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Learning
Partnership

Playing

Creating



Activity Guide

Exploring

Learning

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10 top tips for children from children

1. You might feel shy, scared or a bit nervous but you don't need to.
2. Listen to your teachers.
3. Learn how to read your name and then you can find your peg and your drawer.
4. You need to wear your school uniform and you need to learn how to take it on and off for PE.
5. You might cry when you go to school because you miss your Mummy and Daddy but the teachers will look after you.
6. If you don't know what to do, ask the teacher and they will help you.
7. You will learn new things, like numbers, letters, sharing, reading and writing.
8. Your teachers will tell you where to put your coat and bag.
9. To make new friends, you need to talk and play with other children and be nice and share.
10. You will love school it is really fun!

50. Make a puppet show



You will need

Puppets, soft toys, figures

Cardboard box, puppet theatre, pegged up sheet, the back of a sofa

Using puppets will help your child develop some important skills - Puppets are an ideal way to develop speaking and listening skills.

Children will often express their ideas and feelings through puppets. Children feel empowered to speak and behave on behalf of their character.

Using puppets promotes the use of your child's imagination and develops their creative skills.

Re-enacting familiar stories or situations promotes early literacy skills.

Some children will like to spend time planning the story they want to tell and which characters they need. Others will pick up puppets and create a show on the spot. Which ever way they want to perform will help to develop a range of skills.

Vocabulary

Character, scene, setting, character, voice, story, theatre, performance, show

49. Share a book

Spending just 10 minutes a day reading with your child can make a big difference to their development. Being read to frequently as a young child also promotes a love for reading.



Ask questions every so often to find out what they think might happen next.

Recap what has happened every few pages to make sure that your child knows what's happening.

Encourage your child to hold the book and turn the pages.

Remember to use the pictures to help your child's understanding of the story.

When you ask your child a question, give them plenty of time to respond.

Questions:

What do you think might happen next?

How do you think the character is feeling?

What was your favourite part of the story?

Vocabulary

Title, page, character, setting, story

10 top tips for parents from parents

1. Put name labels in all of your child's belongings.
2. If you are feeling anxious or worried about them starting school try not to let it show in front of them.
3. Check the route from home to school. Walk or cycle it if you can. If you are driving check where you can park safely.
4. If you are unable to drop off and pick up make arrangements in advance (where possible) and let the school know.
5. Make sure that you keep your contact details up to date with the school office.
6. When shopping for school shoes and coats make sure they are practical for all weathers.
7. Give your child time to practise dressing in their new uniform, PE kit, school coat and shoes.
8. Look at the school website as they offer lots of information about the school.
9. Check your child's bag everyday for notes or letters that have been sent home.
10. If the school offers information days, workshops or a chance to visit try your best to attend.

1. Lift up a rock

Children are naturally very inquisitive about the world around them.

When you are playing in the garden, woodlands or the park try lifting a log or a rock for your child to explore the world beneath it.

You can print a fantastic bug hunt sheet off the Woodland Trust website.

Remember

Leave the creatures where you found them.

Wash your hands.



You will need

Rocks

Logs

You might like

Magnifying glass

Bug hunt sheet

Questions

How does the bug move?

What does the bug look like?

Why do you think it lives under here?

Vocabulary

Habitat, dark, damp, legs, feelers, wriggly, shiny, crawl, slow, fast, wings, slippery, delicate, tiny, hairy, smooth

48. Tidy up



Looking after your own belongings is an important skill, so tidying up together at home will teach your child to take responsibility for their belongings when they start school.

A variety of skills are taught and practised during this activity.

Memory and recall skills are used when children have to remember where their toys belong.

Observational skills are developed by sorting and matching similar toys to put them away together.

Putting their own toys away and knowing where they are gives them a reason to keep them tidy and promotes **independence**.

Make tidy up time into a game by using a timer or setting a challenge.

'Can you fill your box before I fill mine?'

'How many toys can you put away in 1 minute?'

Using music or a particular song to tidy up to can make the activity more fun and give your child a limited time to complete the task.

47. Use a knife, fork and spoon

Good table manners are an important skill that should be developed when your child is young.



Model the correct use of cutlery at meal times.

Show your child how to hold their food in place with the fork while they use their knife to cut it.

Make food shapes with playdough for your child to practise cutting with a knife and fork.

Encourage your child to hold their cutlery in the correct hands throughout meal times.

