

BACK POCKET ACTIVITIES

A compilation of activities with materials you can find in your home or centre for all ages and abilities. Designed for families and educators.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our compilation of back pocket activities, a resource full of simple activities for both educators and families. Within this booklet you will find a variety of activities and experiences you can engage in with your children. The activities are divided into each age group and will include both indoor and outdoor experiences. As a friendly reminder, most activities can be done both inside and outside depending on the weather. Each activity and experience will mainly be materials you can find and access within your own home. With each activity there will also be modifications or adaptations that can be done to ensure your child's individual needs are met. Our goal for this booklet is to provide families and educators with back pocket activities that will scaffold their child's learning and all while being engaging and fun. Enjoy!

Tip: The ages outlined in the booklet go along side of our guiding documents set out by the Ministry of Education in the "Early Learning for Every Child Today" document by The Best Start Expert Panel on Early Learning (2007). This document is a reference for educators and early learning staff to help them reflect and observe the continuum of development. Your child may fit into different "age ranges" based on their development needs and abilities which is perfectly normal.

Glossary

Open-ended questions: Open-ended questions are questions that you can ask your child that cannot be answered with a 'yes' or a 'no.' This encourages children to think and reflect but also gives you insight into what and how they are thinking.

Invitations to Play: An invitation to play is really just a simple way to set up the materials or toys your child/children are using in a new way to spark their interest and invite them in to engage.

Loose Parts: Loose parts are materials that are open ended, they can be used for more than one purpose and spark children's imagination to create. They can represent anything the children imagine. Children are able to move, manipulate, transform, control and change them.

INFANT

Birth to 24 months

OBJECT PERMANENCE BOX



Image retrieved from: <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/188658671881634523/>. May 31st, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- Shoe box or Kleenex box
- A few balls, these could include ball pit balls, or tennis balls, etc.
- Scissors or box cutter knife

HOW TO:

1. If using a shoe box cut a circle big enough for the balls, you are using to fit through on the top of the box and on the side. (Tip: Keep the lid of the shoe box useable for the child to open and close). If using a Kleenex box, you can cut an opening on the side and use the top as is.
2. If you want to keep the balls contained, you can place your box on a tray of some sort, so the balls do not roll too far away. Or you could just place it on the ground and let the balls roll.
3. Next, you can role model the activity for the child by showing the child how you can place the ball in the hole of the box. It may roll out or it may not. If it 'disappears' you could ask the child "Where did the ball go?" You can show them also how the lid works, or to 'look inside' to find it.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- Through this experience your infant will be exploring object permanence. This is when a child is searching for items that have moved out of sight or are hidden. It helps infants learn and recognize that even though they cannot see something that it is still there.
- By having your infant grasp the balls and place them in the box, they are working on their palmer grasp, hand eye coordination and motor control.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

- If your child is struggling with the physical grasp of the balls, you can adapt this experience by hiding a stuffed animal or toy under a small blanket. Have the child try to grasp the blanket to move it and find their toy which would be underneath. You can also do hand over hand with the child when they are grabbing the balls to help them with their grasp.
- To extend this experience you can also place or hide small toys in the box or under a blanket as described above. Another great extension is playing "hide and seek." This will help your infant understand that although they may not be able to see you, you are there or will be back.

ELASTICS ON A TIN



Image retrieved from: <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/11259067808046677/> on June 1st, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- Elastic bands
- Loaf/bread tin

HOW TO:

1. Get your elastics and put them over the loaf tin, like the image above.
2. Face the pan up, so that your child can easily fit their hands in the open spaces to help them grab it.
3. This can be a great experience to do during tummy time.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- This experience is a great fine motor activity for your child to work on their palmer grasp and pincer grasp as they grab the elastics. When they let go of the elastics and they echo off the tin, it will make a noise. This will create a sound exploration for the child and engage them in with the beginning stages of exploring cause and effect.
- Tummy time in itself also promotes children's physical development by helping strengthen their muscles in their neck and shoulders which connects to their overall motor skills.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

- If needed depending on your child's neck and shoulder strength, you can place your infant on a pillow or mat that would help keep them propped up (see above image) and able to grab at the tin.
- To extend this experience you could add a baby safe mirror, one that does not have any cracks or chips in it. You can place the mirror on a wall or on the floor with your infant. Have the mirror set up so that the child can see themselves – this will help promote self-identity.

