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

Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences
**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.

**Adjust the Challenge**

Math

Fine Motor

Sensory

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 shake or roll it to their heart’s content.

Another Take:

Start with just the tub filled with a little bit of water. Add a cup of water for your child to experiment with. Next, add a sponge and follow their lead. What do they do? Have the child fill a wash station with a little bit of water for your child to experiment with. Next, add a cup of water for your child to experiment with.

What materials will sink or float? Have your child give them a bath then rinse and repeat. Create a wash station for toys. Give the lid shut and let your child give them a bath then rinse and repeat. Have your child give them a bath then rinse and repeat.

**For Toy Animals, Vehicles or Blocks:** Have your child give them a bath then rinse and repeat!

**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 shake or roll it to their heart’s content.
Tape Puzzles

Set-up: 3 min

Toddler 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.

Adjust the Challenge

Tape a small space on the wall at floor level. See if you can cover the space by stacking materials. Don’t fill the space by level. See if you can fill the wall at the floor a small space on inside or not separate single object can fit simply see whether a different shapes to be filled, using the tape create another.

Mix It Up:

Instead of tape, try filling a shoe box lid or plastic bin to keep the pieces contained. To keep the pieces

Extend the Fun
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!

**Extend the Fun**

Adjust the challenge:

- Make it a memory game for older children.
- Keep things going: soft things, toys, funny things, things you like.

Problem Solving
Math
Language & Communication

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Rhymes 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!

Mix It Up:

Choose another category to play.

Another Take:

Red, you got it! Wow! A fire engine is red. Make it a memory game for older children.

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Get an animal. Can you find game with concrete done as a simple finding. This activity can be extended fun.

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Get an animal. Can you find game with concrete done as a simple finding. This activity can be extended fun.
Mix It Up: Make different matching pairs. Instead of colors use shapes, pictures of animals, or patterns. Or take the game outside!

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
- Shake or toss it again! Shake or toss it again! Roll the colorful dice across the floor and let your little one crawl or toddle after it. Let them explore the cube with their hands. See if they match the number of circles on the floor to the number on the die. Make an adapted tissue box or use a regular die of squares on the floor and write 1-6 on the floor.
- Adapt the tissue box or take the game outside! Adapt the tissue box or take the game outside! Find the matching square on a table instead of rolling a die. Write 1-6 on the floor and use a regular die of squares on the floor and write 1-6 on the floor.

Math Creativity
- Toddler 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.