

Indoor activities

Looking for fun activities you can do indoors with your child at home? We've collected lots of great ideas for you! Some of these are games you can do together, while others are activities your child may be able to do on their own with you nearby to supervise.

Being stuck inside doesn't have to be boring; with a little imagination you and your child can have lots of fun. Remember that you don't need to schedule activities to fill every moment, but it's helpful to have a few ideas up your sleeve for when you need them.

Activities to Do With Your Child at Home

If you need some indoor play inspiration, here are some ideas for activities you can do with your child at home:

- **Make noise with random household objects.** Gather some safe household objects like an empty box, a wooden spoon, and the lid of a tub and let your child pick which one they want to play with. Your child will enjoy handling each item and banging it to see what noise it makes. Just make sure whatever you give them isn't breakable or dangerous.
- **Show your child something magical.** Another fun activity you can do at home is to show your child how certain things work. Seeing you press a switch that turns on a light or pressing a doorbell that makes such a loud sound will be magical for your child.
- **Look out of the window.** Stand with your child at the window and point out birds, passing cars, a squirrel running along the fence, or the shape of clouds.
- **Have a dance party.** Turn on some fun music and dance with your child they will enjoy dancing hand in hand.

- **Read together.** It's great to share reading picture books with your child. Point out the characters in the story and use expressive voices to bring the story to life. Get your child involved by helping them hold the book and turn the page.
- **Sing or chant nursery rhymes together.** Those rhymes and songs that have simple hand movements will particularly delight your child. You might hear your child make sounds along with you if they don't yet have the words or actions yet. You may remember one or two from your childhood, but you can also check out the popular nursery rhymes below.
- **Build an obstacle course.** Your child might love to crawl, climb, and explore. Create an obstacle course using pillows and boxes, and your child will be thrilled at the challenge of getting over, under, and around the objects.
- **Create a bridge.** Pull two chairs together with about 3 feet between the backs of the chairs. Place a towel or blanket over the top, encouraging your child to crawl under the bridge. They'll love the sense of achievement, and they'll love finding you waiting on the other side.
- **Blow bubbles.** Blow bubbles around your child and watch them try to swat at them in wonder and catch them.
- **Play with blocks.** Piling blocks into a tower that can later be knocked down is a big favourite among many children. Traditional wooden blocks are nice, but you can also make your own box blocks by stuffing milk cartons, cereal boxes, or shoe boxes with paper and taping them shut.
- **Roll balls back and forth.** You can also name the features of the ball as you do it; for example, you could say "Roll the yellow ball to me!". You can then try this with a few different balls and say things like "Roll the big striped ball."
- **Play peek-a-boo.** Your child will be delighted as you reveal your face from behind your hands or from behind a blanket or tower. You can pull a funny face to create even more laughter.

- **Assemble a tactile tub.** Put clothes or different fabrics such as coarse wool, smooth silk, beaded materials, or netting in a tub, box, or bag. Let your child handle and feel the different materials.
- **Organise a safe kitchen cupboard.** Though you may have secured your low kitchen cupboards by locking them shut, you might like to keep one cupboard open to store safe, unbreakable items like small pots and tubs with lids and wooden utensils for your child to play with and explore. They'll love the opportunity of being able to grab, bang, and shake all the different objects.
- **Rotate toys.** Your child will be intrigued with something "new" if you rotate toys and keep the rest hidden. When you give them a toy, encourage them to reach it and let them figure it out by themselves so that they will get that sense of achievement.

More Fun Indoor Activities for Your Child at Home

Here are some fun activities you can do indoors with your child as well as solo play ideas you can encourage:

- **Sort objects.** Put an array of safe objects on the floor and help your child learn how to sort them by colour, size, shape, or type. Objects can include all kinds of household things like socks, a hat, a brush, a clean sponge, fruits, bottles, tubs, and boxes.
- **Make a shape box.** Find a small ball and a block, and then cut a rectangle and a circle into the lid of an old shoe box, making the openings the same size as these objects. Help your child learn to place each item in the right hole. Explain the features of the shape by saying things like "See, this block has square edges. Which hole has square edges?" and watch them triumph when the object successfully falls through the hole.

