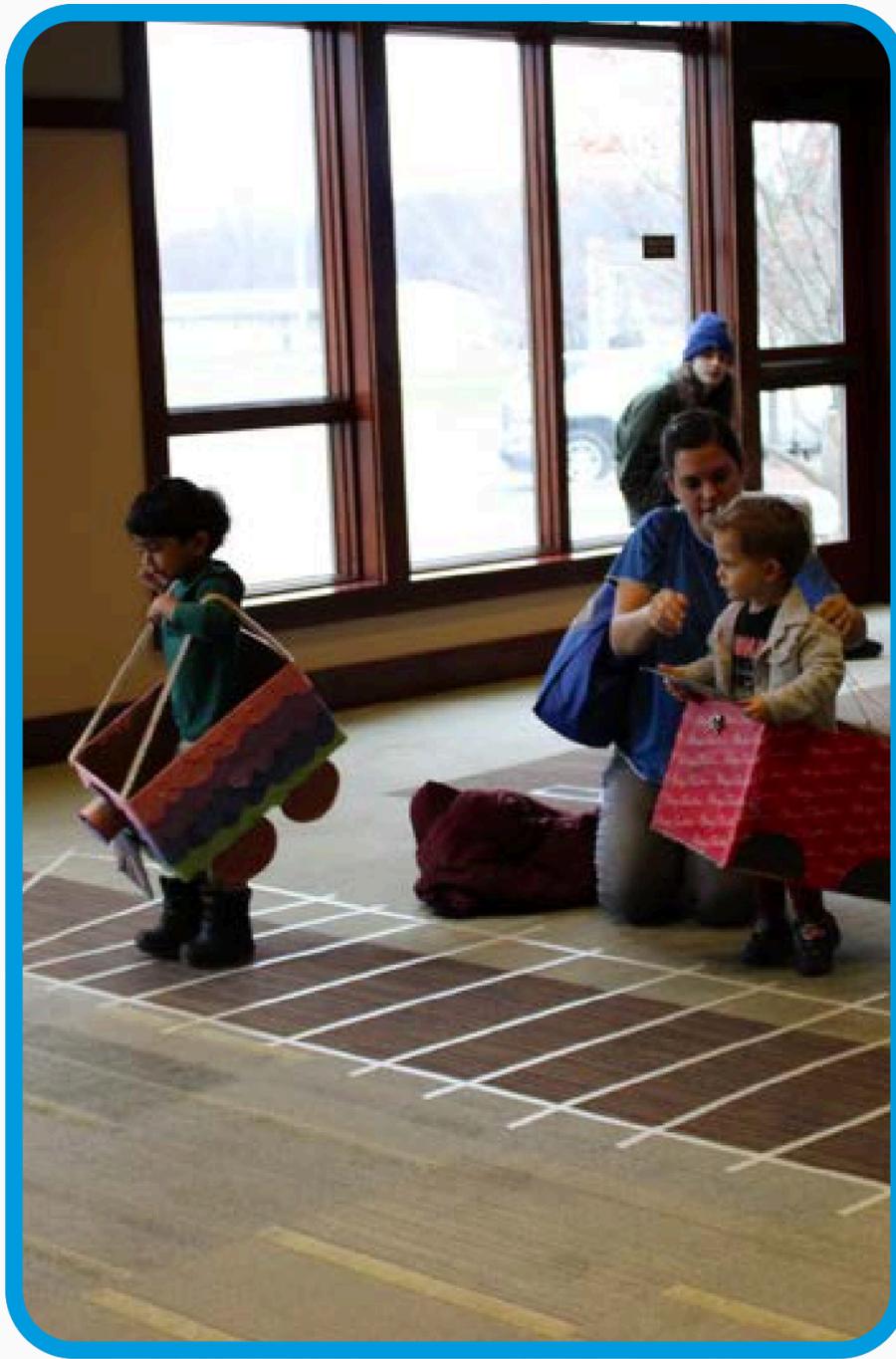
FALL FUN



SAFARI



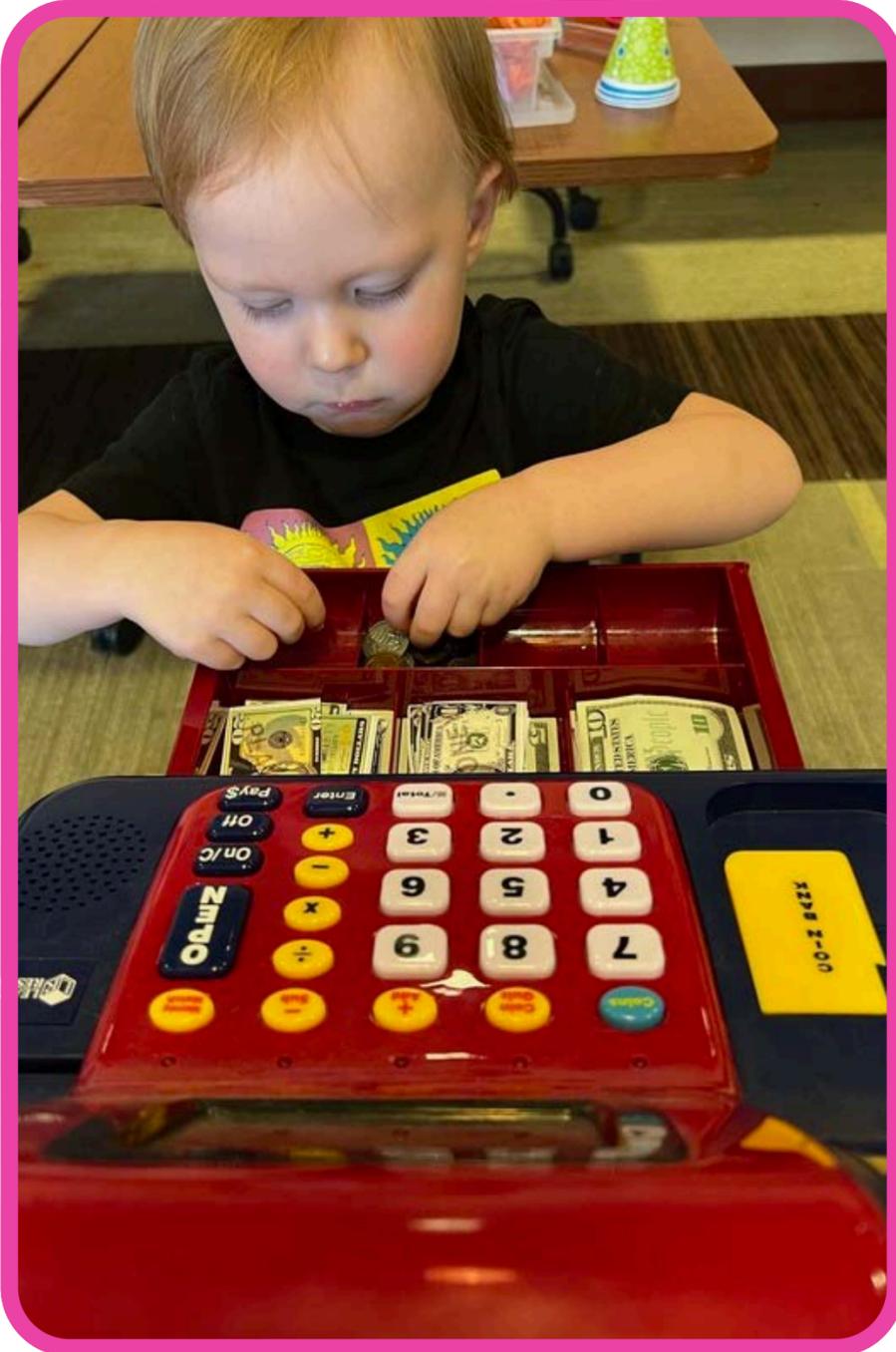
ALL ABOARD



BLUEY'S BIG PLAYDATE



TINY TOWN



RESTAURANT



CIRCUS



BALL ARCADE



INDOOR WINTERFEST



PIRATES!



DETECTIVE



CANDY



CONSTRUCTION ZONE



OTHER THEME IDEAS

- Fairy Tales
- Winter Olympics
- Farm
- Lilo & Stitch
- The possibilities are endless!





UNEARTH A STORY

- Obstacle course (Indiana Jones, dinosaur actions)
- Safari vests & hats - archeologists
- Sand sensory bin (toy dinos, plastic eggs)
- Dinosaur hats, masks & feet
- Pasta paleontology
- Dinosaur felt board/puppets
- Scavenger hunt
- Playdough fossils
- Dinosaur tracks sponge painting
- Cardboard box dinosaur (could be a bean bag toss, part of a sorting game)
- Dino stick puppets/shadow puppets
- Dino grab game (like Hungry Hungry Hippos)
- Dino egg letter match

BRAINSTORMING

- Popular play area items
- Make-believe games from your childhood/your child
- Popular characters, books, shows, etc.
- Old summer manuals and themes
- Pinterest
- Crafts

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

- Fire department
- Doctors and vets
- Farmer's markets
- Local banks and credit unions
- Restaurants
- Zoos and pet stores
- Student organizations and local schools



EARLY LITERACY

01.

READ

I Spy worksheets or presentation
Cozy reading area with topical books
Menus, scavenger hunts, etc.

02.

WRITE

Crafts & coloring
Checklists
Server notepads

03.