DESTRUCTIVE PLAY BOX



Image retrieved from: <https://www.powerfulmothering.com/destructive-play-box/> on June 2nd, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- Plastic wipe container
- Felt (if you do not have felt you can use construction paper)
- Velcro (if you do not have Velcro you can use clear tape)
- Scissors

HOW TO:

1. Cut out shapes of your choice with the felt. (If you are using construction paper you can cut out shapes of your choice with the paper). Ensure the shapes are large enough that they are not a choking hazard.
2. Place pieces of Velcro on the outside of the wipe container and on the back of the shapes. (If using tape, I would recommend covering the shapes with the clear tape, like you laminated them. Then you can put the tape on the back of them and re-use them without them ripping each time).

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- Many infants are known for a 'destruction' phase where they are exploring the functionality of objects. You may see them constantly pulling or ripping objects apart such as tape or paper, dumping toys on the floor, etc.
- You can role model that the shapes can be pulled off of the box and reattach them.
- This experience is a great focused 'destructive' tool for your infant to pull, rip and dump while exploring the functionality of the container and shapes. Also, your child will be learning and exploring object permanence, cause and effect, fine/gross motor and problem-solving skills.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

- It may be challenging for some children to hold the container and rip the shapes off at the same time. You can find that as your child is trying to pull the shapes that the container is moving with them. You may want to consider anchoring the container down or holding onto it so that their strength can be focused on just pulling the shapes off.
- To extend this experience you can then role model with your child putting the shapes inside the container and then dumping them out. You can do this by showing them how the lid works.

BUBBLES



Image retrieved from: <https://aprilgolightly.com/celebrate-summertime-10-baby-friendly-activities/> on June 3rd, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- Bubbles
- Bubble wand

Make your own bubble solution:

- 8 cups of water
- 1 ½ cups of dawn dish soap
- ¼ cup of liquid corn starch.
- You can also make your own wands with pipe cleaners.

HOW TO:

1. Get your bubble solution and wands set up, this would be great to do outside on a nice day!
2. Sit with the child so they can see you as you pucker your lips to blow the bubbles out of the wand.
3. Role model popping the bubbles and pointing to them as they float past you and the child(ren).

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- Bubble play is very underrated as it has many benefits for children's development. The big one is that by practicing puckering their lips and blowing, to blow the bubbles it helps develop mouth muscles for the child's developing speech and language.
- By following the bubbles with their eyes or moving to try and catch the bubbles they are also strengthening their visual perception with spatial exploration and physical motor development.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

- If your child is not yet able to practice or 'blow' the bubbles you can hand your child, the wand and role model how to wave it in the water to create the bubbles. You may also choose to blow the bubbles closer to the child, so they are able to reach for the bubbles if they are not yet mobile.
- To extend this bubble play, you can add music and more movement while engaging with the bubbles. You may also provide your child with a tool such as a fly swatter to try and "hit" the bubbles to get them to pop.

TODDLER

14 months to 3 years

FROZEN SAND



Image retrieved from: <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/101753272820143510/> on June 2nd, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- Container X2: 1 small, 1 large
- Serving tray
- Sand
- Water
- Optional: plastic animals, cups and scoops

HOW TO:

Please ensure with the bin of water you are observing your child at all times to ensure they are engaging with the experience in a safe manner.

1. Ensure the sand is wet and place it in a freezer safe container to place in freezer. (This is where you can add plastic animals, just ensure they are safe for the age of your child). Depending on the size of the container you may want to do this the night before, or in the morning to have for the afternoon.
2. Once the sand is frozen, take it out of the freezer.
3. Fill up the larger bucket where you want to set up the experience, you can fill it up to your comfort level. If weather permits it would be a great idea to do this outside on a warm summer day.
4. Place the tray in the large bucket of water and add some water onto the bottom of the tray. Then place the frozen sand on top of the tray with the water.
5. If you have cups or scoops you can now add them to the bin for dumping and pouring of the water.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- With this experience your infant will be engaging their sense of touch, which we know developmentally is how children learn about the world around them. With scoops and cups your child will also be exploring dumping and pouring which is a great experience for muscle control and cause and effect exploration.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

- If your child is sensory avoidant you can provide them with a glove or objects with a long handle, so they do not have to touch the frozen sand or water. You may also want to provide cups with a handle on it for easier grasp.
- You can extend this experience by letting the child build/create in the sand and tunnels that have been created by the melting water, you may also choose to save the sand.

