

ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR CHILDREN

Children naturally enjoy learning and developing new skills. Play is the work of childhood. Instead of flashcards or educational videos, children need time to explore, indoors and out, without a lot of rules. The adult's role is to provide safety and support, while respecting each child's style of play. It helps children master new thinking skills, such as decision making, build motor skills and keeps them active, which reduces behavior problems. It also provides opportunities for children to learn friendship skills such as sharing, cooperation and compromise. Discover something new with your children!

Dough

Kids like to squish and roll play dough. It is easy to make and lasts for a week or so if you keep it in a zip lock bag.

Oatmeal Dough

- 2 cups flour
- 2 cups regular oatmeal
- 1 cup water

Mix together well. The dough dries hard and can be painted.

Coffee Dough

- 2 cups flour
- 2 cups dry coffee
- 1 cup water

Mix together well. This dough smells great!

Paint


Kids love this washable paint. It can be stored for about a week in a jar with a tight lid or in a squeeze bottle. Use it on construction paper, newspaper, magazine pages, foil or cardboard.

Thick Sparkle Paint

1 cup water

- 1 cup salt
- 1 cup flour
- Food coloring





Combine the flour and salt in a big bowl. Add drops of food coloring to the water until you get the color you need. Slowly pour the water into the dry mixture, stirring frequently. It will be thick. Store the paint in a jar with a tight lid and use it to finger paint. You can also put it into a clean squeeze bottle (ketchup or mustard) and squeeze it onto the paper like glitter glue. When the paint dries it will be shiny and sparkly.

Water

Will This Float or Sink?

Teach your child about buoyancy and density of different objects. Things that are buoyant will float because they are less dense than water. Things that sink are heavier or denser than the water. Fill the bathtub, sink, a big bowl or a dish pan 1/3 full of water. Gather a variety of objects from around the house, such as sponges, cotton balls, broken crayons, coins, metal washers, clothespins, paper scraps, bottle caps, cloth or other interesting items you have on hand. Ask your child which objects she thinks will float and which will sink, then have her test her predictions.

Dress-Up

Children love to imitate the grownups in their lives. Fill a box with clothes and props they can use to dress up and pretend! Here are some ideas:

- dress shirts
- work shirts
- dresses
- high heels
- boots
- men's shoes
- hats
- scarves
- backpacks
- sunglasses
- jewelry
- binoculars
- hard hat
- safety vest
- purses
- old dishes
- neck ties
- flowers
- empty food boxes
- camping gear
- a work jacket



Store

Gather items that you would see in a store such as food boxes and cans, signs, cash register receipts, store flyers and grocery bags. Set everything up and pretend to own your own business! Stock shelves, decide how much things cost and start selling!

A decorative border of diverse children and adults is arranged around the page. At the top, a woman holds a baby, a girl talks to a woman, a woman and girl talk, a man smiles, a girl waves, a boy plays with a ball, a woman reads to a girl, and a girl stands. On the left, a boy walks, a man walks, a girl walks, a boy crouches, a girl and woman are with a box, a girl walks, a woman talks to a girl, and a girl smiles. On the right, a girl stands, a girl walks, a boy walks, a girl reads, a girl in a red dress stands, a girl walks, a woman talks to a girl, and a girl in a blue dress stands.

Scribble & Draw

Give children the chance to try lots of different writing tools such as crayons, pencils and markers as well as tools you might not think of such as squeeze bottles, crepe paper and cinnamon sticks. Working on different types of surfaces is good for brain development because children see how writing tools act in different ways.

Sand Paper Art

- Sand paper
- Broken crayons

Scribble and draw on the rough side of the sand paper. Use the tip of the crayon for narrow lines and the side of the crayon for wide heavy lines. How does it feel to draw on the rough surface? Is it different from other paper you've tried? How does the color look? Is it bold and bright? Can you see the sandpaper under the crayon wax?

Variations: An adult can place the completed drawing between thick layers of newspaper and iron it with a warm iron. Does this make the colors brighter or less bright? Draw on sandpaper using bark, chalk, cinnamon sticks, rocks or anything that makes marks.



Paper

Cereal boxes, junk mail, newspapers, grocery sacks... paper is everywhere! Your child can cut, draw, glue and tear paper and in doing so learn some interesting things!

Simply Stickers

Many children adore plastic bandages and rolls of tape because they seem like such a big part of the grownup world. So gather some up and encourage your children to create! Mailing labels, dot stickers, foil stars, masking tape, electrical tape, clear tape, duct tape, holiday stickers and foam stickers are great for making a sticker collage. Peel the backing off and arrange on a sheet of cardboard or paper. Draw a border or make one around the edge using one or two kinds of stickers. Experiment with patterns of different kinds.

A decorative border of diverse children and adults is arranged around the page. At the top, a row of people includes a woman holding a baby, a girl, a woman, two girls, a man, a girl, a boy with a ball, a woman reading, and a girl. On the left side, from top to bottom: a woman holding a baby, a boy, a man, a girl, a boy, a girl, a boy, a girl, a woman, and a girl. On the right side, from top to bottom: a girl, a girl, a girl, a boy, a girl, a girl, a girl, a girl, a girl, and a girl.

Ooey and Goey

Ooblick

If you're looking for something to do inside on a rainy day pour a box of corn starch in a dishpan and add a tiny bit of water. The mixture is called Ooblick and it acts like a solid when you move it and squeeze it and like it's a liquid when you stop. The cornstarch doesn't dissolve in the water. It's called suspension. Clean Up: If you wash this down the drain turn the water on and let it run for a while to clear the drain.

Scissors

Paper Factory

Collect different kinds of paper such as cereal boxes, brown paper sacks, plastic grocery bags, newspaper, foil, wax paper, junk mail, sandpaper ... the list is endless! Cut the paper into strips 2 inches wide and 6 inches long and put them into a shoebox or basket. Have your child sit at a low table with her feet touching the floor and put the box of strips out so she can choose what she'd like to cut. She might cut the strip into a few big pieces, small squares or rectangles, or even confetti! Talk with her about what she is doing. Point out shapes you see such as rectangles, squares, triangles and more.

Variations

1. Encourage your child to cut wavy lines, fringe and zig-zags.
2. Tape a long strip of paper to the table, turning it in big loops. Tape the loops down to the table through the bottom and in between loops. Your child will be happy to cut this interesting arrangement.

Important! No matter how safe a pair of scissors is, it is still a tool. Teach your child to handle them safely and use them wisely. Talk about what is ok to cut (clay, yarn, paper) and what not to cut (hair, clothing, story books). Watch your child carefully while she practices with her scissors.