Praise your child when they use their cutlery rather than their hands.

Eating meals at the table will help your child to use cutlery correctly as their plate will be on a solid base.

Give your child opportunities to cut their food themselves.

Vocabulary

Knife, fork, spoon, plate, bowl, table mat, coaster, table cloth

2. Make a mud pie



You will need

Bucket, dirt, water, stones, leaves, flowers, sticks

Children will happily spend hours making messy mud pies and using them in their imaginative play.

To make the best mud pies use dirt that doesn't have stones in.

Mix the dirt with water in a bucket using your hands until the mud is the consistency of bread dough.

Roll the mud into balls and flattened them down with the palm of your hand and then decorate,

The pies can be used as a prop in all sorts of games such as, creating a pie shop or a birthday cake at a tea party.

Questions

Where has the water gone?

How does it feel?

What has happened to your hands?

What has happened to the dirt?

Vocabulary

Soft, slimy, wet, lumpy, squishy, messy, gooey, brown

3. Blow bubbles

Bubble play is fun and helps to develop a range of skills.

Following directions

Give your child directions on how to pop the bubbles, clap them, poke them, squeeze them, jump on them. Pop the bubbles with your elbow, finger, knee or toe.

Give a sequence of directions, first poke them, then squeeze them and pop them with your knee.

Try playing music of different tempos for your child to pop bubbles to.



You will need

Bubble mixture
Space to move

You might like

Music

Questions

What are the bubbles doing?

How are they moving?

Where are they going?

Which one is the biggest/smallest/highest/lowest?

Vocabulary

Big, small, tiny, floating, light, pretty, bright, clear, slowly,

46. Dance to your favourite music



You will need

Music
Space

Dancing is a great way for your child to enjoy music and get active.

By moving to music children gain a better understanding of how their body works and moves. They also develop a sense of space and balance.

Encouraging your child to use their arms, legs, feet, hands and even their head to dance will help to develop their fine and gross motor control. This will help your child to move and balance with control and coordination.

Questions

How does this music make you feel?

Can you move in a different way?

Vocabulary

Spin, turn, wiggle, jump, shake, twizzle, up, down, stretch, high, low, sway, back, forth

Playing games such as musical statues can also help your child understand rules.

45. Help put the shopping away

Getting your child involved in jobs around the house will benefit everyone.

Being involved will also make your child feel competent and responsible.

Talk about where each item belongs (fridge, freezer or cupboard) and why.

As you put the shopping away talk to your child about the shape and size of the items. Give them opportunities to handle the items and discuss the weight and size.



You will need

Shopping

Time

Patience

Questions

Where does this go?

Which is the biggest/smallest/heaviest/lightest?

Can you pass me the tins/packets?

Vocabulary

High, low, big, small, packet, tin, bottle, light, heavy, shelf, drawer

4. Have a tea party



Having a tea party is a fun way for children to learn sharing and social skills.

You will need

You can use anything to make a tea party.

Play tea sets, cups, bowls, plates and cutlery from the kitchen or a tea set made out of playdough or boxes and containers.

Guests at the tea party can be friends, family, teddies, dolls, people figures or lego men.

Food could be real, play or made from playdough.

Being a guest at the tea party will give you the chance to model conversation to your child.

Questions

How many cups/plates/bowls do we need?

Who is coming to the tea party?

Have we got enough...?

Vocabulary

Share, equal, more, less, please, thank you, guest

5. Use scissors

The best sort of scissors for children to use for cutting is child safe scissors with a metal blade. The plastic bladed scissors are very difficult to cut with and often cause the child to become frustrated.

To help your child learn to use scissors you can use the plastic bladed ones with playdough or buy teaching scissor to help guide your child's movements.



Vocabulary

Open
Close
Cut
Forward
Sharp

You will need

Child safe scissors

Old catalogues, birthday/Christmas cards, magazines and leaflets

You might like

Cutting skills sheets which you can download online or draw a variety of lines, zig-zags and wiggles on a piece of paper for your child to cut along.

44. Help set the table



You will need

Placemats

Plates, bowls, cups, knives, forks and spoons

Sharing responsibility and having a job to do can make children feel important. Setting the table is an easy way to involve children in meal times.

Setting places allows children to share items out and match the correct amount of items to the amount of people.

Questions

Have we got enough? Do we need any more?

Where is Daddy/Mummy sitting? Who is sitting next to Daddy/Mummy?