TAPE RESCUE



Image retrieved from: <https://busytoddler.com/2018/09/animal-tape-rescue/> on June 6th, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- Tape (masking tape or painters' tape)
- Plastic animals or toys such as little people
- A flat surface (could use a tray, cookie sheet, table, etc.)

HOW TO:

1. Tape the toys you chose down on the surface. You can choose to just put one piece over them, or tape them down with an X.
2. Demonstrate or role model how to rescue the toys with your toddler. Chances are that your toddler will be very eager to engage and try to rip the tape off or pull the toys.
3. While your child(ren) is engaging in this experience ensure you are asking them open ended questions such as: "what does the tape feel like?"

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- This experience is great for children to engage with their fine motor skills. It works on their hand eye coordination; problem solving and creates an opportunity for communication and learning new vocabulary.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

- For this experience you can fold the edges of the tape underneath each other so that it creates a tab for the child to grab onto/pull. You may also need or want to support your child's fine motor by using hand over hand to teach muscle/fine motor movement.
- To extend this experience, if it is something your child(ren) really enjoyed, try doing it on a vertical surface such as an easel, side of the fridge, bookshelf, etc. Adding a vertical element may make it more challenging for your toddler and engages them in a new way.

FOLLOW THE LINE



Image retrieved from: <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/9007267993208386/> on June 10th, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- Chalk if outside (3 or 4 different colours)
- Tape if inside

HOW TO:

1. If outside, take your chalk and draw various lines on the ground. They can be straight lines or wavy lines. Depending on your child, you may also choose to overlap the colours and lines to make it more challenging.
2. If inside, take the tape and tape it to the ground. Creating different types of lines may be challenging with the tape, but you can create straight edged lines such as zig zags if you wish.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- This experience is a great way to redirect and help children focus who may need some big body play. It helps develop their gross motor skills including balance, coordination and walking.
- It also provides children an opportunity for the child(ren) to develop their spatial awareness.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS

- Depending on where your children are at developmentally, instead of adding multiple lines at once, you can start by drawing/taping one straight line. After they have mastered that, add a wavy or zig zag line beside it (not overlapping). Once you feel your child can follow the lines, then you can add the lines to have them overlapping.
- You may also want to walk with the child or engage in the activity with them as a “follow the leader” type game.
- To extend this experience you can add words or shapes to create an “obstacle course” such as “jump” or “turn around 3 times.” This adds an extended element of language, visuals and furthers their gross motor skills.

PIPE CLEANER COLANDER



Image retrieved from: <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/188658671881630328/> on June 10th, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- Pipe cleaners (if you don't have pipe cleaners you can use spaghetti noodles)
- Colander

HOW TO:

1. Provide the pipe cleaners and colander to your child/children. This could take place on the floor, at the table, or even outside.
2. You can choose if the colander is standing up or turned upside.
3. Sit down with the child(ren) and take a piece of pipe cleaner to put through a hole on the colander, role model the activity and get your child engaged!

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- This experience is a great fine motor activity that helps develop the child(ren)'s hand eye coordination while aiming and working within a small space.
- Language and speech are also something that can be explored as your child is engaged. You can talk about the colour of the pipe cleaners or how they are getting the pipe cleaners to fit through the holes, etc.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

- To adapt this experience for children who may need more practice with their fine motor skills, you can use the hand over hand strategy as well as perhaps using something that is firmer for a grasp such as noodles or sticks.
- A possible extension of this experience would be to use pipe cleaners and beads (ensure your child is out of the oral phase, or the beads are an appropriate size). Have the child put the pipe cleaners through the beads. A safer option for younger toddlers would be to use spaghetti noodles and cheerios.

BALL ROUND UP



Image retrieved from: <https://www.icanteachmychild.com/round-balls-game-toddlers/> on June 10th, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- Various size and colour balls
- Hula hoop

HOW TO:

1. Lay the balls out in different spots of your space, this can be done inside or outside
2. Put a hula hoop somewhere in the middle of your space
3. Ask your child or children to put the balls “in” the hoop.
4. After they have put them all in the hoop ask them to them “out.”

