

School Holiday Activities

We have created a huge range of activities, craft ideas and games to keep kids active and entertained over the holidays. There are hundreds of different ideas to try in different age categories. You can always print out a copy too!

Early childhood (pre-school)

These activities are suitable for pre-school children with the assistance of their parents and carers.

Jetpacks

Use recycled goods like plastic bottles and cardboard boxes to make a jetpack. You can use wide silver tape to make straps. Add accessories like bottle tops for buttons. Don't forget to add red and yellow streamers for the flames.

Unusual materials challenge

Build a bug hotel, try leaf threading and make a nature chandelier, create an aluminium foil river in the garden and float things down it, thread pasta into jewellery, build a house with a deck of cards.

Outside games

Play outdoor games like egg and spoon race, tag team races, three legged races, or stuck in the mud.

Story-time

Reading with your child every day encourages a love of books and reading.

<http://www.letsread.com.au/Parents>

<https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/early-years/early-learning-at-home>

Act it out!

Act out the story of 3 little pigs or any other children's story.

Make some noise!

Make a musical instrument from anything around the house. Create a sensory shaker bottle using an old bottle, glitter and water.

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/our-learning-sa/prior-school/making-musical-instruments-home>

<https://littlescientists.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Manual-acoustics.pdf>

Make some slime

Make some slime. Messy slime play introduces children to mathematical and science concepts.

<https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/messy-slime-play/>

Messy foam play

Use shaving foam to create a messy play experience that engages all five senses. Add food colouring to create swirls and patterns!

<https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/messy-foam-play/> <https://www.tate.org.uk/kids/make/paint-draw/make-marbled-paper-foam>

Treasure hunt in the garden

Explore and investigate the garden. Find a four-leaf clover in the grass!

<https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/investigating-their-world/>

Have a picnic or a tea party

Set up a picnic or a tea party. Bring food and invite guests to participate virtually via a digital device (teddy bears welcome).

<https://publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/Documents/0-4-years-Celebrations-Have-a-picnic-or-tea-party-Learning-at-home.pdf>

Build a cubby

Make a cubby house with blankets and furniture from around the house.

<https://publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/Documents/0-4-years-Build-a-cubby-Learning-at-home.pdf>

Paint a window

Find some paint, mix it with dishwashing detergent and paint a rainbow on a window. Once it dries it can be washed off.

Pick your pegs

Have a box full of multi-coloured pegs or similar. Choose a colour and choose a song. Have your child pick out all of the pegs in that colour before the song finishes. Repeat until all of the pegs are gone.

Fun with leaves

Start a leaf collection and talk about how they are all unique. Your child can even add a thin layer of paint and press them onto paper for cool designs. Collect different leaves from the garden and use a hole punch to create confetti. Have fun sprinkling the confetti in the garden!

<https://publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/Documents/0-4%20years-Natural-confetti-Learning-at-home.pdf>

Cloud in a jar

Experiment using water, shaving foam and food colouring.

<https://www.learning4kids.net/2015/05/17/cloud-in-a-jar-experiment/>

Paint with clouds

Add a small amount of paint onto several cotton wool balls. Add a peg to each piece. Your little ones can use the peg to pick up the clouds and paint some wonderful art. They can also make the clouds part of the artwork!

<https://www.learning4kids.net/2015/10/27/painting-clouds-on-the-easel/>

Sing-along

Sing along to some favourite songs about the alphabet, phonics, numbers, colours or animals. There are plenty on YouTube. Add new actions for keywords.

<https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/five-reasons-sing-along/>

Fruit painting

Cut some fruit in half. Put a thin layer of paint on the flat side. Press it down onto paper to see some cool fruit designs. Ask the little ones to repaint the fruit in different colours.

<https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/printing-craft-project/>

Cloud watching

Lie down outside with your child and look up at the clouds. What do they look like? Imagine all sorts of characters and objects up there.

Obstacle course

Make an obstacle course out of cushions, chairs, toys or anything. Make a circuit of running around, jumping over, crawling through, reaching up, balancing or any fun action. Have a great finish line for that sense of achievement. You can also make an obstacle course in the backyard.