- **Play hide and seek.** Challenge your child to find you hidden behind a sofa or behind a door. They will also love the thrill of hiding behind a curtain and waiting for you to find them.
- **Let your child help you with chores.** Your child likes to mimic you and may want to help out when they see you doing chores. Encourage their desire to be helpful by letting them participate in doing safe tasks. You could put on fun music and put their toys away together, or you could ask them to help you fold socks. Be encouraging and help them help you.
- **Cook together.** Why not bake some cookies or cupcakes? Let them help out with mixing the ingredients, pouring the batter into the pan, or icing the finished product. Or they could just be there to help you as the chief taste tester. Just make sure that everything is safe: for example, don't leave any sharp utensils within your child's reach, and keep them away from the hot stove and oven.
- **Share family stories.** Take out a photo album and show them pictures of yourself when you were younger as well as those of their grandparents. You could even show them pictures of themselves when they were a newborn. They will love learning about their family tree and hearing stories about themselves.
- **Create a scrapbook together.** Gather some paintings or drawings your child is doing and let them pick out some favourites. Get a big notebook or folder and add the art with the date alongside it. In a few years, your child will love having this special keepsake of their earliest work.
- **Display your child's art.** Get your child involved in choosing which of their artworks to display, and you can even select a wall that becomes your child's very own art gallery. If you don't want to stick anything on the wall, simply hang it on the fridge using a magnet.

- **Write letters together.** Why not encourage them to write a letter to their favourite grandparent? You can discuss what they'd like to write and you can help by writing the letter, and you can encourage them to scribble their name at the bottom as their "signature." You can also show them how a letter is addressed and let them stick on the stamp. It's ok if you can't send it right now; put it aside and mail it when you have a moment. The recipient will be delighted!
- **Build a fort using a sheet.** Your child will love this activity—you could even call it indoor camping! All you need is a few chairs with a sheet draped over the top to create the fort. Put a comfy pillow inside for your child to sit on. Once the fort is made, encourage your child to look at their picture books in there or give them a torch they can use to make light shapes with. You might find they make it their own little domain that they can spend hours hiding out in. Over time, you'll find your child uses their creativity and imagination to make the fort into whatever they want it to be, whether it's a spaceship, a pirate ship, or a castle.
- **Create a sign for the fort.** They may love the idea of having an entry sign for their fort. Use supplies like glitter and colourful pencils to make the sign and make it match whatever they imagine their fort to be. For example, it could say "Mia's Fairy Wonderland" or "Tom's Castle."
- **Look in the mirror.** Your child loves looking at themselves in the mirror and following your instructions. For example, ask: "Where's your nose?" or "Can you stick out your tongue?". You can even ask your child to look carefully at their eyes and tell you what colour they are.
- **Impersonate an animal.** Play a fun game with your child in which you pick an animal like an "eagle" and then soar through the sky (your living room) with your arms outstretched as if they were wings. Then say "giraffe" and encourage your child to stretch up nice and tall with their arms up high and their hand bent forward as the giraffe's head. You can become an elephant by holding one arm up to your nose like a floppy trunk. Another option is to jump

around the house, pretending to be kangaroos. What fun! Let your child show you how to imitate certain animals for extra fun and encourage them to make the corresponding animal sounds, too.

- **Play ball.** Your child will enjoy rolling a ball back and forth or playing catch with you, and these are good ways to improve their hand skills and hand-eye coordination. Just make sure you pack away any breakables like vases and photo frames because your child's aim will be off (whether it's accidental or on purpose!), and your aim might need some practice, too!
- **Squish coloured spaghetti and rice.** Cook up a small amount of spaghetti and rice and place a few spoonfuls in a few different bowls. Wait for it to cool and add some different coloured food colouring to each bowl. Then, let your child squish the foods with their hands and explore the different colours, textures, and sounds. They'll love making a mess with their hands and feeling the food squish between their fingers!
- **Sort some pom-poms.** You might be able to get these budget-friendly round puffs in various colours at an online retailer. Give your child a muffin tin and ask them to sort the pom-poms by colour. Your child will like the challenge, the feel of the textures, and the look of the bright colours, and this task will help improve their hand and finger skills.
- **Create a stained-glass window.** Get some coloured tissue paper and let your child tear it into small shapes, then help them stick these onto a window to create their own stained-glass window. To stick them you can either use water or glue (just make sure it's the kind that will wash off easily afterward). A less messy approach may be to tape a big square of wax paper onto the window first, and then help your child glue the shapes onto the wax paper. This idea will help them learn to fit shapes together and allow them to express their creativity. They'll also enjoy watching how the colours change depending on how the sun shines in.