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- This experience is not only a good gross motor activity but it also promotes receptive and expressive language by responding to commands and using verbs/adjectives.
- Encourages your child to follow simple one step directions.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS

- As always, you can role model the activity for the child(ren) and engage with them as they are rounding up the balls. Ensure you are encouraging them! You could also adapt this by engaging with the child and turn taking. “I put one ball in the hula hoop, now can you put a ball in?”
- As an extension you could ask your toddler to put a specific ball in or take a specific ball out. Example: “can you take the blue ball out?”
- You could also extend this by turning it into a “throwing” activity by trying to throw the balls into the hoop instead of placing them inside.

PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN

2.5 to 6 years

COLOUR SCAVENGER HUNT



Image retrieved from: <https://iheartcraftythings.com/simple-color-scavenger-hunt-kids.html> on June 9th, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- White paper lunch bag (you can also just use white paper)
- Coloured writing utensils (markers, crayons, pencil crayons, etc.)

HOW TO:

1. Take your white piece of paper or bag and write "Colour Scavenger Hunt" at the top.
2. Scribble various colours underneath, you can make them into a square or circle.
3. You may choose to also write the name of the colour underneath as well.
4. Give the paper or bag to your child(ren) when outside. This would be a great and easy activity to bring along on a nature walk, or to the park!
5. If using a white piece of paper bring along a bag or basket for the child(ren) to place their findings in.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- This experience is a great way to get outside with your child(ren) and create connections to the natural environment that surrounds you. Getting outside and engaging in experiences such as this one help create a sense of belonging and well-being with the child and nature.
- It will provide wonderful opportunities for new language and communication skills to flourish as you talk about their findings.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

- This experience already serves as a great visual if your child is non-verbal. You can still engage in meaningful conversation to help foster those connections with nature.
- To extend this experience, you can also do a similar experience with paint chips from the hardware store. You can also keep this experience going by bringing back their findings and added some magnify glasses for them to further explore. Perhaps providing some nature books, or researching things together could also further this interest.

GOLF TEE



Image retrieved from: <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/188658671881630338/> on June 13th, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- Golf tees
- String
- Elastic bands
- Hammer or Rock (just need to hit the golf tees into your surface)

HOW TO:

1. Gather your materials.
2. Take your hammer or rock and put the golf tees into the ground/dirt. This can also be done in a tree trunk or pumpkin – get creative! The golf tees don't need to be in any specific order or lined up.
3. Give your child different size pieces of string.
4. You may also want to just give them elastics.
5. Engage with the child(ren). Start wrapping the string around the golf tees creating different shapes or lines. You can do the same with the elastic bands, creating different shapes.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- This activity is great for your preschoolers fine motor development, imagination, shape recognition and language!
- The child can not only use and grow their fine motor skills with placing the string and elastics around the tees to create various shapes, but they can also perhaps help with hammering the tees into the ground, involving them in tool use.
- You'll be amazed with what image or shapes your child creates with the string and elastics on the tees! Ask them open ended questions about their creations, wonder with them.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

- Depending on your child's fine motor strength and skills, you may want to consider various types of rubber bands. Think about the thickness of the band and how easy it is to stretch and hold on to. You may also need to help your child by doing it together, they can take one side and you can take another of the elastic to place it over the tees of their choice (as always, you can do hand over hand).
- To extend this activity you could do a hammering experience for tool use with golf tees in foam, or extend it based on the season such as a pumpkin as the base. You can also make your own peg board with nails and wood!

