

play at home

Play, imagine and create to support your child's development.

Use things commonly found in the home to create a stimulating learning environment. Engage with your child whilst making and playing to help develop their speech and language, fine and gross motor skills, social skills and enjoy your bond together. Happy playing!



playdough recipe

Ages 2+

Please note that *this recipe uses boiled water so is not appropriate to make with children.* They get to play with it once it's cooled down.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of plain flour
- 1 cup of salt
- 4 tablespoons cream of tartar
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- food colouring
- 2 cups of boiled water



Method:

- Put the plain flour, salt and cream of tartar in a bowl and mix
- Make a well, and put the oil in the bottom of the bowl then mix the food colouring into the oil
- Add the water hot from the kettle and mix it all together
- Allow the playdough to cool, then knead

Playdough will last months if stored in an airtight container or zip lock bag.

Benefits of Playing with Playdough

Playing with playdough helps children to strengthen and develop their fine motor skills, and eye/hand coordination. When used in pretend play it engages their imaginations and can encourage language skills.

Whilst playing with your child :

- Praise and encourage their efforts
- Encourage using both hands
- Make a cake with candles and sing "Happy Birthday" or drum on the playdough and sing "Pat-a-Cake"
- Sculpt creatures, cars, bugs, animals...
- Use pots, pans, muffin trays, spoons to do some pretend cooking



have fun!

coloured rice

Ages 2+

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of uncooked rice
- food colouring
- water

Method:

- Add some rice to a container (or bag)
- Add some food colouring mixed with a little water and add to the rice
- Put the lid on and shake
- Lay the rice on a tray to dry



Rice will last months if stored in an airtight container or zip lock bag.

Benefits of Rice Play

Playing with rice helps children to strengthen and develop their fine motor skills and eye hand coordination. When used in pretend play it engages their imaginations and language.

Rice can be picked up in the hands, poured through fingers or funnels, a single grain picked up with a pinch grip or scooped etc. Rice play can also be used for pretend play if you add a pot and spoon to 'cook' with, or add some of their favourite toys such as dinosaurs to make a 'small world' in the rice.



have fun!

finger paint

Ages 1+

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons of corn flour/ corn starch
- ½ cup of cold water • 2 cups of boiling water
- Food colouring

Method:

- Mix the cold water and food colouring with the corn flour in a pot to make a thick paste
- Gradually add the boiling water cooking it on the stove for about 1 minute continually stirring with a whisk until it's a nice 'custard like' consistency
- Allow to cool to play with warm or cold.



Finger paint will keep in the fridge for up to a week if stored in an airtight container.

Benefits of Finger Painting

Finger painting is a type of messy/sensory play that helps children to strengthen and develop their fine motor skills and eye hand coordination. It also builds up a repertoire of different textures, smells, sounds, sights (and often tastes!) that your child experiences to support the development of the sensory system. If you ask simple open-ended questions while your child is playing such as “what does it feel like?” you also support their language development.

Finger paint can be played with on the surfaces of a tabletop, mats or trays. You can use a smock, or a tea towel as a bib to stop the paint from getting on clothing. Play with it using hands or you can give some simple things to scoop it with such as a spoon or small bowl.



have fun!

making sound

Age 4mth+

We have sound all around us: the sound of cars, birds, dogs barking, rainfall... Letting our children make sounds and play music helps them to build awareness of the different qualities of sounds (loud, soft, high & low pitched etc) and words to describe sound (hum, thud, bang, bark, crash, creak, rustle, ring, squeal, whisper etc). You can make your own instruments at home to make music, sing along with, or play along to recorded music. Experiment to see what sounds you can make with your own body: voice, clap, tap thighs, stamp feet etc).



Some other ideas

- Tap and bang on pots and pans.
- Make your own shakers by filling empty bottles, paper bags, or staple two plates together.
- Use natural objects to tap, shake and listen to: sticks, stones, gumnuts, seed pods, shells.



have fun!

Scarves

Age 3mth+

Scarves are a great 'open ended' play material. We can use scarves in many different ways. Here are some ideas and you can come up with your own!

For babies and toddlers

- Floating Scarf: with your child lying on their back gently float the scarf over them
- Watching the Scarf: slowly move the scarf so your baby can follow it with their eyes
- Peek a Boo: put the scarf over your face and pull it off revealing your face and say a gentle 'boo!'
- Tummy Time: put the scarf in front of them and let them reach and feel the scarf

For toddlers and older children

- Hide and Seek: hide the scarf somewhere in the room and let your child find it giving them some help if needed
- Throw and Catch: scrunch the scarf into a ball and take turns throwing it for the other to catch
- What's There?: hide something underneath the scarf and let your child guess what it is by looking and feeling it
- Dancing: put on some music and dance moving the scarf around

Dance like no-one's watching

As well as all the physical health benefits, dancing for all ages also improves general and psychological wellbeing. So grab your scarf, put on music and have a dance in the living room!



have fun!

treasure box

Age 8mth+

Playing with everyday objects helps children to strengthen and develop their fine motor skills, and eye hand coordination. It supports the sensory system by exposing your child to many different textures, sounds, smells, weights and colours.

When choosing your objects for your treasure box you need to **make sure it is safe**. Only use objects that are not a choking hazard, not fragile, clean & won't cause injury. There doesn't need to be too many things for discovery, up to 10 items is plenty.

Some examples of what you might use are:

- household objects: containers, kitchenware, sponges, paper, decorations, cotton reels, scarves, solid bracelets, ribbons, balls, baskets, egg cups, tea strainers, spoons, some of their smaller toys, plastic cup, photos, brush, whisk
- found objects: gumnuts, leaves, feathers, sticks, stones, bark, shells, pinecone

Supervise your child while they are playing.

Benefits of Playing with a Treasure Box

Playing with different objects helps children to strengthen and develop their fine motor skills, and eye/hand coordination. They develop a vocabulary of different sensory experiences, and you can help name their experience. For example, they may be touching a scarf, and you may say, 'does that feel soft?' Children may start mimicking everyday tasks such as making a cup of pretend tea with a plastic cup and spoon.



have fun!

scavenger hunt

Go for an adventure and see if you find things in nature that are tiny... bendy... rough... spiky... etc. The pictures are examples. You might find a smooth pebble rather than smooth bark. The scavenger hunt gives prompts of things you may see, feel or smell. What do you notice around you?



smooth



soft



stone



different greens



tall



tiny



bendy



flower



rough



spiky

go outside!