<https://publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/Documents/0-4-Backyard-obstacle-course-Learning-at-home.pdf>

Picture nature

Talk a walk to the back garden or view on your daily walk. Look for interesting things in nature. It could be insects, flowers or anything. Allow your little ones to take pictures either with their imagination or with a phone camera.

Water play

Make boats out of anything that will float. Try corks, avocado shells, passionfruit hulls or leaves. Test them out in a big bowl of water. Add passengers to the boats using stones or mini toy characters. Paddle pop sticks could be used to make flags.

<https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/learning-elements-playing-water/>

Ice cubes

Make some fun ice cubes out of interesting fruit combinations or fruit juice. Add in some surprises of real fruit pieces or treats. Make different coloured ice.

<https://littlebinsforlittlehands.com/frozen-color-mixing-science-activity/>

Playdough

Make play dough together.

<https://publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/Documents/0-4-years-Play-dough-Learning-at-home.pdf>

<https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/making-art-craft-materials-home/>

Dress-up and role play

Play dress-ups and allow children to wear clothing items from different family members to engage in role play.

<https://publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/Documents/0-4-years-Dress-up-box-Learning-at-home.pdf>

<https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/dress-ups-make-believe/>

Threading beads

Thread beads on string, cord or wool to create a necklace. Pasta can be used to create their own beads for threading.

<https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/threading-craft-projects/>

Spray painting

Fill up an empty spray bottle with water and some food colour. Spray paint empty boxes or large pieces of paper outside.

Make paint

Make some paint for art experiments and finger painting.

<https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/making-paint/>

Have fun with balloons

Blow up some balloons and hang them on the clothes line outside. Give children a spray bottle filled with water and ask them to aim for the balloons from a distance. They can also have fun tapping the balloon into the air. See how many times they can tap it without it touching the ground!

<https://publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/Documents/0-4-years-Balloons-Learning-at-home.pdf>

Play I spy

Look for things indoors or outdoors for example: "I spy with my little eye something that is yellow; something that is the shape of a circle; something that starts with the t sound..." <https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/spy-games-words-sounds/>

Shadow play

Sit with your child and use a torch or a lamp to make shadows on the wall or ceiling.

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/parenting-and-child-care/parenting/learning-your-child-greatstart/working-it-out/shadow-play>

Paper plate puppets

Use paper plates, paddle pop sticks, pencils and any other materials available to create paper plate puppets. Make some popcorn and do a puppet show. They can also make a paper plate umbrella.

<https://www.learning4kids.net/2015/11/17/paper-plate-umbrella-craft/>

Feely bag

Use an old pillowcase or large sock filled with a variety of small object such as a toy car, bird feather, rocks, pegs, brush etc. Ask children to identify objects and discuss how things feel in the bag (e.g. is it hard or soft?; big or small?). Make an eye spy feely bag!

<https://www.learning4kids.net/2015/11/25/homemade-eye-spy-sensory-bag-keeping-kids-occupied-in-the-car/>

Make your own puzzle

Find a picture from catalogues, newspapers or magazines. Paste the chosen picture onto a sheet of cardboard or reuse an empty cereal box. Cut the picture into different shapes to create a puzzle. You can also use ready-made puzzles for learning. <https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/new-world-drawing-puzzles/>

Play a game of Simon Says

Give instructions like: "Simon says put your hands on your head", "Simon says put your hands behind your back", "Simon says jump". If the instruction is not accompanied by the words "Simon says" the children should not follow the action.

<https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/simon-says-listen/>

Go bowling

Fill empty bottles with water or dirt or sand. Arrange them as can be seen at a bowling alley, and challenge children to knock them down with a tennis ball or any other ball available at home. Practise number skills as they set up and knock over the pins.

They can even decorate the bottles!

<https://playgroupwa.com.au/bodies-and-brains-alien-attack>

Ball games

Play a game of throw and catch. See how far apart you can stand while still catching the ball successfully.

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/activity-guides/playing-with-balls-activity>

Play a game of what's the time Mr Wolf?

<https://www.kidspot.com.au/things-to-do/activity-articles/whats-the-time-mr-wolf-news-story/da4c14189849d42a50600e7fae3493f8>

Make moon sand

Make moon sand using 4 cups of plain flour and half a cup of any oil available (vegetable/canola oil or baby oil). Use a blender or your hands to combine the oil and flour well. This may take up to 10 minutes to get everything completely incorporated.