Vocabulary

Plate, bowl, cup, glass, knife, fork, spoon, crockery, cutlery, placemat, coaster, place, each, share, more, less, next to

Your child could make place cards/mats for each member of the family to add to the table.

43. Thread beads on a string

Threading helps develop many skills. The activity helps—

Increase strength and coordination

Hand-eye coordination

Fine motor skills

Dressing skills

Pencil grasp and control

Planning

Organisation

It also provides the opportunity for self-expression and a sense of accomplishment.



You will need

Beads or pasta

String, pipe cleaners or straws

Use beads and strings to create necklaces and bracelets.

Stick straws into playdough to thread pasta onto.

Encourage your child to create patterns when threading with colours and shapes.

Vocabulary

Pattern, shape, size, thread, push, pull, same, different

6. Roll down a hill



You will need

A grassy hill

Remember

Check that the hill is free of stones, nettles and thorns

Take time for your child to enjoy some of the simple (and free) opportunities that the outdoors have to offer.

The best way to roll down a hill is to lie like a sausage across the hill with arms by your side or stretched above your head.

Roll down together and see who can get to the bottom first.

Encourage your child to change the shape of their body and talk about how this changes the way they roll.

Questions

How does it feel?

Can you roll slower/faster?

Can you roll up the hill?

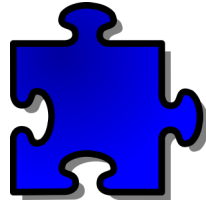
Vocabulary

Long, short, fast, slow, roll, quicker, stretch, curl, up, down

7. Complete a tricky puzzle

You will need

Puzzles



Puzzles are a fantastic way to challenge your child's thinking. They provide many learning opportunities.

Playing with puzzles increases your child's spatial awareness and hand-eye coordination.

Completing a puzzle sets a single goal and provides a sense of achievement.

Your child must think and develop strategies on how to approach and complete the puzzle.

Questions

Where could this piece go?

What shape is it?

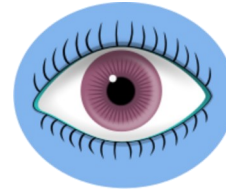
Have you tried turning it?

What picture have the shapes made?

Vocabulary

Shape, size, bigger, smaller, same, different, match, lift, in, out, turn

42. Play eye spy



The great thing about eye spy is that it can be played anywhere with no resources. It can also be a great game to keep your child entertained in a shopping queue or waiting room when they are bored.

The game can be altered in a number of ways.

Eye spy with my little eye something beginning with...
(letter/sound)

Eye spy with my little eye something the colour...(colour)

I hear with my little ear something beginning with...(letter/
sound)

I hear with my little ear something that is...(quiet/loud/
near/far away)

You can also give clues to help your child with their guesses and practice other skills.

It rhymes with...

It's behind/near/next to/in front of...

41. Go to the park

Parks are a wonderful free resource which provide hours of fun for your child.

Play is essential for healthy development, but free, spontaneous play is highly beneficial for your child.

Play equipment gives your child the opportunity to -

Strengthens muscles

Learn to assess risks

Use different movements/body parts

Socialise with other children

Take part in imaginative play

Build stamina



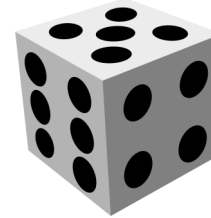
You will need

A park

The park also provides you and your child with the space to play ball games, fly a kite run around, ride a bike, have a picnic and meet friends.

Many parks also give you the opportunity to explore wooded areas and see a variety of wildlife and trees.

8. Play a board game



There is nothing that your child will enjoy more than spending time with you. Playing games is a great way to spend time together, provide learning opportunities and satisfy your child's competitive side.

Playing board games is also an ideal time to introduce your child to rules, taking turns and the feeling of winning and losing.

Through these games your child will learn and develop many skills - shape/colour recognition, grouping, reasoning, hand-eye coordination, dexterity and critical thinking.

Top tips

Keep the game simple

Explain the rules

Have a practice run

Play in teams to help your child understand how to play

Don't be tempted to allow your child to win every time

Game ideas

Snakes and ladders

Noughts and crosses

Picture bingo

Ker plunk

Try making a game together

9. Climb a tree

You will need

Trees

Look for tree with strong trunks and thick branches, branches that are close together and free from decay.



Climbing is excellent for gross motor development.

