At-Home Activities

Simple, fun activities that use everyday items to provide rich learning opportunities.

Skill Development

These research-based activities are designed to support key developmental areas. Most activities involve multiple skills, but each focuses on three of the following:

- Creativity
- Gross Motor
- Math
- Sensory
- Fine Motor
- Language & Communication
- Problem Solving
- Social & Emotional

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Water Play

Set-up: 2 min

Children engage their senses through water play. Let them experiment as they fill, pour, wash, dunk, and splash!

What You Need:
- Water
- Sink, plastic tub or bowl
- Any materials ok to get wet
- Towel or other floor covering

Material Ideas:
- Measuring cups, spoons, scoops
- Sponges, wash cloths
- Plastic toys or blocks, containers
- Soap, bubble bath

To Play:

1. Fill a sink with water or a tub on the floor (on a towel). Take it outside for even less clean up!

2. Give your child materials and let them explore.

Mix It Up

Create a wash station for toy animals, vehicles or blocks. Have your child give them a bath then rinse and repeat!

What do they do?

Have your child guess whether different materials will sink or float. They can drop items in water to see if their prediction was right.

Adjust the Challenge

Start with just the tub filled with a little bit of water. Next, add a cup of water for your child to explore. What do your child’s feet, legs, or a sponge feel like in the water? Your child may need to adjust the challenge based on their progress.

Extend the Fun

Want sensory play without the mess? Fill a clear, plastic bottle with water, then add food coloring, glitter, beads or small toys. Glue the lid shut and let your child tip, roll and shake to their heart’s content!
Tape Puzzles

Set-up: 3 min

Toddlers and preschoolers love filling spaces – packing, stacking, ordering. This simple activity turns it into a game!

What You Need:
- Painters tape (or other not-too-sticky tape)
- Blocks or other materials to fill the space – cloth, paper, cut pieces of cardboard, jar lids, etc.

To Play:
1. Find a comfortable space on a floor or rug. Use the tape to mark off an enclosed space. A simple square works well, but you can make it more complex if you like.
2. Have the child fill in the space with the blocks or other materials.
3. Do it again with the same or different objects.

Extend the Fun

Mix it up:
- Take different shapes to be filled.
- Using the tape, create
- Instead of tape, try filling a shoe box lid or plastic bin.
- Leave a small space on the wall at the floor level. See if you can cover the space by stacking materials.
- Tape a small space on the wall or floor.
- Cover it with blocks or fill it with other materials.
- Don't fit the pieces, inside or out. Separate single objects can fit.
Point and Seek

Set-up: 1 min

Children love to explore, even if it’s only with their eyes. In this game, children find categories in their environment with a fun rhyme and pointing.

Rhyme
To Start:
- Let’s find green.
- I’ll show you how.
- The door is green. (Point)
- I found it! Wow!

To Continue:
- Let’s find more green.
- It’s your turn now. (Pause for pointing)
- The (chair, book, etc) is green.
- You found it! Wow!

To Play:

1. Look around you and pick a category. Colors and shapes work well.

2. Use the first rhyme to start the game and provide an example. Use the second rhyme to invite your child to play.

3. Repeat the rhyme to point to more objects or replace the bold words with a new color or category. Play again!

Mix It Up
- Choose another category to keep things going: soft things, toys, funny things, things you like. Any category will work.
- Have your child run to the object instead of pointing.
- Instead of looking around a whole room, focus on something smaller, such as a favorite toy or doll. Use the rhyme to label whatever you’re focusing on. “Let’s find an arm.”

Another Take:
“Let’s find more green.” The door is green. (Point)
I found it! Wow!

Adjust the Challenge

Extend the Fun
Dice Dash

Set-up: 8 min

Toddlers and preschoolers love matching games. Encourage them to get up and move as they roll the dice and run, hop, or crawl to the corresponding color.

What You Need:
- Dice customized for the game
- Paper or felt to create two floor bases to match each color on the dice

Make Your Dice:
- Turn an old tissue box into a large colorful dice or use real dice as a starting point. Tape or glue a piece of colorful paper to each side. Markers work too!

To Play:
1. Place colored bases on the floor. Spread them out – children love to move!
2. Have your child roll the dice and run, hop, or crawl to the base on the floor that matches the color.
3. Take turns rolling and moving to the matching base.

Extend the Fun

Mix It Up

- Another Take: Find the matching square on a table instead of rolling a dice. Pick squares out of a bag.
- Adapt the tissue box dice. Use a regular dice or adapt the tissue box and write 1-6 on the floor.
- Make different matching pairs, pictures of animals, shapes, patterns or colors.

ADJUST THE CHALLENGE

- Shake or toss it again! Have children hold their hands, see if they explore the cube with their fingers, let them toddler after it, let them roll the colorful dice. Let them across the floor and let their little one crawl or roll the colorful dice.

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