

Indoor Play Ideas



Children thrive through play

Play is vital for **children's physical health** as well as their **mental health** and **cognitive development**. There is also some evidence that if children are physically active when they are young they are more likely to **adopt healthy lifestyles** as they grow up.

Play builds health and wellbeing – being active through play helps children physically and emotionally, contributing to their health and happiness.

Play builds brain development and supports a range of learning skills.

Play builds resilience – playing boosts children's confidence, creativity, problem-solving skills and perseverance, enabling them to cope with stress and challenges throughout life.

Children from a very young age take part in lots of different types of play. From early games such as peek-a-boo to more complex dramatic role play, to just “hanging out”, children and young people are learning to communicate and build relationships. So many skills are best learned through play. There is also no need to buy expensive toys for play, in this booklet we have ideas for lots of things that can be made from things you might have in your house. Don't use small loose parts for very young children.



1 DIY sensory board Adult support

Get a large piece of wood and attach various locks, latches, baking trays (these can then use magnetic letters and numbers), push on push off battery operated lights, a calculator, light switch, chains, keys attached to ribbon, things that turn (eg small wheels off toys) and lots more.

Lots of fun will be had with these. You could get your child to draw a house on the board then add the lock/latch to the front of the house.

2 Textile sensory board Adult support

Using a large piece of wood or cardboard attach various materials to give a variety of textures to play with and touch.

Examples: cotton wool, felt, ribbon, tin foil, zips, mirror, sponge, zip lock bags with hair gel/shaving gel/conditioner – **even add in glitter!**

3 Match the pegs Adult support

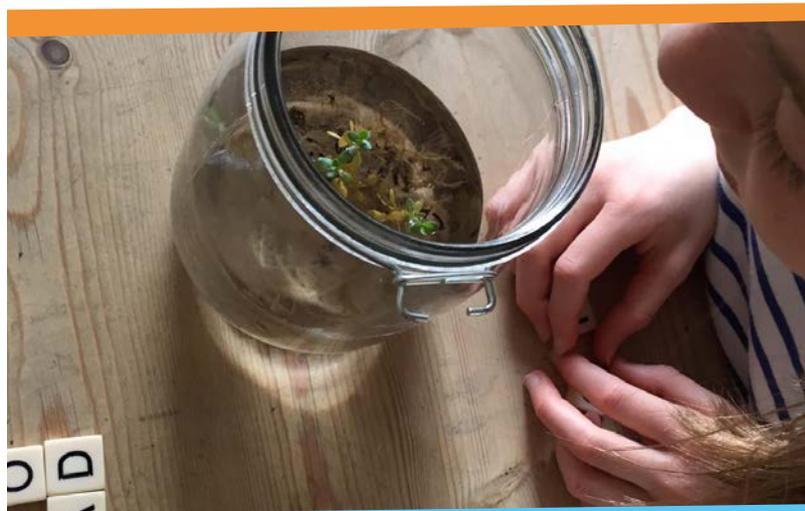
Peg coloured clothes pegs to some string. The object of the game is for the child to find an object in the house which is the same colour as each peg.

4 Boxes galore

Boxes are great fun for imaginative play. Keep boxes of various sizes and children can use them in a variety of ways. **They can be boats, cars, treasure islands – the possibilities are endless!**

5 Count the raindrops

On a rainy day, can you count how many rain drops run down the window? Choose two and guess which one will run down the window fastest.

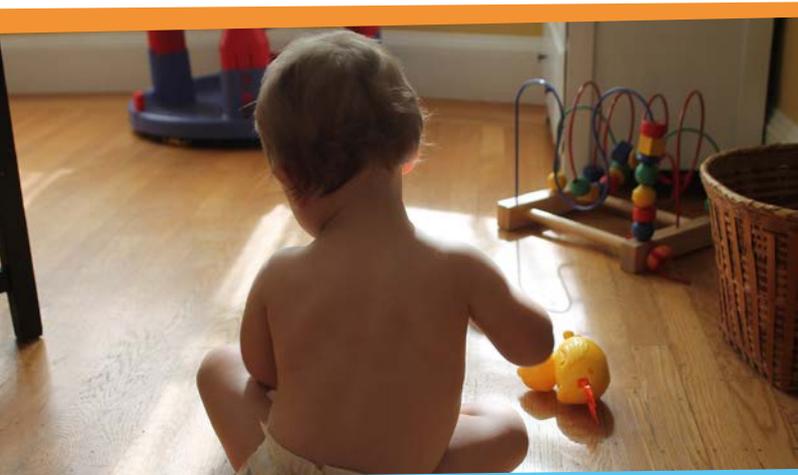


6 Performance box

Get a large box and cut a square out of the front of the box, making a television like shape. **This can now be used for children to do their own productions, or even for puppet shows.** Crayons can be used to decorate the outside of the box.

7 Perform a play

Make up a play to perform to an imaginary audience and/or another family member!
Try dressing up to add to your performance.



8 Imaginative play

Be a fire breathing dragon, cast spells and 'do magic', use props like sticks and ribbons, pat invisible animals/ eat invisible food, pretend objects are other things e.g. a sofa can be a bus.

