



80 Indoor & Outdoor Activities for Children





Introduction

I'm a full supporter of the 'it's good for kids to be bored' brigade. When children are allowed to take life at their own pace and not be fed activities and entertainment, they really do discover they have great things inside them. Free play is a good thing! School is so intense and kids really relish some time and space. Sometimes we all need a nudge and an idea though, and this is what this resource is all about.

My favourite activities, and when the kids are happiest, are when they can apply their imagination and creativity without being told what to do, or how to do it.

There are **over 80 activity ideas in this Guide**, photos and links to 'How To's'. An idea for everyone, whatever the weather! Have a read through and click on any text that's in green & bold if you'd like to read more...

Starting with **Outdoor Activities & Crafts** first, and **Indoor Activities & Crafts** last.

I hope you enjoy!
Emily x



Outdoor Activities & Crafts

Pet Garden Snails

I can't recommend this enough! You need a cheap plastic tank with a lid with plenty of air holes, which the kids then build a home in out of sticks, leaves and grass. They choose their snails from the garden, chop up some fruit and veg for them to eat and they have their very own **Snail World!** When the kids have had enough, simply relocate the snails!

'Different' Green Spaces

A good excuse to **get the map out!** Write a list of green spaces that are fairly easy to get to: somewhere you can take a picnic, a picnic blanket and just go and play and explore.

Slacklining

This is a great one, which even littlies can enjoy with help. You walk along a flat piece of webbing tied between two trees (or something sturdy), at a chosen height above the ground. Like tightrope walking!

Get The Kids To Make The Picnic!

An activity in itself and often forgotten. If possible, involve cooking or baking for it beforehand! A great opportunity to teach kids about food hygiene, food groups, healthy eating and how to use a knife!



Sports / Outdoor Equipment

Try something different! Borrow from a friend, or buy something second hand from eBay...

Archery, Frisbees, Skipping Ropes, Chalk, Pogo Stick, Footballs, Rounders Bat & Ball, Ping Pong Set, Cricket Set, Skateboards, Roller skates, Hoola Hoops, Bikes, Scooters, Wheelies, Bean Bag (use a coat as a target and see who can throw it the closest or aim at a tree trunk), Water Pistols, Nerf Guns, Kite, **Football Markers**.

Time Trials

Whether you're in a playground, a park or inside the house, the kids love it. Decide on a 'course' and then use your phone to time each child as they take it in turns to complete it. Use trees, rocks, playground equipment, hills...anything you can. Each child can have their own individually designed course to suit their likes, age and ability. Obviously don't make it too hellish for the littler ones, or too big that they'll only want to do it once!

Party Games!

Why wait for a birthday party?? Party games are fantastic if you find yourself with a small group of people. Great ideas for both **Outdoor & Indoor Party Games!**



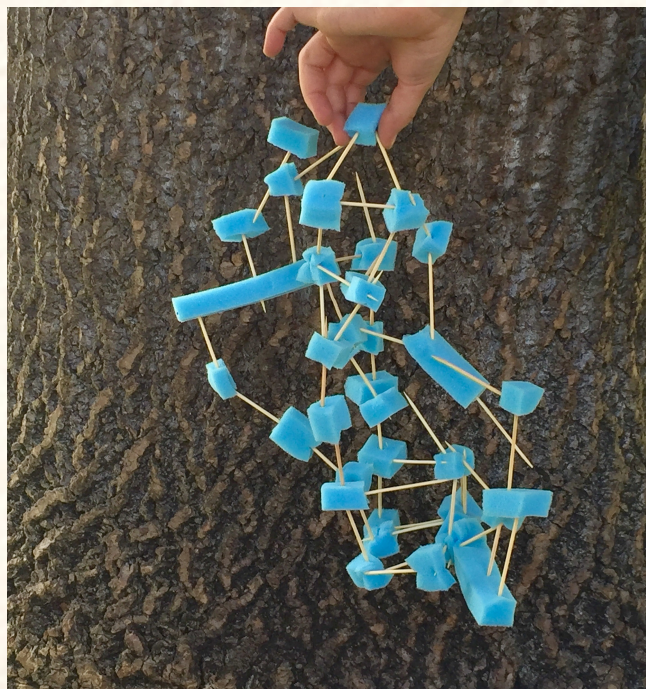
Crafts can also be done outside and often a change of scene jazzes things up very nicely. Just take the components out in a bag with you and 'whip them out' when the kids need a sit down. Here are some ideas, some more transportable than others...

