

# Early Learning and Child Development

## Fun and Interactive Activities

Please consider safely using the following activities with adult supervision. Depending upon the age group, you may want to consider how you use the following examples and what materials are safe and hazardous free. For example: avoid small material items that could cause choking; avoid the use of items which are sharp, unclean and/ or unsanitary.

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### **Build a Fort**

Use blankets, sheets etc. to build a fort. Some children like to add items to the fort such as flashlights, teddy bears, pillows, music etc. To add to the fun you could have a picnic or share snacks in the fort.

### **Bear Hunt**

This is a fun game to play with children. You can call out the following and children will follow your lead. "Let's go on a bear hunt, are you ready, here we go" you can slap your hands on you lap as you add to the story. For example " Oh Look! I see a forest, We can't go around it, we can't go under it ,Let's go through it!" Use your feet to show how you walk through the forest. You can then add items such as going over a mountain, through a stream, a swamp or over/under the bridge.

The highlight is "Going into the Cave...the dark, cold cave...." This is when children get really excited. "Better use my flashlight, oh no its not working!" "Oh what's that, its big, its furry.....It's a Bear!!!" Then repeat all the things you did as you go all the way back home.

You can add feeling to the walk such as going through the forest. " Brrrr.....its cold" as you use your hands on your arms to show the cold air. Some children may say we forgot our coat or boots- show how you will put on your coat or boots, zip zippers etc. Add soft foot steps to show how we walk softly amongst the forest ground.

Children enjoy drawing pictures after their experience on a Bear Hunt.

### **I spy**

A player will find an object or item for the other player to guess. Take turns to guess items and say " I spy with my little eye.....something that is the color Red." The player will guess

what items are the color red and once find it they take the next turn. Make it fun for the player such as “Brown Bear, Brown Bear what do you see?”

## Puzzles

Exercise those creative, cognitive and problem-solving muscles with a good puzzle. Have your child draw a picture on a cardboard or paper. Then use a felt or pencil to outline puzzle pieces directly on their drawing. Cut out the pieces with a pair of scissors, mix them up and get solving



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**Photo Credits- online images of Kids Yoga Animal Pose**

## Freeze Game

Have players freeze in specific poses: animals, shapes, letters or Fun Yoga Poses such as Frog, cow or turtle.

Then you could guess what the pose is or have them try another one.

## Hide and Seek

One person covers his or her eyes and counts aloud while the other players hide. When the person is finished counting- he or she begins looking for the hiders. The last hider to be found is then next to count.

## Treasure Hunts

Draw some clues on some pieces of paper — have fun with this and get creative. Put the first clue somewhere easy to find. Then leave as many clues as you like, making a trail to the final clue. Instead of a prize, the treasure hunt can lead to something special such as a hug, high five or special time together.

## Simon Says

Choose one player to play the role of “Simon”. The rest of the players will gather in a circle or line in front of Simon as she/he calls out actions starting with the phrase “Simon says”: “Simon says...touch your toes.” The players then have to copy Simon’s action, touching their

toes. If Simon calls out an action without uttering the phrase “Simon says,” the players must not do the action. If a child touches his toes when Simon didn’t say..., he or she is out of the game.

### **What’s inside the Box?**

Use an empty box or a container that you can place items into. You could cover it with a towel or with colored paper to make it challenging for others to guess. Have one player place items such fabric, nature items, toy etc. for other to guess. To make it fun you can place a blind hold over a players eyes so they cannot see what is in the box. Allow the player to feel the item as they try to guess what’s inside the box.

### **My Masterpiece-Collage**

Children enjoy creating their very own masterpiece! You can have them create this on an old plate, cookie sheet or piece of cardboard. Items in the home that are no longer of use are a great way for them to use their imagination and creativity skills. Items such as old shoe box, gift wrap, gift box, old tins, cotton, fabrics, berry baskets, yarn, buttons, craft paper, felts, crayons etc. You could add items from outside such as bark, sticks, and rocks. If you

This is a great opportunity to share weaving skills

### **Make a puppet**



Take a clean gently used sock to create a puppet. This is a great way to share a story, play a guessing game and have fun with. Use felts to create eyes and a mouth, if you have old buttons or yarn, you could attach to create eyes, or hair for your puppet.

*Photo Credits- online images sock puppet*

### **Make Playdough -Ingredients**

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup salt
- 4 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 2 cups lukewarm water
- 2 Tablespoons of vegetable oil (coconut oil works too)
- Food coloring, optional
- Quart sized bag

Stir together the flour, salt and cream of tartar in a large pot. Next add the water and oil. If you're only making one color, add in the the color now as well. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly. Continue stirring until the dough has thickened and begins to form into a ball. Remove from heat and then place inside a gallon sized bag or onto wax paper. Allow to cool slightly and then knead until smooth. If you're adding colors after, divide the dough into balls (for how many colors you want) and then add the dough into the quart sized bags. Start with about 5 drops of color and add more to brighten it. Knead the dough, while inside the bag so it doesn't stain your hands. Once it's all mixed together you're ready to PLAY. Store the play dough inside the bags once done to keep soft. Keeps for up to 3 months. Use safe house hold items such as butter knives, cookie cutters and other fun items to create and explore with.

## **Balancing**

Need a small object such as a pencil, eraser — or similar object to place on head. Play music as each child walks around balancing the object on their head. If the object falls off the child is frozen until another comes and places the object back on the head. Everyone stops and resets their object when the music stops. Game starts over when the music again starts.

## **Memory Game**

Hide up to five items under a small dish cloth. Lift up the cloth and allow the children to remember what is there. After a few moments cover the items with the cloth and slowly hide/ take away one item. Then lift the cloth up and have them guess what was taken away. This is a great way to guess colors, objects and/or names.