- **Stomp on bubble wrap.** If you have bubble wrap at home, place a large square on the floor and let your child jump on it to pop the bubbles.
- **Make a rainbow.** Get your child to scrunch up coloured tissue paper into tiny balls, and then help them stick them on a piece of paper to create a rainbow. If you have limited colours of paper, choose a motif to match. For example, if you have brown and green paper, help your child create a tree.
- **Do a puzzle.** Help your child put the shapes of a large, simple puzzle in the right spot.
- **Chalk it up.** Set up a blackboard and let your child draw with chalk. You might ask them to be the “weather person” each day and ask them to look outside and draw what they see - it could be sun, clouds, or rain, for example.
- **Dip into finger painting.** Grab some big sheets of paper and put out the paint, spreading a drop cloth or newspaper underneath to protect the table or floor. Let your child play with the paint and mix colours with their fingers to see how new colours can be formed this way. You could help your child paint handprints, too. Paints that are suitable for children usually wash out of clothes easily, but you may want to dress them in an apron or clothes you don’t mind them getting dirty. See ideas below
- **Mould some dough.** Give your child some store-bought dough or make some homemade dough that your child can poke, scrunch up, pat down, pull apart, and squeeze together. The same can also work with crinkly cellophane or crunchy wrapping paper. Your child will love making a noise when it’s scrunched or torn.

Ideas for Having Fun and Learning

These engaging activities will help your child develop in improving hand and finger skills and expressing their creativity to learning about numbers, shapes, and letters.

- **Form geometric shapes.** Show your child how to draw shapes like stars, triangles, and diamonds on paper, and then let them decorate the shapes, too, with markers, glitter, paint, or whatever you have on hand.
- **Cut and paste paper.** If you have child-safe scissors at home, your child will enjoy cutting shapes from paper, and gluing them onto another sheet to make a collage. Another idea involves your child cutting a hairstyle for a toilet paper roll “troll.” To do this, take a clean toilet paper roll and draw a face on the lower half using a black marker. Then cut long strands of hair by cutting into the roll vertically. Once the troll is ready, let your child cut the troll’s hair however they’d like to. Get ready for some crazy hairdos!
- **Play card and board games.** A great family activity can be playing simple card or board games that are suitable for your child’s ability and attention span. Just keep in mind that your child may get upset if they don’t win every game.
- **Experiment with clay.** Your child will like making all kinds of shapes and balls with clay. One idea is to help them roll the clay into a large egg shape. Then let them make it into an “egg head” by adding colourful feathers as the hair, fake eyes or beans as the eyes, pipe cleaners as the mouth and ears, and a pom-pom as the nose.
- **Draw and paint.** Your child can have fun creating art with crayons, markers, or pencils. Or have them do some finger painting or painting with a brush (or other painting tools). Select a few artworks to put into a memory book or display some on a wall or on the fridge.
- **Make paper plate faces.** If you have some paper plates at home, get out some arts and crafts supplies and let your child decorate the plate. Let them use their imagination to add eyes, a nose, a mouth, rosy cheeks, and hair.
- **Explore books that introduce concepts.** As you pick out some books to read together, include some that cover concepts such as the days of the week, the

seasons, size (e.g., big versus small), the alphabet, counting, and the names of geometric shapes, for example. The focus shouldn't be on pressuring your child to learn; rather, the books should be so engaging that they are interested in finding out more.

- **Answer the “big” questions.** If you find your child asking questions like “Why is the sky blue?” or “Where does the sun go at night?” don't feel you have to have all the answers at the ready. Instead, see if you can look for the answers together using books that you have or online resources for children. Often these important questions are answered in a way that's easy for young people to understand. Doing this will show your child that it's ok not to know something, and that it's great to search until you find the answers.
- **Take a virtual tour.** If you're stuck indoors, you may be able to take your child on a virtual tour of a zoo or a museum. This can help them explore places and learn about things that interest them in an interactive way. With all the free online resources available now, you don't have to leave your home to see fascinating things from all over the world.
- **Discover what sinks and what floats.** Encourage your scientist to explore the concept of buoyancy by inviting them to sail different objects across a miniature pond. Fill a saucepan half full of water and collect some objects of different densities: small pieces of cork, wood, paper, and plastic, along with a leaf, a stone, a bar of soap, and a sponge. Have them experiment with the objects to see which ones sink and which ones float. You could even ask them to guess first and then test their prediction.
- **Go on a treasure hunt.** Create a basic map of your living room complete with the TV, windows, sofa, and rug marked using matching colours and clear drawings. Then draw an X to mark a few spots where you've hidden a surprise. The treat could be something like a single sweet or a sticker. You might like to hide something under a pillow or leave one on a ledge behind the curtain. Your child will love the hunt as well as the thrill of finding their treasure.