SHADOW TRACING

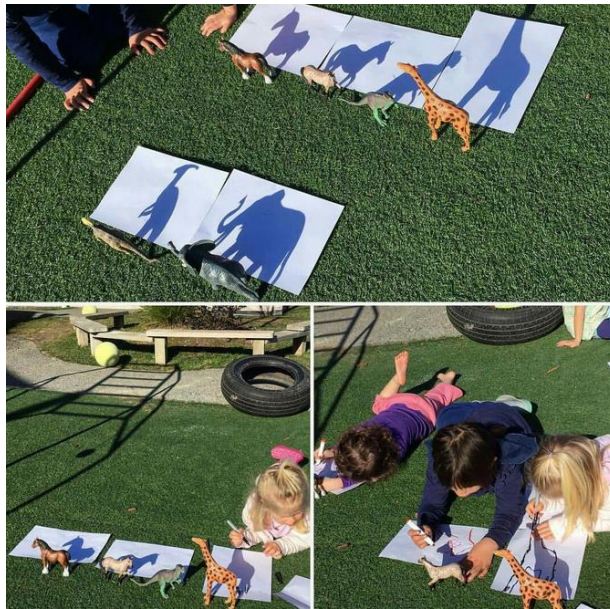


Image retrieved from: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/39/f7/a5/39f7a52f2288fae4edbc142e39fc6a43.jpg> on June 14, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- White or light coloured paper
- The sun or a bright light
- Figures (animals, shapes, blocks, cars, etc.)
- Pencils and other colouring utensils

HOW TO:

1. Gather your materials, if it is a bright sunny day bring them outside. If not, set them up in an area with a bright light/flashlight.
2. Let your child pick the toy they want to trace.
3. Put the figurine in a place where the light hits it to create a shadow on the paper. (Let the child(ren) figure this out with you, ask questions, hypothesise “where should we put the figurine to see it’s shadow?”)

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- This experience is a wonderful opportunity for preschool/kindergarten children to work on their developing pincer grasp with the writing utensils.
- It also provides an opportunity for the children to problem solve and question their hypothesis based on the light and shadow.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

- Depending on your child’s abilities you may want to consider what type of writing utensils are made available. If in a group setting ensure there are already a wide variety of writing utensils for use such as thick pencils, thin pencils, pencils with grips, etc. You also want to ensure you have a variety of figurines, some with simple lines and others that may be more challenging to ensure you are including all children.
- To extend this experience you can do big body shadow tracing, shadow tracing with chalk outside, or even creating your own shadow theatre!

BALL IN BUCKET CHALLENGE



Image retrieved: <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/188658671881640926/> on June 14th, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- Two buckets: one large and one small
- Water
- Balls or water balloons
- Chair

HOW TO:

1. Fill your large bucket with water and your balls or water balloons.
2. Place the smaller bucket beside the big bucket filled with water.
3. Place the chair behind the buckets in the middle.
4. Have your child/children sit in the chair and put their bare feet in the water bucket. Encourage them to try to pick up a water balloon/ball with their feet and transfer it into the smaller bucket.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- This experience is a great idea for a hot summer day! It allows the children to cool off while working on gross motor strength and coordination.
- Each child may choose to move the balls differently, some maybe with their toes, others the bottom or side of their feet. Observe and see what each child does and ask them why? Is it easier that way?

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

- You can adapt this experience by providing tools for the children to use. You can provide nets, tongs or shovels for the children to use in place of their feet and legs. You could also encourage the children to use their hands and arms if they are more confident with that.
- To extend this experience you can do a wide range of water activities with these buckets. You can add water animals and turn it into a water sensory bin, you could also add smaller rocks or gems to see if the children could pick them up with their toes to make it more challenging.

SELF PORTRAITS



Image retrieved from: <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/188658671881662774/> on June 14th, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- Loose parts: these can include buttons, string, sticks, rocks, leaves, acorns, pinecones, coins, pop tabs, bottle caps, etc.
- Glue
- Paper plates
- Markers
- Mirror

HOW TO:

1. This is a very simple experience for children to engage in on their own or with others. You can set up the materials you have for them to use on a table with an example. Place the mirror where the child can see themselves. Just ensure the materials you are using are developmentally appropriate for your child/children.
2. Allow the children to use the plates as a starting point if they wish, a blank canvas.
3. Sit back, engage when needed and watch the children express themselves!

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- Providing loose parts with this experience allows children to express themselves and learn who they are all while having a positive creative outlet.
- Through self-portraits and conversations with peers children are likely able to learn to express themselves all while learning how others see themselves. It's very personalize and can create wonderful opportunities for conversations on values and culture while learning to be respect diversity.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

- This experience can be adapted based on the materials and tools you put out for your child(ren) to use. For example, if you have a child who has a visual impairment you want to ensure you include a variety of tactile materials.
- To extend this experience you could then engage the child(ren) in a self portrait with just paper and pencil in a few weeks time. This also would be a great opportunity to include books from the Travelling Tales library on diversity, culture and inclusivity.