9 Dance

On your own or with your family, just get moving!
Dancing is great exercise.

10 Family survey

Ask everyone in your family what their favourite food, film and animal is. **You can make up other things to ask them too!** Write the answers down so you can see what's most popular!

11 Stop the clock!

Use a phone or clock to give yourself 30 seconds to find as many red things as you can in a room in your house or garden. **Change the colour, place, and amount of time after every shot!**

12 Family portrait

Draw a picture of all of your family. Think about what everyone looks like and the clothes they usually wear. Don't be shy in getting creative with colour and other materials!

13 Take-it-in-turns storytelling

One person starts the story with the first sentence, then the next person leads on the story with another sentence, and then repeats around the group or pair.

14 Poster design

Design a poster of your favourite film! Use pencils, pens, paint and other materials... **Be as creative as you can!**

15 Bingo

Make scorecards of 5 squares and across and 5 squares down and then put in some numbers. Put a matching set of numbers in a bowl, and give everyone a scorecard. Pull out a number, show to everyone. Colour over the matching number on your scorecard. When you have coloured over all your matching numbers, **shout BINGO!!**

16 Indoor camping

Put a tent up in your house and go camping! If you don't have a tent, use a sheet, two chairs and some string.

17 Indoor maze

Use your hallway or other room in your house to make a maze! Using string, tape or items of clothing. Just tie things at different heights and see if you can get through without touching anything!



18 Mini music festival

Pick your dream line up to suit the whole family, design a poster to advertise the festival and start playing those tunes! **You can even dress up festival style!** You could make flowery headbands from paper or tissue and dig out those sunglasses!

19 Dress up

Use old clothes, new clothes, costumes... and get creative! You can even get into character.



20 Design a monster

On the biggest piece of paper you have, draw an outline of your body (or just your head and shoulders). Left-over wallpaper works well. Once you have an outline, create a **friendly MONSTER** with googly eyes and a funny hairstyle.

21 Matching game

Use hard card to make 20 squares, as close to the same size as you can. On 10 of them draw different shapes or symbols, then do exactly the same on the other 10. Turn them and mix them up and you've got your own matching game!

22 New world

Make up a world completely different from our own and create cities and characters to be a part of it! You can act it out and even design a poster/drawing to **visualise your new world!**

23 Play shops

Use cardboard/paper to make pretend money and find some food or other things in the house to pretend to sell! Decide who is going to be the shopkeeper and who is going to be the customer... **then play shops!**

24 Shape spotting

How many circles, triangles or squares can you spot in each room in your house or garden? **Why not make it a race to find the most rectangles?**

25 Memory game

Gather together items (maybe start with 8) on a tray/table, e.g. pencil, sock, spoon, toy. Cover and see how many you remember. Keep adding items until you can't remember them all - how many can you do?

26 Experiment with volume

It's difficult to guess how much odd-shaped containers will hold. Gather together different containers and see how much water they take. **Estimate how many times smaller ones will go into bigger ones!**

27 'Granny went shopping...'

The first player says, "Granny went shopping and bought...", then says what she bought. The next player repeats and recites what the first player said she bought and adds his or her own item, and so forth.

28 Paper planes

Make paper planes and see which flies the furthest. Does it make a difference if you put weights (paperclips) on them? **Make your plane look great with your own design.**



29 Ice cube race

Make and freeze ice cubes – add food colouring and have 4 of each colour. **Then see who can melt their ice cubes the fastest.**

30 Create some music

Use pots and pans for drums and wooden spoons for drumsticks! How about making your own percussion instruments with containers and rice?



31 Make your own aquarium

Make your own aquarium and go fishing! Fill a paddling pool with water and blue or green colouring. Then add some plastic toy animals e.g. frogs, snakes, fish and use nets, slotted spoons or strainers to catch as many creatures as possible! Do it on your own or make it a competition between your family! Who is the quickest? **Who can catch the most exotic creature?**

32 Make invisible ink

You can make invisible ink by mixing lemon juice & water. Using a cotton bud write on white paper and leave to dry. The writing will disappear and reappear when heated up a little or by using a torch. **You can write your own secret messages.**

33 Paint a picture blindfolded

Pin some paper to a wall or fence and lay a plastic sheet or some newspaper below. Use a scarf for a blindfold and make sure you are wearing an apron! Have a family member guide you to the paper and hand you a paint brush and then **get painting!**

Play Scotland is the lead organisation for the development and promotion of children and young people's play in Scotland. We work strategically to make the child's right to play a reality so that all children can reach their full potential and be able to confidently inhabit an inclusive public realm, as well as help shape child friendly communities.

Further information

For playful resources visit

www.playscotland.org/parents-families

Also, keep up to date on our website and social channels



Produced by Sammy Wyeth as part of the **#101waystoplay** campaign

Committed to PLAY



Taic do Chluiche



Play Scotland
Rosebery House, Level 1
9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5EZ
T: 0131 313 8859 E: info@playscotland.org



Company Number: SC197785, Scottish Charity Number: SC029167.
Registered at the above address.