Put it in a large container and let children play freely with it.

<https://www.happy-mothering.com/2-ingredient-diy-moon-sand-recipe/>

Grow plants together

Plant bulbs and seeds and watch them grow!

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/our-learning-sa/prior-school/greatstart-watch-it-grow>

Make a mark!

Allow your child to explore shapes and lines made with different writing tools.

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/our-learning-sa/prior-school/greatstart-mark-making>

<https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/lets-go-writing/>

Go on a virtual tour of the Louvre

Explore the Louvre together.

<https://www.louvre.fr/en/visites-en-ligne?fbclid=IwAR2LS9LnfFe0i5A-t8uljqdvL8cyCRolnjCqExrfTtQAaH2uTTpd3dJ-A6s>

Go on a virtual tour of the Great Wall of China

Explore the Great Wall of China together.

[https://www.thechinaguide.com/destination/great-wall-of-china?](https://www.thechinaguide.com/destination/great-wall-of-china?fbclid=IwAR0JSYxkxBLg0jJpMRgmnDSn7MoNsbGxmRWDXCpiJXrV5UEtFOr2400w_3QE)

[fbclid=IwAR0JSYxkxBLg0jJpMRgmnDSn7MoNsbGxmRWDXCpiJXrV5UEtFOr2400w_3QE](https://www.thechinaguide.com/destination/great-wall-of-china?fbclid=IwAR0JSYxkxBLg0jJpMRgmnDSn7MoNsbGxmRWDXCpiJXrV5UEtFOr2400w_3QE)

Go on a virtual tour of Yellow Stone National Park

Explore a national park together.

<https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/photosmultimedia/virtualtours.htm>

Go on a virtual tour of the National Gallery of Victoria
Explore the Indigenous Australian exhibition 'Marking Time'.
<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/virtual-tours/marking-time/>

Go on a virtual tour of the Newcastle Art Gallery
Explore an art exhibition together.
<https://www.nag.org.au/virtual-tour>

Virtual zoos and aquariums
Explore zoos and aquariums from around the world.
<https://www.brisbanekids.com.au/world-zoos-that-offer-virtual-tours/>
<https://govalleykids.com/virtual-field-trips/>

Have fun in the kitchen!
Following a recipe and making healthy food also feeds your child's brain with new words, science, and maths skills.
<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/our-learning-sa/prior-school/greatstart-kids-kitchen-fabulous-food>
<https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/messy-fun-in-the-kitchen/>
<https://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/recipes.aspx?category=kidfriendlyrecipes>

Painting with balloons
Inflate the balloons slightly and use them to paint on a large sheet of paper.
<https://www.learning4kids.net/2016/01/03/painting-with-balloons/>

Homemade goop
Made from household ingredients, this goop looks like play dough, but is smooth, soft and slightly stretchy.
<https://www.learning4kids.net/2015/08/30/homemade-rubbery-goop-recipe/>

Make your own books
Make story time even more creative by writing their own stories and making their own books. <https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/make-your-own-books/>

Make some paste
Make paste and then use it in craft projects.
<https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/making-paste/>

Songs and stories in Aboriginal languages
Learn Aboriginal languages while singing and telling stories.
<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/our-learning-sa/prior-school/songs-and-stories-aboriginal-languages>
<http://dreamtime.net.au/rainbow-serpent-story/>
<https://www.miromaa.org.au/our-way/awabakal-dreaming/when-the-moon-cried.html>

Map of Indigenous Australia
Explore the AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia using the online magnifying glass.
<https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>

Walk the plank

Walk the plank like a pirate while learning to balance and jump!

<https://playgroupwa.com.au/bodies-and-brains-walk-the-plank/>

Toy rescue!

Save toys from danger by throwing and catching them and putting them in a safe place, like a bucket or box.

<https://playgroupwa.com.au/bodies-and-brains-toy-rescue>

Lava game

Pretend the ground is hot lava, and leap, jump and hop onto markers without touching the ground.

<https://playgroupwa.com.au/bodies-and-brains-lava-land/>

Superhero

Help your child fly like a superhero while they learn climbing and balancing skills.