SCHOOLAGE

5 TO 8 YEARS

CO-OPERATIVE CUP CHALLENGE (2+ people)



Image retrieved from: <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/188658671881640932/> on June 15th, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- Cups (either plastic, cardboard, styrofoam, etc.)
- Elastic Bands
- Pipe Cleaners

HOW TO:

1. Gather your materials. Have the children help you add 4 pipe cleaners per elastic. Have them spaced out on the elastic, and twist them together to make them thicker/easier to grab.
2. There will be two children per elastic, each holding a pipe cleaner in each hand like the image above.
3. The children will need to work together to pull the elastic apart, then place it over a cup to grip it. From here have the children try to stack the cups; they can bring them over one at a time and place it on top then let go the cup go by maneuvering the elastic again. Please see the clip if needed: <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/188658671881640932/>.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- Through this STEM experience the children will be working together, communicating, collaborating and problem solving as they use their hand eye coordination and fine motor skills to carefully maneuver the cups.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

- For this experience, you can include elastics that are already made up with 'holders' for children. Perhaps adding a variety of holders based on your children's needs such as thicker, or more durable handles would be beneficial. As well, you can and should be engaging with the children throughout this experience. Perhaps you could join another child and be a pair, communicate and role model as you work through the experience together.
- To extend this experience you can perhaps provide children with "tower" shapes, such as pyramids, etc. for the children to create. This will create and further challenge the children's focus, patience, communication and their coordination.

DIY BIRD FEEDER



Image retrieved from: <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/13792342598788378/> on June 17th, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- Peanut butter (or alternative of your choice)
- Pine cones
- Bird seed (I've also used cheerios before)
- Bowl or plate
- String
- Scissors
- Knife or spoon

HOW TO:

1. Gather your materials and set them out on a table for the child/children to use.
2. Cut a piece of string and tie it to the top of the pine cone.
3. Take your pine cone and roll it/cover it in the butter of your choice.
4. Then roll the covered pine cone in the bird seed or cheerios.
5. Put it somewhere safe for when you go outside. Once outside have the children choose a spot to hang it. This is where you can lead into conversations about why they chose that spot.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- This presents a wonderful opportunity for the children to create something that will help enhance their connection to nature and their outdoor environment.
- It will promote a sense of belonging, well-being and be a wonderful conversation starter. The children can learn new language and hone in on their observation skills as they watch for birds to appear.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

- This is a great activity that is fairly suitable for all children and developmental abilities. You may need to help or guide children when it comes to the fine motor aspects and/or hanging it on a tree outside.
- To extend this experience you can add images of various birds so the children can identify them, as well as perhaps create binoculars out of toilet paper rolls for the children to use while observing the birds feeding.

MARSHMELLOW AND TOOTHPICK ENGINEERING

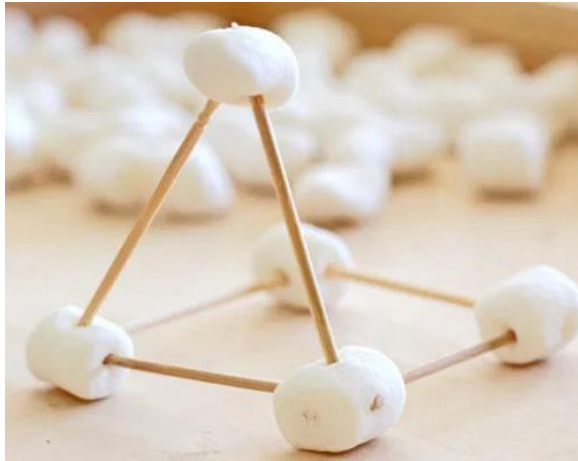


Image retrieved from: <https://happyhomefairy.com/teaching-colors-white/> on June 17th, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- Small marshmallows
- Toothpicks

HOW TO:

1. Set up your materials for the children to engage with when they desire. Creating an invitation to play would be beneficial – make it appealing and intriguing with bowls, place mats, etc.
2. Have the children use the marshmallows as the “connectors” for the corners.
3. Ask them questions while they are building...”What shape are you creating?” “How can you make it 3D?”

