



Department of
Education

FUN WAYS TO

play AND learn

AT HOME



Childhood is a time for adv

Many of our favourite childhood memories were made playing, whether it was building a fort with cushions, playing in the backyard, telling stories or dress-ups. The best thing about playing is that it can happen indoors or outdoors, and there is no need to spend a lot on toys. Common household items can be used and are great as they provide open-ended experiences and children will often give a new meaning to these items.



OUTDOOR PLAY IDEAS:

- use twigs and leaves and stones from the natural environment;
- build a sandpit and add kitchen utensils, cups, trucks, spades and water to play with;
- fill a large container with water and add food colouring, paintbrushes, kitchen utensils, sponges, eye droppers; and
- use sports equipment to bounce, kick, catch, hit.



OBSTACLE COURSE ACTION IDEAS:

- jump over a broom;
- climb over a pile of cushions;
- roll under a low table;
- crawl through the legs of chairs;
- play leapfrog from one area to another; and
- tap balloons to keep them in the air.



BUILDING PLAY IDEAS:

- build constructions with natural and recycled materials;
- assemble a marble run;
- build a road, ramp or train track;
- tinker with tools; and
- create with pipe cleaners, beads and cardboard rolls.



SAND PLAY IDEAS:

- give your child digging tools such as shovels, spades, spoons and scoops;
- use kitchen utensils such as sieves, measuring cups, spoons, funnels, cake tins;
- make coloured sand by adding food colouring;
- hide treasure in the sand or bury dinosaurs and let your child dig and explore; and
- write words in the sand.

venture!



WATER PLAY IDEAS:

- blow bubbles;
- change water colour with food colouring;
- splash, pour, trickle and float items;
- use containers of different shapes and sizes for filling, emptying, comparing and pouring;
- ask questions - *How much? How full? What happens if? I wonder what...?* ...and respond to their answers;
- experiment and talk about how and why things happen;
- squirt water at a target;
- paint with water – use big and little brushes, and other items; and
- freeze items in containers of water and let your child explore ways to extract them.



PLAYDOUGH PLAY IDEAS:

- change the texture of your playdough by adding sand, stones, sawdust, macaroni or rice;
- add materials to be used for construction, such as popsticks, pasta, pipe cleaners or twigs; and
- use salt dough to create crafts, ornaments and sculptures.



SCIENCE AND MATH PLAY IDEAS:

- match lids to containers;
- sort kitchen cupboard items in order of size, colour, use;
- make patterns;
- hide a toy and provide clues to find it, such as having a treasure hunt;
- play shops;
- count the stops when travelling on a bus or train;
- count steps, toys or items of clothing on the washing line; and
- play card and board games.



MUSIC PLAY IDEAS:

- sing or make up songs and nursery rhymes;
- identify parts of the body and places through different songs and rhymes;
- dance to different rhythms;
- march, stamp, clap and move to the beat; and
- shake plastic bottles filled with rice, dried beans, pasta or water.



LITERACY PLAY IDEAS:

- talk, sing, read, draw and write, look at pictures, sing nursery rhymes and make up actions;
- read books to (and later, with) your child – even if they want to hear the same story over and over again;
- talk about words and sounds;
- help your child follow instructions when cooking or building;
- play rhyming games;
- encourage your child to ‘write’ their own shopping lists when you go shopping together;
- play I Spy;
- look for signs and symbols, such as road signs, and talk about their meaning;
- encourage your child to scribble, draw and write using pens, pencils, chalk, crayons and markers; and
- ask your child to recognise pictures, letters and words in signs and logos.

For more information on play-based learning visit
education.wa.edu.au/play-based-learning