<https://playgroupwa.com.au/bodies-and-brains-fly-like-a-superhero>

Alphabet rocks

Collect some rocks, paint them with the letters of the alphabet and then spell out words. <https://supersimple.com/article/alphabet-rocks/>

Colour hunt

Find objects around the house and garden, and then sort them by colours.

<https://supersimple.com/article/color-hunt/>

Sand foam

Make a fluffy mix of sand and shaving foam.

<https://www.learning4kids.net/2015/05/26/how-to-make-sand-foam/>

Squishy bag

See how primary colours mix and form new colours!

<https://www.learning4kids.net/2015/08/25/primary-colours-squishy-bag-experiment/>

Flubber!

Experiment with making edible slime.

<https://www.fizzicseducation.com.au/150-science-experiments/kitchen-chemistry-experiments/edible-flubber/>

Homemade lava lamp

Make a lava lamp with a bottle, water, food colouring and glitter.

<http://www.planet-science.com/categories/experiments/chemistry-chaos/2011/07/make-a-lava-lamp.aspx>

Work it out

Write the numbers 1 to 12 on concrete with chalk. Throw socks or a ball on two numbers then either add, subtract or multiply them together. Do shuttle runs over 5 metres for the number that was worked out.

12 days of fitness

Everyone acts out the following actions to the song "The 12 days of Christmas". 12 = star jumps, 11 = raise the roofs, 10 = knee lifts, 9 = side stretches, 8 = jogs on the spot, 7 = jabs/punches, 6 = hula hoops, 5 = imaginary jumping ropes, 4 = kicks to the front, 3 = muscle poses, 2 = scissors, 1 = stork stand.

Puppeteer

Lie down like a puppet while the puppeteer makes calls to get the puppets to come to life, "I am pulling the string to your arm".

Ball in the bucket

Use an underarm throw and count how many tennis balls land in the bucket. It doesn't count if it bounces out!

Hang time

See how many times they can clap while throwing a ball in the air. Try spinning on the spot or catching it in a hat.

Follow the leader

This physical activity can easily go along with Simon Says, and instead of the children just following, they also must do exactly what the leader does. Jumping jacks, dancing, cartwheels, handstands etc.

Reach the sky

Standing behind a starting point, throw an object in the air and aim to reach a target line before the object hits the ground. After a successful attempt, move the target line further away to increase the difficulty.

Target practice

Set up some plastic bottles in a range of places around the room or yard and set points for each as a target. Have 10 pairs of socks ready, then throw them at the targets to see how many points they get.

Hacky sack

Use a hacky sack or small ball and keep it in the air via kicking, kneeling or heading. See how many touches they can get before it hits the ground.

Boccia

Play a game of Boccia in the back yard with family members. This could be played inside with modified equipment such as stuffed toys.

Scavenger hunt

Make a list of 10-15 items to find and set a time limit of 5-10 minutes to find the items. This can be done inside or outside if you have a backyard/local park, as part of your daily exercise routine. (Example list: <https://www.aboutamom.com/free-indoor-scamenger-hunt-printable/>)

Dance Challenge

Play some music then jog around the room or yard. Someone controlling the music will need to stop it at intervals. Whenever the music stops, children perform a dance move eg. The Lawnmower, Sprinkler, Stayin' Alive. See who can come up with the best moves.

Write your own picture book

Gather any number of pieces of paper and draw a picture on each. Scribe or ask the little ones to write a description of the picture. Staple the pages together and form a book to read. Extend the idea by first thinking of a topic to write about, characters, settings and activities.

Describe a picture

Look at photographs or a series of pictures (printed). What are the individuals doing in the photo? Do they know their names? Choose three favourite photos. Lay them on the table. Without touching the photo, ask them to describe a photo to a partner, can they guess which photo is being described?

Take a number walk

Take a safe stroll around the neighbourhood as part of your daily exercise routine. Look at some of the house numbers. Practise reading the numbers and talking about the numbers e.g. what is one more? What might that number look like if we had that many lollies (or other object)?, could we put that many in our hand, a bowl, a bucket? Think about other ways to talk about numbers, such as count the steps it takes to walk between houses, count the petals on a flower, count how many sides of a door.

Alphabet hunt

Look at the letters in their name. Ask them what each letter sounds like and what is its name. Look around the house and try to find objects that begin with one of the letters from their name.