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- This experience is great for school aged children to explore math concepts such as engineering, planning, 3D shapes and overall just creating with their hands.
- Through this experience they need to be thinking ahead as to where the sticks and marshmallows need to be to connect in order to create their goal/finished project. Although there is an “end goal” the learning is happening through the process of them creating.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

- To adapt this experience you may want to choose larger materials such as noodles or popsicle sticks and either larger marshmallows or playdough. This would support children who may be still developing their fine motor skills. As well, providing visuals of 3D shapes or object would be beneficial for individuals who need a visual guide or reference.
- To extend this experience online you can find/research “marshmallow and toothpick STEM challenge” this will bring up various images of what can be created. You can show your child/children and see how many they can make. You could even give them 20 minutes to see how many they could create!

BALLOON TENNIS (2+ people)



Images retrieved from: <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/188658671881627557/> on June 17th, 2021.

MATERIALS:

- Balloon
- Paper plate
- Paint stir stick (you could also use a ruler)
- Hot glue or strong tape

HOW TO:

1. Hot glue or tape the paper plates to the paint stick or ruler.
2. Blow up the balloon.
3. Have the child(ren) stand apart a distance of their choosing. Get them to hit the balloon back and forth to each other with their 'plate racket'. They can start off close and work their way further and further apart.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- This activity is great in developing children's hand eye coordination.
- Along with working on their physical development and coordination, it also provides an opportunity for children to work with a peer while communicating and problem solving.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

- If you have a child who has limited use of their hands, you can make the game accessible by challenging children to just try to 'keep the balloon up in the air.' This way children can use their head, legs, arms or any part of their body.
- To extend this experience you can do balloon rockets with a piece of string, tape and a balloon. Tape the balloon to the straw, place the string through the straw and attach it to the wall on one side. Blow up the balloon and let go. Ensure someone is holding the other side of the string.

SENSORY ACTIVITIES

Sensory is a major part of children's development and is great to not only stimulate some children but help regulate children's emotions and overall well-being. These activities/recipes can mainly be done with any age. Just ensure you are taking caution with younger children and being aware of choking hazards, as well as if any of the children in your care have allergies or sensitivities.

These activities can also be COVID policy friendly by creating individual bins or bags for the children to use independently. As well, they may also be set up in a way that invites multiple children to join at once, whether that be in a sensory bin or in/on a tray left open at a table.

Remember you can add any materials you'd like based on the children's interest to add different elements and materials to the sensory.

Dish Soap Silly Putty

½ cup of corn starch

6 tablespoons of dish soap

Mix it together in a small plastic cup or bowl, I typically use a popsicle stick to stir or you can use a spoon. Once it starts clumping together have the child kneed it with their hands and it will start to form a ball. Sometimes you may need to add a bit more corn starch if it is too sticky. This is a super simple putty that is so soft to the touch. Add in some water after a while and see what happens to it!

Moon Sand/Cloud Dough

2 cups flour

¼ cup coconut oil (you can also use baby oil)

If you'd like you can also add food colouring. This is also a very soft/silky sensory for the children to engage in. You can add some spice to this cloud dough by colouring it and adding toys such as seashells, animals, cars, trucks, etc.

Paint Sensory Bags

Paint

2-4 Large Ziplock Bags

Tape

You can add one colour of paint per bag, or what I enjoy doing is adding two primary colours to a bag and let the children mix them together. This is a great 'colour mixing' experiment without the added mess. You will most likely want to tape the bags down on a table for the children, especially younger ones where it is more easily accesible for them to engage with.

Pea Sensory Bag

Water

Frozen Peas

Large Ziplock Bag

Tape

Pour ¾ to one cup of water into the bag and add frozen peas. Tape the bag onto a table or the ground and let your child explore!

Salt Trays

1 cup salt
Flat tray
Paint brushes

Pour about 1 cup of salt onto a tray of your choosing. The idea is that it is a designated work space for the child. Your child can use the paint brush or their fingers to draw images, write words or letters in the salt.

Lava lamps

Vegetable Oil
Water
Food Colouring
Jar or bottle
Alka-Seltzer tablets

Fill the jar or bottle about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way with vegetable oil. Fill the rest up with water. Add a few drops of food colouring of your choice. Break an Alka-Seltzer tablet into small pieces and drop it into the jar at the same time. Watch it erupt!