SING

Signage with song suggestions & lyrics
Puppets with music elements
Felt stories with music elements

04.

TALK

Signage with conversation prompts
Games
Charades



TIPS & TRICKS

TOYS

If you have a budget, think about which items you could reuse for different programs or play area to get the most out of your purchase.

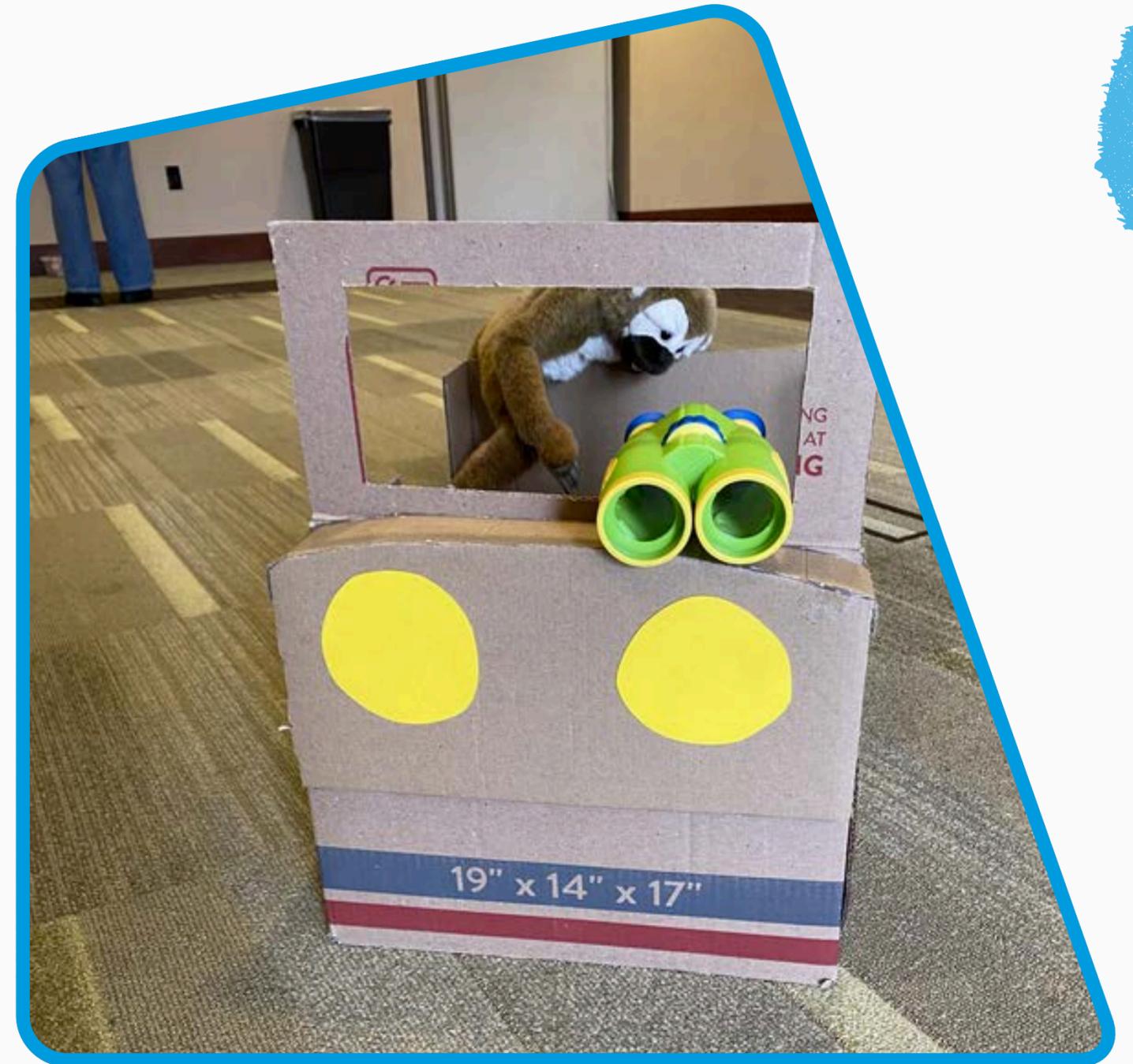
Alternatively, what are some toys you already have but maybe don't use as much? This is a fun opportunity to dig those out!



TIPS & TRICKS

SUPPLIES – THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX!

- Utilize creative staff & volunteers
- Borrow from coworkers and the community
- Promote library resources (Library of Things)
- Cardboard and tape are your friends!
- Consider storage space
- Frequent appearances: tunnel, hula hoops, balance beam, kiddie pool



FINAL TIPS & TRICKS

- Give yourself plenty of time
- Set up and clean up
- Many hands make light work!
- Promote
 - Storytimes
 - Social Media



EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED





QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!

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