Make a puzzle

Print, paint or draw a picture. Cut the picture into 6-10 interesting shapes, shuffle them, and try to put them back together just like a puzzle. If they stick the picture onto cardboard first, it will make the puzzle last longer.

Make a road

Discuss how we safely drive on, and use, the road and identify the special types of roads and signs. Use chalk or masking tape to make a series of roads on the floor (in a safe place outdoors or indoors), with crossroads, pedestrian crossings and stop signs etc. Ask them to take a toy car for a 'drive' around the streets.

Build a picture

Use magazine or picture cutouts to build a picture e.g. a garden. Look at magazine pictures or print pictures from the internet of the many things they will find in a garden such as flowers, pebbles, trees, grass, birds. They cut out as many as they like, then paste each of the garden items on a piece of paper to create their own special garden picture.

Do the washing

Grab some socks, or clothes from a toy box, and give them a wash with the little ones. Use a container of mildly warm soapy water, wash the clothes, then hang the clothes on the washing line. Do the same for plastic dinnerware or toy tea party dinnerware.

Mini indoor Olympics

Together, design a range of simple activities to do such as toss a toy in a container 5 times, bounce and catch a ball ten times, balloon soccer around the house etc. Set a time to complete all the activities and try to do them all in the best time. Do the same for a range of

simple outdoor games such as shoot ten baskets in a hoop, bounce a ball against the wall 10 times etc.

Spotlight

Use a torch in a dimly lit room to have some fun. The little ones could use the torch to focus in on objects around the room, play follow the spotlight by shining the torch on the floor and following along, or shine the light on different body parts and name them e.g. knee, elbow, ear lobe.

Design a workout

Together, choreograph a workout that can be done to their favourite tune. Draw and write up to 10 actions that can be done during the workout such as 5 star jumps, 10 toe wiggles etc. Make it fun and do the workout every day!

Garden party

Have a garden party with their favourite toys. Create invitations, write a shopping list, set up the space with decorations, celebrate with real or imaginary food. Don't forget to bring some great music and play some party games.

Trace the shapes

Trace around common household items to discover as many shapes as possible. It is easy to find circles; can they find more such as a triangle and a rectangle? Decorate each of the traced shapes with a unique pattern. Now, name the shape e.g. a striped circle, a dotted rectangle.

Sewing

Find 2 old pieces of clothing. From one, draw and cut out a simple image or shape. Stitch this shape onto the second piece of clothing. A great way to practise sewing skills and up-cycle clothing for a sibling or a toy.

Walking toy

Choose a toy that can stand such as a dinosaur. Move the dinosaur very slowly across the floor towards a goal (e.g. a dino friend). Every time the dinosaur moves, they take their hand away and take a photo. When the dinosaur walk is complete, scroll through the photos from beginning to end, it will look like the dinosaur is really walking. You could also use an app such as Stop Motion Studio.

Writing in the flour

Use a baking tray or plate and layer it with flour or shaving cream, or sand, glitter etc. Practise writing familiar names, letters, numbers, patterns and shapes.

Give the toys a bath

Put warm water and some bubbles or washing up liquid in a bucket, plastic container or the bath tub and give the plastic toys a wash.

Make a museum/art gallery

Create some drawings, colouring in, Lego or play-do creations and put them on display in their own museum/art gallery. Gather objects or pictures already around the house and put them in the museum/art gallery.

Make a salt dough sculpture

Mix 1 cup salt, 2 cups of all-purpose flour and 1 cup of warm water to create the dough. Knead for 5 minutes. They make a creation and leave it to air dry or bake in the oven at 90 degrees until it is dry (for bigger creations this may take a few hours). Once dry, they can paint your creation using acrylic paints.

Make musical shakers

Fill empty water bottles with different materials, for example: dried rice, pasta or lentils, pieces of foil, buttons/beads. Secure the lid shut with super glue/glue gun. Make music and practise shaking to the tune of their favourite song!

Play memory games using playing cards

Using a standard deck of cards, shuffle the cards and lay them facing down on the table. Take turns picking up two cards to find matching numbers (or you can adapt the game to find matching colours or suits). Once they find a matching pair, keep the cards until all cards have been matched. The person with the most matches wins!