

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

Introduction:

Whatever the age of the children in your setting it can take very little time, effort or expense on your part to get those creative juices flowing! Cognitive and kinetic development can be boosted in a fun, relaxed and informal childminding setting with just a few simple basics from your kitchen cupboard or local craft shop.

Remember, a perfect end result isn't the objective. It is the fun had and learning achieved along the way that will result in a successful outcome.

1 – 2 YEAR OLDS



Make baby's own photo album

What you need:

Photos
Cardboard

Activity:

Gather together pictures of all the people in baby's family or those that he has regular contact with. Stick them onto pieces of cardboard and bind together to create a book.

Allow him to flip through the book himself, turning the pages to find different family members and faces he knows, teaching him the names along the way.

Bubbly Fun

What you need:

Empty water bottle
Water
Dishwashing liquid
Tape

Activity:

Fill half the bottle with water and add a squeeze of dishwashing liquid. Secure the bottle with tape and give it a shake to create bubbles. Baby will enjoy shaking the bottle and will be stimulated by both the sound of the water and sight of the bubbles. This also makes an excellent crawling toy for physical play as baby chases the bottle as it rolls along the floor!

Crawling Obstacles Game**What you need:**

Pillows
Large boxes

Activity:

Stack up the pillows to make a fun but safe obstacle course for baby to climb over. Open up the top and bottom of the boxes to create a tunnel to explore, perhaps placing toys to find inside. This could also be used for slightly older children, along with old sheets and blankets, to create their very own den!

What's in the Cupboard? Game**What you need:**

Low-level cupboard
Plastic cups, spoons, bowls and kitchen accessories

Activity:

Empty a low-level cupboard and fill with your choice of accessories. Set baby in front and allow him to take out the objects, touch, feel and examine, before putting back in and taking out others. This is an excellent way for a child to discover new shapes, textures and colours and use their creativity to adapt the object for use in their very own way.

2 – 3 YEAR OLDS



Picture Unveiling

What you need:

Two pieces of cardboard cut into L-shapes
Pictures of everyday household objects cut out of magazines

Activity:

Overlap the two pieces of L-shaped cardboard over your chosen picture and slowly pull the pieces apart to see if the child can guess what the picture is beneath. If they are a little older ask them to tell you why they have offered the suggestion they have given.

Horsey Horsey

What you need:

Adult sock
Old newspaper
Felt tips; water-based paints or felt pieces
Knitting wool or similar for mane
Broom handle or roll from inside of wrapping paper
Cord or rope for reins (always supervise young children when using these materials).

Activity

Create the horse's head by putting the scrunched up newspaper into the sock to give shape, with the toe of the sock as the mouth. A horse face can then be painted onto the sock or created by gluing on the different felt pieces. Use the glue to stick on the knitting wool to make the horse's mane from the top to the bottom of the sock. Put the sock onto the broom handle or cardboard roll. Tie the reins on with rope or cord and the horse is all ready for riding!

What is missing from my set? Game

What you need:

Common set of items such as fork, knife and spoon from a cutlery set or soap, facecloth, toothbrush and toothpaste from the bathroom
Small random items from around the house

Activity:

Line up younger children in front of the common items and ask them to close their eyes. Take one item away and ask them to tell you what is missing. This will help them to develop an awareness of common themes and improve short-term memory.

Use the more random items to create the game for older children. This is slightly more challenging as they are trying to memorise objects with no common thread!

3 – 4 YEAR OLDS



Edible Fruit Necklace

What you need:

Selection of fruit cut into bite-sized chunks eg: apple, strawberries, pineapple, firm pears or pieces of dried fruit
Large needle
Long piece of string
Knife
Scissors

Activity

Cut the fruit into segments (if older children are doing this themselves they must be supervised). Thread the string through the needle and poke a hole through the pieces of fruit, pulling the needle and string through. Repeat this until all the pieces of fruit are on the string. Remove the needle and tie the string's ends into a tight knot.
NB: If preferred, a wooden skewer can be used to poke holes in the fruit pieces.

Fishing Game

What you need:

