

## Learning through Play Ideas

- ❑ **Bubbles:** Blow, chase, and pop. Kids love bubbles. If you don't have bubble "juice" (as my kids called it), mix up your own solution with 4 cups of warm water,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of dish soap, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of sugar. No bubble wands? Use items from your kitchen such as cookie cutters, apple slicers, or spatulas, or twist pipe cleaners into wand shapes. Instant wands!
- ❑ **Penguin run:** Give your kids rubber balls or beach balls and have them waddle with the balls between their knees from one end of a designated space to another.
- ❑ **Noodle balloon:** Pool noodles and beach balls are the perfect items for a number of games. Have your kids play a game of keep-up or provide boxes for kids to try to bat their balloons into. Warning: there might be a lot of laughter. [Find more ideas for striking activities.](#)
- ❑ **Sidewalk chalk:** Use this multi-use item to set up a variety of games for your kids. Draw a hopscotch pattern on the ground, provide your kids with beanbags or rocks, and let them hop away. Draw a maze with loops, lines, and curves and see if your kids can walk forward and backward on the maze. [Find more hopping activities.](#)
- ❑ **"Paint" the house:** Bring in the painting crew without actually worrying about the colour of your walls or outdoor furniture being changed. Provide your children with paintbrushes of all sizes and a pail or two of water. Kids love seeing the "paint" go on walls or fences and instantly drying.
- ❑ **Magnify the fun:** How cool is it to see a flower, the bark of a tree, a crawling ant, or a stone really, really enlarged? Give the kids a magnifying glass and send them off to explore nature in a big way.
- ❑ **Sponge it up:** With a pail of water, one empty pail, and two sponges, set your kids up for some fun in the sun (or even in the rain!). Show your child how to soak the sponge with the water in one pail and see how much water they can carry to the second pail set short a distance away.
- ❑ **Lily pad hop:** Get your kids jumping with this froggy fun. Lay out tea towels, face cloths, or pieces of felt and have your kids leap and hop. Be sure not to fall in the pond! [Find more balance activities here.](#)
- ❑ **Music makers:** There are so many household items that can be used to make music. Have your kids sing and dance with pots and pans, spoons, bells, empty bottles partially filled with dry beans, muffin tins, and ice-cream scoops. Does the noise sound different if a spoon or a hand is used to tap a pot? How fast or slow can the music be?
- ❑ **Kicking obstacle course:** Challenge your kids to create a course using outdoor chairs, cones, flower pots, or anything else lying around. Then kick a ball around the obstacles. If you can take a 10-minute break, you can give it a try too — the kids will love it! [Find more kicking activity ideas here.](#)



Try role-playing games together such as shopping. Set items out on the sofa, give your child a bag and some pretend money. Then switch roles and let them be the shopkeeper.

Play teddy bears' picnic. Put soft toys in a circle and give your child a few cups and spoons. Give your child a chance to tell you what to do like, 'Stir teddy's tea.' You could chat to them as you are doing actions, for example, 'let's cut the cake in half'.

Start conversations by using open questions with lots of possible answers, for example, 'What are you going to play with today?'

Plan a treasure hunt game, where your child has to listen to your instructions to find a clue or an object. For example, 'Try looking behind the sofa'. Help your child look for a specific number of objects and count them together – such as 3 cups, 2 pink socks, 5 pens.

Help your child make a puppet show about their favourite story using objects around the house.

Play sorting games together. Collect a range of different household objects and practise sorting them into different groups, perhaps by size or colour. Once you have finished, count all the objects in each group.

Play a make-believe journey game with your child. Make a car out of a cardboard box that you decorate together, or just grab some cushions, pile in a few teddy bear passengers, and let your child drive you off on an adventure.