Make A Sundial

Great activity! The kids design their paper plate, or piece of paper in time to launch 'Project Sundial' at noon! Sundial by *National Wildlife Federation*

Foam & Cocktail Stick Sculpture

Chunks of foam (either pre-cut or take some scissors) and some cocktail sticks. I personally prefer using Marshmallows and Jelly Tots...





Bottle Bowling

You need: any number of empty plastic bottles and an old tennis ball. Who can get a strike?!

Chalk Spray Paint

You need: a plant spray bottle, broken chalks, cornflour and water! 'how to' by by **Clever Pink Pirate**

Sponge Balls

Perfect for inside too! Cut sponge cloths into 3/4" strips and tie them round the middle with string. Soak in water for soggy fun! by **The Suburban Mom**

Rainbow Bubble Snakes

You need an empty plastic bottle, an old sock, some duct tape, dish soap and some food colouring and they run around like mad things with their rainbow bubble snakes!
by **Housing A Forest**

Bubble Popping Painting

Mix food colouring with bubble mixture and blow bubbles straight on to paper! Amazing effect and particularly easy to clear up outside!

Coffee Tin Can Stilts

Take care for sharp edges and judge accordingly

You need some strong twine, a pair of coffee tin cans, scissors, a hammer and a nail. Use the hammer and nail to



make two holes in the bottom of the tin cans, feed the twine up through one hole and then once you've worked out the length you want (depends on height of the child), you feed the other end back down through the other hole. Tie knots at both ends of the twine (inside the tin can). Hours of fun!

Rock & Pebble Construction

You can find or buy rocks or river pebbles, paint them and then use them to build little fairy houses, gorgeous caterpillars by **Nellie Bellie**, monsters or in fact anything you fancy. You can also use normal Tile Grout to 'glue' rocks together to make a sculpture, a tunnel, a bridge, a marble run...the options are endless!

DIY Sprinkler

Puncture a large plastic bottle with as many holes as you can and then tape it to the end of your hose pipe. Turn the tap on and WHOOSH!

'Pick Your Own'

There will be somewhere within reach where you can all go and pick your own fruit and veg. Kids LOVE doing this! Then you can bring it all home and eat it or freeze it!

Pine Cone bird Feeder

Our birds will thank you for these at any time of year! Easy to make and if you get a book out of the library on birds, the kids can also learn about any hungry visitors they spot too!



Shadow Drawing

Such a shadowy idea (boom boom)! Can be done either with chalks on playgrounds and pathways, or with pen and paper.

You make shadows using yourselves on to a hard surface, or items on to paper and then you, or a friend draws around them! by **Parents.com** Image is in the link.

Melted Bead Suncatcher

These are very easy to make and can be made either in the oven, or on the BBQ! Not only do they look lovely, but they make perfect counting discs, stress discs, building blocks, pretend food items...!



Lipstick Kiss Chase

Such a funny game. Put on some bright red lippy, chase after your kids and when you catch them, you plant a great big smackeroo on their cheeks, so there's no denying they got caught. It totally torments them but they love it!

Small Friendly Sports Day

If you have friends about, how about having an informal sports day with a picnic and medals? The kids would love it. You'll find a big enough space in a green area somewhere, and it doesn't need to be professional or organised enough to make the 'News at Ten'.

Marble Runs

There are so many ways to make marble runs - using old



toilet rolls taped at various slants to a fence, pieces of wood propped up on goodness knows what, channels dug down into sandpits, using old cardboard boxes...the kids LOVE them. They send all sorts down them-: marbles, cars, small figures...coins!