- **Make an indoor garden.** Gather some pots, potting soil, and some seeds or seedlings. Then show your child how to plant seeds and water their plants. Watching it grow together will be a satisfying joint project that you'll both enjoy.
- **Ice some cupcakes.** If you enjoy baking, this is a nice way to spend time with your child in the kitchen. Bake some cupcakes together and let your child help you decorate them after they've cooled down. You can top them with moss green or purple coloured icing and ask your child to sprinkle them with edible glitter to make them into "fairy cupcakes." Alternatively, if a special day like Halloween is coming up, go with orange-coloured icing, and help your child use liquorice to create spiders as the decoration.
- **Track your child's height.** As your child grows taller, it's fun to mark their height on a wall or door frame. Of course, you can always buy a height chart, or create your own poster using large sheets of paper and a ruler. Your child will love seeing how tall they are and seeing how much they've grown since the last measurement.
- **Send and receive mail.** All children love getting mail, so ask a close friend, grandparent, or other relative to write to your child via email. Your child will be delighted to get a message sent to your email address that's just for them. If one of your close relatives has a birthday coming up, get your child to design a birthday card (the card can always be mailed later) and then give the lucky person a video call so you and your child can sing "Happy Birthday."
- **DIY learning folder.** If your child enjoys learning in a more formal way, get a ring binder, a few sheets of A4 paper, and a plastic sleeve for each sheet. Each sheet should be dedicated to a specific topic, which could include the alphabet, geometric shapes, colours, days of the week, numbers 1 to 10, and seasons. You can design these sheets on your computer, making sure that the letters, shapes, or numbers are nice and big on each sheet. What about labelling the shapes as per the picture below? Then you'll need to create cut-outs to match. So, for the seasons, you could make a cut-out of a sun, snowflake, autumn leaf,

and flower. Then stick a little adhesive putty on the back of each shape, and have your child place the symbol on the correct part of the page. Your child may need help completing the various activities but if you help them and make it enjoyable, they'll learn in time.

To help you feel more connected to other parents like you, it might help to create or join an online chat group or forum for other parents in your community where you can share creative ideas for fun indoor activities. You'll be able to share tips and encourage each other. Plus, if one of you is having a bad day or struggling with a specific challenge, you can be there for each other. Even though you're at home with your child, being in touch with fellow parents via phone, video chat, or group chat will help you feel that you're not actually alone.

Listed in this article are just some of the many fun activities you and your child can do at home, with several of them not requiring anything other than everyday household objects and a little imagination. Your child learns through play, and while these activities help your child's development, you might find that you enjoy these shared moments, too!

Action Songs

Here are some ideas on how to have fun and play simple games through nursery rhymes with your child.

Game 1: 'This Little Piggy Went to Market'

(Traditional, origin Great Britain and North America)

This little piggy went to market. (touch big toe/finger)

This little piggy stayed at home. (touch next biggest toe/finger, and so on)

This little piggy had roast beef.

This little piggy had none.

And this little piggy cried, 'Wee, wee, wee!'

All the way home. (tickle him all over)

Game 2: 'Round and Round the Garden'

(Traditional, origin Great Britain)

Round and round the garden (draw circle on child's tummy/hand)

Like a teddy bear.

One step, two steps... (walk your fingers up his chest/arm)

Tickle him under there! (tickle under his chin)

Your child might love this action rhyme because it ends with a surprise tickle. Start by drawing an imaginary circle on your child's tummy/hand, 'round and round'. Then with 'one step, two steps', walk your fingers up his chest/arm, and then tickle him under his chin and arms.

Game 3: 'Jack in the Box'

(Traditional, origin United States)

Jack in the box (cover your eyes)

Sits so still.