It promotes self-confidence, builds critical thinking skills, helps children assess risks, builds resilience, exercises imagination and provides a sense of achievement

Explain to your child that they do not need to climb to the top to have fun or be a tree climber.

Safety

Children must not wear bicycle helmets when climbing trees.

Avoid climbing trees when they are wet and slippery.

Your child should only climb to a height that you feel happy with and have previously agreed.

When climbing back down remind your child there is no rush.

40. Play Simon says



Following instructions can be difficult for young children. Simon says is a great game to practise this important skill.

Start the game with one instruction.

'Simon says sit down'.

Once your child has mastered this you can start introducing 2 or 3 instructions at a time.

'Simon says out your hand on your head, turn around and then sit down'.

Don't forget to leave 'Simon says' out to check that your child is listening.

You can also use this game to encourage children to carry out routines and instructions they are usually hesitant to follow.

Simon says walk up stairs, Simon says brush your teeth, Simon says wash your face...

Simon says stop playing, Simon says put your bricks in the box...

Vocabulary

Up, down, turn, sit, stand, on, skip, balance, leg, foot, arm, hand, head

39. Go for a walk

Walking is a fantastic activity for you and your child. It's fun and interesting and gives your child time to notice things.

The exercise makes them feel calmer and happier and it improves their concentration.

Take a walk with your child and try to pinpoint different sounds that you hear. The route and destination are not important, your child will benefit from spending time observing their surroundings and talking about them.



You will need

Somewhere to walk (park, street, woodlands)

Time

Questions

What do you think is making that noise?

Which noises do you like/dislike?

How many different noises can you make?

Vocabulary

Hear, listen, sound, noise, loud, quiet, rustle, tweet, creak

10. Play in the rain



You will need

Warm and water-proof clothing

You might like

Food colouring, paper, sponges, paintbrushes, buckets, spades

With the correct clothing children can play and have fun outside in any weather.

Sprinkle a piece of paper with food colouring and take it outside in the rain

Set up a pop up tent to create a cosy den while you watch and listen to the rain

Drop food colouring into puddles

Paint with mud

Play with trucks in the mud

Jump in puddles

Make mud pies

Use buckets, spades, spoons and sponges to move a puddle

Questions

What sound does the rain make?

Where do you think the rain is coming from?

Who might like/not like the rain?

How does the rain make puddles?

Vocabulary

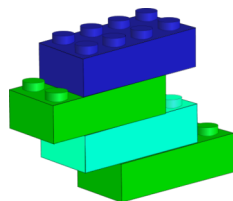
Drizzle, rain, pouring, drop, wet, soaking, puddle, splash

11. Make a model

Vocabulary

Next to, on top, side, shape, size, join, add, stick, cut

Bigger, smaller, same, equal, tall, short



Models can be made anywhere and with anything.

The important part of model making for your child's learning is the process of the planning and making rather than the what the outcome looks like.

Model making promotes the develop of skills such as, planning, organising, problem solving and logical thinking.

Talk to your child while they are model making about what they are making and how they are making it.

Some children may like to spend time planning their model by drawing a design first.

You will need

Cardboard boxes, cardboard tubes, paper, sticky tape, glue, scissors

Construction sets—duplo, lego, blocks, bricks

Stones, sticks, leaves

38. Make a musical instrument



You will need

Boxes, plastic containers, plastic bottles

Rice, lentils, beads, pasta,

Elastic bands, string, straws,

Give your child the opportunity to explore the types of noises that can be created with the items you have provided. Put some lentils in a bottle and let them shake it, add more lentils and show them how it creates a different sound.

When they have created their own instrument they can decorate it and use it to make music to accompany their favourite songs.

Try clapping a beat for your child to copy with their instrument.

Questions

How did you make your instrument?

Can you make a loud/quiet sound?

Can you make a slow/fast beat?

Vocabulary

Sound, noise, quick, fast, slow, loud, quiet, beat, count, shake, pluck, bang, music

37. Play shops

Children take a lot of pleasure in recreating adult roles and routines.

Imaginary play is an important part of child development. Role play encourages children to positively interact with peers and adults.

During this type of play your child will copy and practise words they hear you use which will develop their vocabulary and language skills.



You will need

Items to buy (food, toys, books)

Money

Shopping bags

Questions

How much does this cost?

Do you have...?

Where can I find...?

Vocabulary

Money, coins, notes, cards, bags, customers, till, bags, shop keeper, closed open

12. Bake a cake



You will need

150g margarine

150g caster sugar

3 eggs

150g self-raising flour

Chocolate

Decorations

Wash your hands.