Baking Soda Volcanos

$\frac{1}{2}$ baking soda
Dish soap
1 cup vinegar
Cup or bottle
Sand

Have the children build a volcano/mountain in the sand outside. Place a cup inside the middle of the volcano. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ baking soda and then add some dish soap. When you are ready pour the vinegar inside the cup and watch the volcano erupt! You can also do this inside a lemon which just adds extra fizz.

Ooblek

2 cups cornstarch
1 cup water
Food colouring (optional)

Add cornstarch and water together. Is it a liquid? Is it a solid? Let then children decide as they explore this sensory experience. I recommend providing a spoon or fork with it for children who do not want to get their hands dirty.

PLAYDOUGH ACTIVITIES

RECIPES

4 Minute Play Dough

- 2 cups plain flour (all purpose)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup salt
- 2 tablespoons cream of tartar
- Up to 1.5 cups boiling water (adding in increments until it feels just right)
- food colouring (optional)
- few drops glycerine (optional- adds more shine!)

Method:

- Mix the flour, salt, cream of tartar and oil in a large mixing bowl
- Add the boiling water
- Stir continuously until it becomes a sticky, combined dough
- Add the food colouring and glycerine (both optional)
- Allow it to cool down then take it out of the bowl and knead it vigorously for a couple of minutes until all of the stickiness has gone. * This is the most important part of the process, so keep at it until it's the perfect consistency! *
- (If it remains a little sticky then add a touch more flour until just right)

Orange and Lemon Playdough

- To make the orange play dough we simply added a sachet of orange jelly (jello) powder to our usual 4 minute no-cook recipe, after the hot water stage. Knead it in as usual and be amazed at the gorgeousness of the scent!
- For the lemon we added a few drops of yellow food colouring and 1 tsp of finely grated lemon peel, as well as 1-2 drops of lemon balm essence.

Ginger Bread Play Dough

- 2 cups plain flour (all purpose)
- 1 cup salt
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 2 tablespoons cream of tartar
- 1.5 cups of boiling water
- 1 tablespoon ground ginger
- 2 tablespoons ground cinnamon
- (optional addition) 5 drops of glycerine for extra shine!

Method:

- Mix all of the dry ingredients into a bowl. Add the oil. Stir in the boiling water and allow to cool briefly. Knead it into a workable dough on a floured surface using your hands. After a few minutes it should be soft and smooth and none should come off on your fingers. If it's still a little sticky then add more flour, one tablespoon at a time until it's just right!

ACTIVITIES

Images retrieved from: Image retrieved from: [https://www.pinterest.ca/search/pins/?q=playdough%20activities&rs=typed&term_meta\[\]=playdough%7Ctyped&term_meta\[\]=activities%7Ctyped](https://www.pinterest.ca/search/pins/?q=playdough%20activities&rs=typed&term_meta[]=playdough%7Ctyped&term_meta[]=activities%7Ctyped).

Playdough Bugs

- Pipe cleaners
- Googly eyes
- Straws
- Tooth picks



Playdough Imprints



- Loose parts
- (keys, combs, blocks, buttons, feathers, shells, pine cones, animals, etc.)

Playdough Bowl Faces

- Bowl

(you could also use plates as a template)



Playdough Cutting

- Scissors (ensure they are safe for your age group)



Playdough Doughnuts

Image retrieved from: <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/545850417343082959/>.

- Loose parts
(these could include things
such as sprinkles, buttons,
beads, rocks, etc.
think doughnuts)



RESOURCES

Below are links to some great accounts that share simple ideas to help keep your children engaged! Feel free to use them when you need some inspiration.

- Keep Kids Busy: <https://www.instagram.com/keep.kids.busy/>
- Wunder Kinds: <https://www.instagram.com/wunderkindstoys/>
- Crafty Moms: <https://www.instagram.com/crafty.moms/>
 - Right Brained Mom: <https://rightbrainedmom.com/>
- Play Barron Park: <https://www.facebook.com/playbarronpark/>

As well don't forget to check out:

- The Early Learning Resource Program Facebook page:
[Early Learning Resource Program: Connecting Our Community | Facebook](#)
- The local Early ON Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/oeyc.haliburtonvictoriabrock>