

INEXPENSIVE PLAY IDEAS FOR CHILDREN



INDOOR ACTIVITIES

Treasure Basket

A Treasure Basket is a shallow sturdy basket containing a collection of everyday objects chosen to stimulate the different senses for babies who cannot move independently. The purpose of the treasure basket is to maximise interest through the use of the five senses: touch, sight, sound, smell and taste. The babies gain rich sensory experiences through looking, touching, banging, licking, picking up and dropping the various items. The idea of playing with everyday objects is not a new one. Most people will remember playing with pots and pans in the kitchen or sorting through the button box. Providing babies with a treasure basket gives them the opportunity to explore and discover things for themselves by themselves.

Suggested contents for a treasure basket

Wooden Objects

Wooden curtain rings, napkin rings, castanets, egg cup, spoon, spatula, pegs, rolling pin, honey dipper, cotton reels.

Metal Objects

Spoons, measuring spoons, bunch of keys, bath plug and chain, garlic press, small egg whisk, small tins containing rice, shells etc, bunch of bells, tin lids, metal egg cup, bottle brush, tea strainer, brass curtain rings, lengths of fine chain.

Natural Objects/Materials

Large pebbles, paint brush, small natural sponge, a lemon, woollen ball, little baskets, shells, wooden brush, driftwood, toothbrush, shaving brush, pumice stone, avocado pear stone, natural loofah, fir cones of different sizes, feathers, corks, small shoe brush.

Leather/Rubber/Textiles

Wallet/purse, glasses case, coloured ribbons, powder puff, fabric cut offs, bean bag, fur ball, rubber tubing, tennis ball, golf ball, teddy bear, door stop, slip mat

Paper/Cardboard/Other

Greaseproof paper, small cardboard boxes, tin foil, hair rollers, pan scourer make up brushes, things that rattle, things that fit inside one another, velvet hair bands and scrunchies, scent bags, sturdy cardboard tubes.

How to use the treasure basket

When using treasure baskets parents need to find a quiet area where their child can sit comfortably. Set the basket near the child so he/she can reach the objects easily. The parent should sit close enough to the child to supervise but not so close that they interfere. Parents should not interrupt their child's thought process unless the child clearly needs attention.

Wonder Box

Wonder Boxes are an excellent low-cost way for parents to engage children in play. They allow children to sort, explore textures, sounds and actions. It will encourage interaction which may be initiated by the child or the parent. Wonder Boxes are normally theme based and can come in different forms e.g. suitcases, baskets, handbags, hat boxes, draw string bags, empty bean bags, plastic containers etc.

Examples of themes that could be used:

Holidays, natural materials, dressing up, seasons, senses, stories, nursery rhymes, music & dance, rolling, colours, counting, alphabet, sorting, sequencing and stacking.

Using a Wonder Box

Wonder Boxes should be placed in a quiet area where children can explore the contents freely. Parents can use the Wonder boxes for story time with their child. The child can talk about, describe, explore and investigate the various materials which promotes thinking skills and awakens their curiosity.

Treasure Chest

This is an excellent personalised gift which contains items of specific interest for individual children.

Things you'll need:

- Shoe Box

- Tissue paper
- Paint or Construction paper to decorate your box
- Tape, Glue, Scissors

Ideas for items to fill the treasure chest

- Child's favourite
- Sweets
- Small notebook
- Pencils
- Pens
- Funny pictures
- Little toys
- Story book
- Photographs
- Include little things that the child likes

You can paint and decorate the shoe box in the child's favourite colours or make it like a pirate's chest or dolls house.

Indoor Sandbox

Fill a large washing-up bowl or well-sealed cardboard box (without the lid) with a mixture of lentils, rice and/or cous cous. Provide spoons, sieves, measuring jugs, plastic funnels and ladles. Great for toddlers and pre-school children.

Indoor Dens

Indoor dens are even easier. Let your children move the furniture around as they wish and provide sheets, towels and/or duvets to drape over it. Rugs, cushions and pillows will make the den more homely. The den may become a castle, a ship, a rocket – let them use their imaginations!

Musical Kitchen

Younger children will love the opportunity to take all the pans and lids out of the cupboard and bang them with spoons. Let them experiment with the different noises made by big and small pans, spoons of different sizes etc.

Floating and Sinking

Fill a large container with water and place at a safe level where all children can take part in the activity. Ask the children to go around the house and choose various small objects (nothing of value) e.g. small tubs, beads, pasta, plastic bricks, balls etc. Ask the children put each item in the water and guess whether it will float or sink. Ask the children questions about why they think the items float and sink and explain the reasons for this.

Hunt with the Magnet

Fill a shallow tray with sand and fill it with magnetic objects. Give each child a small magnetic and explain to them that you have hidden objects in the sand. Encourage the children to take turns at finding an object using only the magnet. The deeper the sand the more difficult the activity.

Musical Jars

Fill some clear glass jars with water and add different colours of food colouring. Label each jar with a number e.g. 1 – 10. Using a wooden spoon to beat the jars gently and write down the numbers that make up well known nursery rhymes such as Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star. Let the children experiment with the jars to make their own tunes.

Green Family

Want to have a family of your own? A green family? All it takes is a little water and sunshine to entice this green family to spread its roots!

The things you need:

1. Empty containers of different sizes
2. Wheat seeds
3. Soil
4. Water
5. Poster colours
6. Brush



Step 1: Fill three-fourths of all the containers with garden soil.



Step 2: Spread a handful of wheat seeds on the soil. Cover the seeds

with another layer of soil.

Step 3: Sprinkle some water over the newly sown seeds. Place the pots in a sunny place. Twice a day, spray water generously on the seeds.

It will take 7-14 days for the shoots to appear. After that, spray as much water needed to keep the grass moist.

Once the grass becomes really thick, the 'hair' of each member of the family, is ready. Now it's time to paint faces on the containers.

Step 4: With poster colours and brush, paint the family members' faces on the containers. You can have as many members in this green family as the number of containers!

How big a family do you want? And naming all the family members should be fun, don't you think? So, have your green fingers started itching?