Preheat the oven to 175°C.

Put the margarine, caster sugar, eggs and flour into a bowl and mix well.

Spoon the mixture into paper cases and bake for 10-12 minutes.

Leave to cool.

Melt the chocolate and spread on top of the cooled cakes.

Add the decorations and let the chocolate set.

Enjoy!

Baking is a great way to teach your child about hygiene and safety in the kitchen. Making a treat that others can enjoy will also give your child a sense of achievement.

Vocabulary

Mix, stir, sprinkle, break, weigh, melt, cook, bake, rise, hot, cool, heat, measure, pour, tip, beat

13. Tell someone about your day

Your child may seem reluctant to talk about their day at school. This is nothing to worry about and does not mean that your child is unhappy. Children need space and time to process what they have experienced throughout the day.



If you always make time to talk about your day during dinner time, you may find that your child will continue to do this when they start school.

To encourage your child to tell you about their day try asking some questions to prompt your child and show them that you are interested. Be careful not to bombard them with questions as this may make your child feel overwhelmed.

Questions

What did you enjoy most about today?

How did that make you feel?

Who did you see/talk to/play with?

What did you learn at school?

36. Make a magic potion



You might need

Bucket

Sticks, petals,
leaves, water, pine
needles, stones

Plastic bottle/
containers

Magic wand

Children love mixing, creating and pretending they are a fairy or a wizard.

Making potions will give your child the opportunity to develop their fine motor skills through squeezing and pouring.

Encourage your child to use what they can find in the garden to create their potion. Talk about each ingredient and what the potion will do when it's finished.

Questions

What are you putting in your potion?

What will your potion do?

Who is the potion for?

Vocabulary

Mix, stir, add, more, less, spell, magic, invisible, pour, pinch, sprinkle, drop, cauldron

35. Make a shopping list

Making a shopping list with your child is an excellent way to introduce your child to new vocabulary.



Cut out pictures from leaflets, flyers and packing and stick them on to paper to create a list.

Look at a recipe together and make a list of the ingredients you need to buy.

Give you child a small number of items from your list that they can create their own list with.

Make a list together by discussing meals and ingredients.

Create a pretend shopping list for your shopping game or for ingredients to make your potion.

Let your child draw or mark make to create their list. You can then write the item name below their picture.

Your child can then take responsibility for their list during the shopping trip. They can look for the items, select the correct size or quantity and tick items off their list.

14. Give a hug



Giving a hug can help a child to communicate to others that they want to be friends or that they are sorry. A hug can also be used to cheer their friend up if they are upset.

Remember that a child should not have to give a hug if they don't want to. They can communicate affection with words, a smile, a high five or a hand shake.

15. Get yourself dressed

Getting dressed is an important skill for your child learn. Being able to dress themselves will build your child's confidence and independence and give them a sense of achievement.

As well as getting dressed, remember to give your child the opportunity to practise -

Getting undressed

Folding their clothes into a neat pile

Turning their clothes from inside out to the right way around

Putting on their coat, hat and gloves



Top tips

Buy skirts and trousers with elasticated waist bands.

Put name labels in the back of their clothes to help them identify the front and back.

16. Go to the toilet by yourself



Of all the practical skills to practise and master, going to the toilet is probably the most important one.

Encouraging your child to become confident in getting to the toilet in time, wiping properly, flushing the toilet and washing their hands will have a positive impact on their self-esteem when they start school. If they are independent in this skill they are also less likely to have an accident.

17. Put your shoes on

At school most children will have to change from outdoor to indoor shoes and some will have to change into wellies for outdoor play and trainers for PE.

Tying shoe laces is a tricky skill to learn. When buying shoes for school look for shoes/boots that zip or velcro.

Give your child opportunities to practise changing their own footwear.



Top tip

Write your child's name on the inside of their shoes so that your child can identify the left and right foot.

33. Do something kind

Kindness is an important trait that other children look for in a friend.

Modelling kindness is the best way for your child to learn.

There are many ways that your child can show kindness—

Choose an old toy to take to the charity shop.

Help friends tidy up after playing.

Share a smile.



34. Make a healthy snack



Involving your child in making their own snacks and meals can help encourage them to try new foods.

Try making a fruit kebab using some fruits that your child likes and adding in ones that they haven't tried before.