Won't you come out?

Yes, I will! (throw up your arms)

Children love this exuberant game of hide-and-seek. Show your child how to cover his eyes, and then say the first couple of lines in a low voice to set the mood. Add some anticipation with the third line, and then throw up your hands and shout out the last line. Your child will love quietly waiting, waiting... and then popping up like a jack-in-the-box!

Game 4: 'Row, Row, Row Your Boat'

(Traditional, origin Great Britain and North America)

Row, row, row your boat (rock back and forth)

Gently down the stream.

Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily

Life is but a dream.

Your child loves doing as much possible with you, including riding in a boat. Sit down on the floor and settle your child so he's facing you. Hold both his hands with yours, and rock back and forth in time to the song. Vary the tempo for a fast boat ride or a slow one. Take advantage of the easy rhythm by substituting some of your own words (wash, wash, wash your face; roll, roll, roll the ball...). You'll both end up giggling.

Game 5: 'Old McDonald Had a Farm'

Old McDonald had a farm,

E-I-E-I-O!

And on this farm he had a cow,

E-I-E-I-O!

With a moo, moo here

And a moo, moo there.

Here a moo, there a moo

Everywhere a moo, moo.

Old McDonald had a farm,

E-I-E-I-O!

You can continue with whatever animals you like, such as duck ('quack, quack'), dog ('woof, woof'), cat ('meow, meow'), sheep ('baa, baa'), and horse ('neigh, neigh').

This song is so engaging it can make a child feel as if he's actually singing the words. The sounds are fun to make, and the words help your child learn the names of many animals. Sing it on the way to the zoo or to a farm, then make the sounds when you meet the animals. Your child will be thrilled to find it all so familiar.

Game 6: 'Humpty Dumpty'

(Traditional, origin Great Britain)

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. (tip your child back slightly)

All the king's horses and all the king's men

Couldn't put Humpty together again.

Game 7: 'Trot, Trot, Trot'

(Traditional, origin Great Britain)

Trot, trot, trot to London.

Trot, trot, trot to Dover.

Look out, ____, (child's name)

Or you might fall OVER! (tip to the side)

Learning and Growing

Through music, your child is learning the auditory discrimination skills essential for language development and later for reading. By singing songs throughout the day, you are helping him begin to identify and respond to the sounds, pitches and patterns of language. You're also helping to develop a strong emotional and social connection with your child.

Finger play, action rhymes and simple repetitive songs are important to a child's development of language and memory as he learns to anticipate, predict, and attach words and meanings to actions.

Finger-painting fun

What is it about finger-painting that kids love so much? Being allowed to make a mess is a big part of the fun! Here's how to get your hands dirty while keeping the mess in check.

Cover up

Find a room in the house where you feel comfortable having your child use paints. Spread newspaper all over the floor and table. Roll up her sleeves and help her put on an apron, smock or oversized shirt to protect her clothing.

Play with textures and colours

Finger-painting is a fun way for your child to experiment with textures and colours. For example, add more water to show her how the paint becomes slippery, or mix primary colours so she can see how they change.

Share with your child

Talk to her about how the paint feels on her fingers. Encourage her to use descriptive words or metaphors.

Make a print

You can make a print of your child's finger painting by placing another piece of paper over the surface of the painting and pressing down gently. Pin it to the refrigerator for everyone to admire!

Finger-painting is one of the best ways for children to express themselves creatively. Besides spending quality time with their parents, they also strengthen hand and finger muscles and learn about mixing colours.

What you'll need

- Newspaper
- An apron or an old shirt

- Water-resistant paper, including shiny finger-painting paper
- Primary-colour finger-paints, shop-bought or homemade (see below for recipe)

Alternatives

If your child is reluctant to get her hands 'dirty' with finger paints, you can substitute other materials, like liquid soap, shaving cream with a drop of food colouring, or even chocolate pudding!

Make your own finger paint

Recipe 1:

- 1 to 3 tablespoons water and corn flour
- 1 tablespoon paint or food colouring

Spread the liquid on the finger-painting surface. Add tempera paint.

Recipe 2:

- 945 ml cold water
- 150 g corn flour
- 1 teaspoon paint or food colouring

Mix the water and cornflour. Cook over a medium heat until thick, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat and add paint or food colouring, or divide the mixture into three parts and add three different colours.