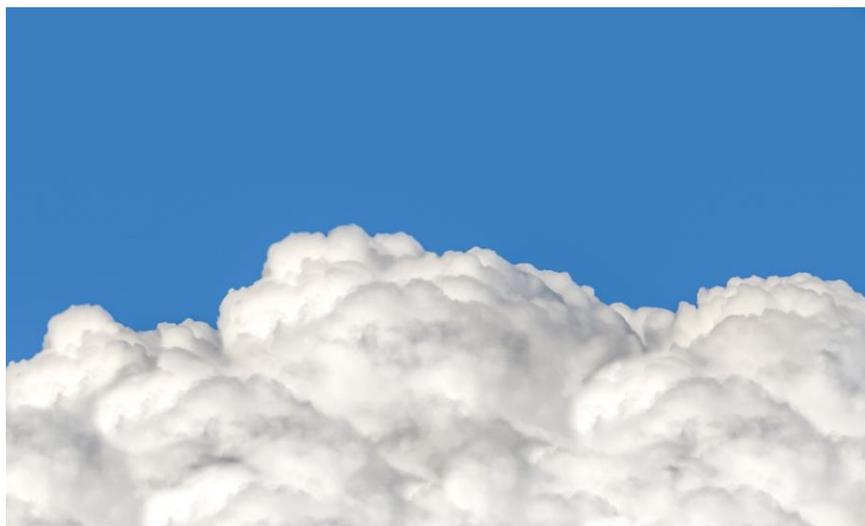
Chopstick
Ribbon
Tape
Scissors
20cm of string
2 or 3 small magnets
Pencil
Coloured paper
Large paperclip

Activity

Wrap the ribbon around the chopstick, tape it in place and secure one end of the string to the chopstick with the tape. Tie the other end of the string to the large paperclip. Draw some fish on the coloured paper and cut out using the scissors (children can also paint or colour in the fish here). Tape the small magnets to the fish.

Children can now go fishing by holding the chopstick fishing line and dangling the paperclip over the magnetic fish. The magnets will attract one another, making the fish easy to catch!

4 – 6 YEAR OLDS



Cloud Collage

What you need:

Cotton Wool

A variety of blue paper (different colours and textures)

Glue

Paintbrush for glue

Activity:

Keep one sheet of blue paper over for the sky and get your child to tear the remaining blue paper into strips and shapes. Layer the strips and shapes onto the sky and glue in place. Use the cotton wool to make cloud shapes on the page and secure with glue.

NB: you can add to this by providing different coloured paper eg: green crepe paper scrunched up to create a tree, brown for the trunk or red to make a house.

Make a Jellyfish

This art and craft project is also a great learning activity as children learn about life under the sea!

What you need:

35cm length of crepe paper

A4 piece of card

Scissors

Tape

Dark pencil

Activity:

Cut the length of crepe paper into five narrow strips (about 1 – 2cm wide). Hold one end of each strip of paper with one hand, then using your other hand, grip about 3cms down and twist the paper in different directions. This will create a twisted fold for the jellyfish tentacles. Once you have completed this with every strip of paper, set aside.

Trace a large semi-circle on the A4 card and cut out. Draw a face on the semi-circle and tape the 'tentacles' to the bottom.

Your jellyfish can then be designed further with colouring pencils, water-based paints and glitter!

7 – 9 YEAR OLDS



Create Yoghurt Pot Flowers

What you need:

Washed yoghurt pots
Scissors
Coloured straws
Paint
Paintbrush

Activity:

Use the scissors to cut the yoghurt pots from their opening to their base. Do this all around the pot until the pot resembles a flower; the incisions are the petals. Put a hole in the centre of the base of each pot. Poke a straw through the hole, keeping the majority of the length extending from the base. This is the flower's stem. Use the scissors to cut small slits into the top of the straws. You can then paint your yoghurt pots or customise them with spray or glitter!

Wooden Spoon Puppets

Puppet shows encourage imaginative play and making their own puppet will bring out the creative side of any child!

What you need:

Wooden spoon
Paint
Paintbrush
Tape
PVA glue
Selection of craft items to decorate the spoon eg: wool, ribbon, fabric, cotton wool, buttons; glitter; foil

Activity:

Select a person for your wooden spoon character. Encourage the children in your setting to stretch their imagination to come up with the most unique character possible!

Paint the wooden spoon the colour of your character. It could be a wizard, a giraffe or a dragon so make sure there are plenty of different coloured paints available!
When the paint is dry, use glue or tape to stick on the craft items to make the face.
Wool, ribbon, foil or crepe paper can be wrapped around the handle and glued in place.

10 – 12 YEAR OLDS



Making a Miniature Garden

What you need:

A shallow plastic or metal tray with holes in the bottom

Potting compost

Small stones

Pebbles

Jar lid

Aluminium Foil

Selection of small plants eg: thyme; moss, tree and shrub seedlings

Activity:

Almost fill the tray with potting compost. Cover the jar lid with aluminium foil to make a garden 'pond'. Make a hole in the potting compost and push the jar lid down so the sides cannot be seen.

Accessorise the pond with stones and pebbles.

Mound the compost up in a couple of places to make little raised beds surrounded with stones. Use the flat pebbles to make a winding path.

Gently plant your selection of shrubs and seedlings.

Keep your display in a brightly-lit place and remember to water regularly. A spray bottle is excellent for this. Give a different child responsibility for watering the 'garden' every day!