Top tip

Use a straw rather than a skewer for your child to thread the fruit onto.

32. Play where is teddy

Try hiding teddy for your child to find and use clues such as warmer and colder to help your child identify teddy's hiding place.

When your child has found teddy encourage them to tell you where he is— *'I found teddy inside the toy box'*.

Put the teddy in different locations and ask your child to tell you where he is— *'The teddy is on top of the box'*.



You will need

A teddy or another toy that your child enjoys playing with)

Questions

What is teddy next to/inside/near?

Can you put teddy on top/under/next to....?

Where would teddy like to sit?

Vocabulary

Next to, near, on top of, under above, below, to the side, high, low, inside, outside

18. Sing a nursery rhyme

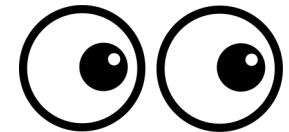


Nursery rhymes are a great start to learning early phonic skills such as, the ability to hear and identify letter sounds. They also give your child the opportunity to practise pitch, volume and rhythm. Nursery rhymes can be enjoyed anytime and anywhere. Encourage your child to add actions to the rhyme, change names/words to personalise them or clap along to the beat.

Nursery rhyme words can be easily found online.

19. Recognise your name

Being able to recognise their own name will aid your child's self esteem and help them find their belongings when they are at school.



Roll out their name in play dough.

Label their belongings with name labels.

Write their name in glue for them to stick onto.

Write their name on paper with a candle for your child to paint over with watered down paint.

Make a name sign together for your child to stick on their bedroom door.

20. Make playdough



You will need

- 1 cup of plain flour
- 1/2 cup of salt
- 1-2 teaspoons of cream of tartar
- 1 cup of water
- 1 tablespoon of oil
- Colour/glitter/scent or fragrance

Method

Mix the dry ingredients together in a large pan and add the water and oil. If adding colour, glitter, etc. add at this point.

Heat and stir continuously - it will look lumpy but keep stirring until it becomes smooth and comes away from the sides.

Leave it to cool before using.

The dough will keep for weeks in an airtight container.

Playing with playdough will help your child develop many skills

Manipulating playdough helps to strengthen hand muscles and develop fine motor control. Your child will also use hand-eye coordination when cutting, poking and prodding the dough.

31. Have fun in the bath

Bath games make bath time a fun and enjoyable experience and offer educational opportunities.

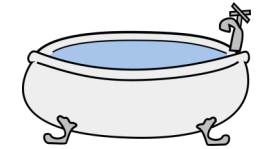
Provide a range of different sized containers for your child to explore. Which holds the most/least water?

Explore what happens when you hold a bottle under the water. Talk about where the bubbles are coming from.

Use toys and objects in the bath to talk about floating and sinking. Which float and which sink?

Spread shaving foam on the side of the bath. Your child can use their finger to draw pictures, shapes and try writing letters.

Bath time can also be a great time to read your child a story.



You might need

- Different sized containers
- Bottle
- Sponges
- Bath toys
- Shaving foam
- Books

Vocabulary

Pour, tip, sprinkle, splash, more, less, big, small, full, empty, drop

29. Help hang the washing out

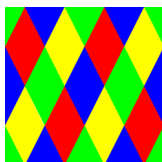


The washing is done, the sun is shining and now it's time to hang it out. Your child could help you do this.

Squeezing the pegs will help develop the muscles in their hands that they use to hold a pencil and use scissors.

It is an ideal time to practise identifying colours, patterns and sizes. Ask your child to pass you the spotty socks/purple shorts/ big t-shirt.

30. Copy a pattern



Start by making a pattern for your child to copy. Once they have mastered this create a pattern for them to continue or see if they can create their own for you to copy.

Make a pattern with their toys (blue car, blue car, red car, blue car, blue car).

Make a movement pattern (jump, step, jump, step).

Make a sound pattern (Bang, tap, tap, bang, tap, tap).

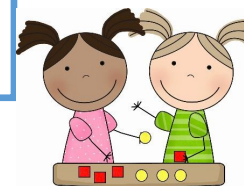
21. Have a race

Races are exciting outdoor games that will keep your child active.

If they are playing with friends it's also a great chance to work as a team, compete in a healthy manner and cheer on their teammates.

You can also add other skills into the races.

Try dressing up race, balance a beanbag on their head, jumping, skipping, egg and spoon.



