



FUN ACTIVITIES AT HOME

Are you looking to keep your child actively engaged and learning while you stay at home? Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- ➡ Consider having your child move between the rooms of your home throughout the day. This will add variety, reduce boredom and promote engagement. The same activity presented in a new location will amuse children all over again
- ➡ Try alternating a quiet activity with a physically active one. This will extend your child's ability to stay focused on a task
- ➡ Create and stick to a routine throughout the day. This will reduce anxiety and help everyone to manage better

KITCHEN / DINING ROOM

There are many items in your pantry and kitchen that can be used to engage children. Here are some fun activities you can try:

Use cans of food to stack, sort, roll, transfer from one box, container or shelf to another

Use this activity to practise various skills such as:

- Math skills by sorting food by coloured label, size or category of food
- Language skills by labelling the foods and modelling comments that describe the food
- Following one and two step directions such as “put the big red can behind the blue can”
- Gross motor skills by squatting and reaching to move food cans from one shelf to another



Play pretend grocery shopping with the canned foods in your pantry

Tip: A great activity for promoting language and social skills

Make a food necklace or bracelet

Thread some Cheerios, macaroni or small pretzels onto a string or pipe cleaner to make a necklace or bracelet. Wrap some tape around one end of the string to make it easier to insert into the object.

Use scissors to cut newspaper, flyers, playdough or spaghetti

Older children can help prepare dinner by cutting lettuce for salad with clean scissors



Create a sensory bin

Putting any dried foods such as rice, oatmeal, cornmeal or pasta into a large flat bowl

Tips:

- An old baby bath placed on top of a large beach towel is ideal. Add spoons, cups, sifters and funnels for hours of fun
- If space permits, a small wading pool creates a great container for the child to sit in and play with the sensory material. This reduces the amount of materials spilling onto the floor

Stack and sort

Use plastic containers and bowls to stack, sort and build

Wash non-breakable dishes in the sink

Encourage pouring from one container to another to promote fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination

Set the table for a meal

This is a great counting and math activity



Place a table cloth on the floor have a pretend (or real) picnic

Spread a large sheet of paper such as two or three sheets of newspaper on the floor. Use masking tape to secure the edges of the paper to the floor around the whole perimeter of the paper.

Provide crayons for your child to scribble on the paper

Tip: Older children may like to circle certain letters or numbers, or colour pictures they see on the newspaper

Make Playdough

Recipe

- 4 cups flour
- 1 cup salt
- 1 tablespoon cream of tartar or alum
- 4 cups boiling water (the water must actually be boiling when mixed with the flour)
- 4 tablespoons oil

Process: Mix all dry ingredients in a large bowl, pour in boiling water and stir well to bind all the dry ingredients together. When cool enough, knead in the oil

Tips: Children can help with measuring ingredients; however, mixing in the boiling water must be done safely by an adult. You can add food colour, flavourings like vanilla or cinnamon, and sparkles, as you wish and as is safe for your child. To make things more fun add safe kitchen tools to playdough such as a potato masher, garlic press, rolling pin, ice cream scoop, tooth picks (without sharp points), small hammers

HALLWAY / LIVING ROOM

The space in your living room and hallway make a great space for gross motor development activities. Here are a few fun and creative ideas:

Create an indoor obstacle course

1. Put masking tape lines on the floor to jump over or walk along
2. Use a stool or storage bin to step up onto and jump down from
3. Crawl between two masking tapes marked with X's
4. Throw soft toys into a bucket
5. Position storage bins or large cans of food to run, jump, or crawl between and around



Dance to music

Play some music. Children of all physical abilities will be able to move to music in their own unique way

Tips:

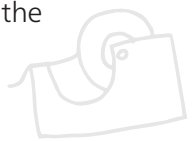
- Add a plastic bowl and a wooden spoon to make a drum
- Play music with a variety of tempos, fast and exciting, slow and calming and remember to always end the session with some calming music
- Play freeze dance where a child must hold their pose when the music stops. This is an excellent exercise for practicing balance and self-regulation

Cardboard forts

Crawl in and out of large old cardboard boxes. Stack and build with smaller boxes such as shoe boxes. Take a large cardboard box such as a dishwasher box into a house by cutting out a door and a window. Throw a sheet or large table cloth over two large boxes to create a makeshift tent

Walk like an animal

Have your child pick their favourite animal (like a kangaroo, snake, elephant or bird) and ask them to imitate the animal's walk



Create a scavenger hunt.

Tell your child to bring you objects from around the house

Tips: Practise school readiness skills by having your child bring something of a certain colour, shape, size or that begins with a certain letter sound. You can give your child a single picture or picture list of objects to retrieve. This can promote pre-reading and matching skills

LAUNDRY ROOM

Getting children involved in daily living tasks allows them the ability to learn life skills and feel a sense of accomplishment. Here are some laundry room activities that you can introduce:

Match socks during laundry time

Fold laundry

Model language such as “small” or “big” while noticing the different sizes of clothing. With older children, talk about why certain articles of clothing are worn, such as a sweater, which is worn to keep you warm when it is cold. Shorts are worn in hot weather

Sort laundry into piles such as by colour, size, category (T-shirts, pants and so forth) or by which family member the clothing belongs to

You can also measure detergent and pour it into the washing machine with your child, or encourage your child to carry a heavy basket of laundry to different bedrooms. Please remember that the weight of basket should match the child's abilities.



BEDROOM

This space can be used for calming activities that will allow for a nice break for parents and children. Here are some simple and relaxing activities:

Read a book together

Look at a family photo album

Encourage your child to talk about what they see in the picture or remember about that occasion

Listen to an audio book

Listen to calm, quiet music

Create a homemade puzzle

Cut a picture from a magazine into four pieces or more and encourage your child to rebuild the picture

Provide any old clothing that can be used for dress up. Children love to dress up in their parents' or adults' clothing, shoes and hats

This activity provides a great opportunity to:

- Practise dressing and fine motor skills such as doing up buttons and zippers
- Role play where children pretend to be someone else
- Develop self-image, especially when they look in the mirror



MAKING ADAPTATIONS FOR ALL ACTIVITIES

- For children who look for a lot of heavy input through their large and small muscles, joints and skin (proprioceptive sensory input), you can have them dance, jump, crawl, carry heavy objects and squeeze things such as playdough
- Children who may be challenged or delayed in their gross motor development can participate in all activities while sitting down
- Children who are visually impaired will benefit from sensory rich activities
- Children who are hearing impaired can learn by showing them a picture or by providing them with a concrete material or object

All activities should be supervised by an adult to ensure the child's safety.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Indoor/outdoor activities ideas for young children

- handsonaswegrow.com/indoor-kids-activities
- classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html?caching
- pbs.org/parents

Online free kids/adult activities to keep physically active indoors

- parade.com/1011717/jessicasager/best-free-workouts
- goodhousekeeping.com/health/fitness/a31792038/coronavirus-live-stream-workout-classes