22. Share

Sharing can be a challenge for children, but it is a skill they need for play and learning. If your child is able to share they will find it easier to make friends, keep friends and play cooperatively.

Children who share will learn how to compromise, take turns, negotiate and cope with disappointment.

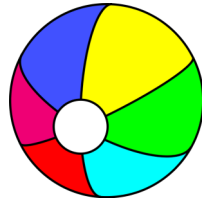
To encourage sharing you and your family can model sharing, point out when sharing is taking place, offer plenty of praise when your child shares and give them opportunity to share with peers by inviting friends for playdates.

23. Play throw and catch

Throwing and catching involves many skills for your child to master.

Starting with rolling a ball to each other will help develop their ability to track a moving object, aim the ball in the correct direction and position their hands correctly to catch the returning ball.

Another way to build their skills is to use a balloon or a scarf. These items move and fall much slower than a ball which gives your child a chance to adjust their position.



You will need

Ball
Balloon
Beanbag
Scarf
Ball of paper

When your child is throwing encourage them to throw underarm as this will give the most control over the ball.

Top tips for your child

Look in the direction you are throwing
Have your arms ready in front of you
Keep your eyes on the ball
Use two hand to throw and catch

28. Make a tree rubbing



You will need

Trees
Paper
Wax crayons

This is a great activity to take to the park or on a walk as you only need paper and crayons.

Find a tree, place the paper on the tree and rub the wax crayon over the paper.

This gives the opportunity to talk about what the tree looks like, how it feels and compare trees to find similarities and differences.

The tree rubbings can then be taken home and used as a background to stick a picture on or cut up to make a collage.

Questions

How does the tree feel?
What is the difference between/same about these trees?
Where is the trunk/branches/leaves?

Vocabulary

Tall, short, wide, bumpy, knobbly, smooth, bark, branches, roots, trunk

27. Find leaves

Try collecting different types of leaves and use them to compare the size, shape and colour.

Empty your leaves on the floor to make a picture or take them home and stick them on paper to make a picture to keep.

When collecting leaves remind your child that they should not pull them off the trees and plants.

Look at the trees and try to match the leaves to the tree they fell from.



You will need

Park/garden/tree lined street

Bucket or bag

You might like

Paper

Glue

Questions

What sort of leaves can you find?

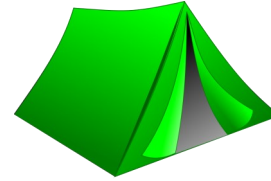
Which is your favourite type of leaf?

What is the same/different about these leaves?

Vocabulary

Long, short, fat, spiky, curly, bumpy, smooth, green, big, little, yellow, orange, brown

24. Build a den



Den building is a magical experience for children, which develops many skills and promotes creativity.

Different children may enjoy different aspects of this activity. Some will enjoy the process of planning, finding materials and building their den. Others will prefer to create their den quickly so that they can use the den in their imaginative play.

Their enjoyment may vary but the development of skills remain the same.

Planning, organising, problem solving, creative thinking, imaginative play and many more.

Dens can be built anywhere with anything.

In the house

Use cushions, bed sheets, blankets, chairs, pegs or a huge cardboard box for your child to create their cosy space.

In the garden

Use old bed sheets, tarpaulin, rope, pegs or a even a pop up tent.

In the woods

Lean branches against a tree and cover with twigs, fern and leaves.

25. Look at a cloudy sky

You will need

A cloudy sky



Lie down on the grass and watch the clouds drift through the sky. Point out the different clouds and ask your child what they notice.

Look for animal shapes in the clouds to capture their imagination.

Discuss how different clouds give us different weather—rain, snow, hail and sleet.

Create a cloudy picture

Stretch cotton wool balls into cloud shapes to create a cloudy sky picture.

Questions

What does that one look like?

Why are they moving?

How do they move?

Vocabulary

Cloud, sky, thin, streaky, puffy, drift, float

26. Make a picture



You will need

Paper

Pencils

Crayons

Drawing and creating pictures encourages children to be more expressive.

Children absorb everything they see, hear, smell or touch. Creating a picture is a great way for them to express their experiences and understanding.

Drawing develops your child's problem solving skills, enhances their fine motor control and hand-eye coordination.

Collect leaves, pine needle, sticks, stones and arrange them on the ground to create a picture.

Take home the items you find and create a picture by sticking them on paper.

Take a sketch pad and pencils outside and make observational drawings.

Draw plans for other activities such as; den building and potion making.