Learn A New Skill

There are so many! Yo Yo'ing, pogo sticks, juggling, knitting, sewing, crochet, hoola hoop, skateboard, roller skates, bike riding, rolling back and forth on a gym ball without falling off sideways, riding a unicycle, making smoothies, photography, long jump, cartwheels...it can be absolutely anything. If it's something you can get a book out of library on, then cash in on some reading practise for the kids too.

Sell or Give Away Old Toys

The Toy Project will collect your toys from you and give them away to hospitals and other needy centres. Or phone your local Hospital Switchboard and ask to speak to a Playworker if you would like to donate to them.

If you do decide to sell them, there's the usual car boot and front door sale, but how about a **blanket sale**? Gather a few families who wish to do the same, advertise via social media with signs up locally too, and away you go. Everyone brings their own blanket, puts all their wares for sale on it and has fun! Remember, the more you advertise (maybe tell the local paper??), the more chance you have of selling more.



The kids can either keep the money, or have a family meeting to decide who you should give it to, be it a charity or a person in need.

Homemade Lemonade Stand

Make some homemade lemonade and sell it outside your house to passers by (with adult supervision). Children love going to Poundland to buy cups, buying the ingredients, making the lemonade, setting up the stall, designing a poster, encouraging sales...and drinking all the lemonade...

Rainbow Treasure Hunt

So simple! Collect items of nature in as many of the colours as you can, then tape them alongside their colour.

by **MonstessoriSoul**



Binoculars

Take them on a nature walk, a boat ride, in a field, use them to find each other when playing in parks...endless fun!



Walky Talkies

Superb to use, either indoors or out! Secret Missions galore!

Chalk Trails

You'll need two adults for this, so team up with a friend and their kids. One team leaves the house first and goes for a walk. Every time they take a turning or cross the road, they draw an arrow on the pavement to show which way they've gone. When you're sure the first team has had enough time to be well out of sight (maybe discuss routes beforehand or get adult #1 to text adult #2 when it's 'safe'), the second team heads out and has to try and find them! You end somewhere where you can play and have a picnic, or stop for a coffee and some cake and then the other team heads off and takes the lead. Kids love it!

Geocaching

The ultimate treasure hunt and it's free!

Tree Den Building

It's obviously easier to build dens in a wood, where the kids can use branches and sticks to make a teepee of some sort, but there are **also lots of trees where you can actually make a den inside**. I'm talking about the ones where the branches start just above ground level and you can clamber inside them. They make a very unusual and fun place for a picnic!

When I was very young, my sister and I would have pretend tea parties inside the holly trees. It was a bit bracing to get in and out, but totally clear and dry once you were inside.



Camping

It's a must! Whether it's just in a tent in your house, garden, or for an overnight or two somewhere else. It could even be 'glamping' in a friend's or family's garden.

Indoor Activities & Crafts

So you're either stuck indoors due to torrential rain, or you just need a break from haring around the countryside. Here are some ideas to try out...

Treasure Hunt 'Ice-cream Sundae'

Our kids love this! First you hide some ingredients around the house: sprinkles, a small packet of biscuits for crushing, marshmallows, chocolate for melting, punnets of berries for blitz'ing, little sweets, a fresh pomegranate (it takes them ages to get all the seeds out of it!) Give the kids a list of what's available to find, and once they've found it all they can make themselves an Ice-cream Sundae! Big love for you!

Newspaper Giraffe

Or a newspaper something. Use any old cardboard, as big or as small as you like. Draw a shape, cut it out using either scissors or a Stanley knife, and then rip up bits of newspaper (or old sheet music) and stick it on using PVA glue. It works best if you overlap it all, and then recut around the edges at



the end once it's dry. This giraffe lived sticking up from behind the radiator in the kids' bedroom for quite a while. His name is Norman...



Bread In A Bag

This deserves it's own mention, as this cleaner version of making bread, also doubles up as a working-with-clay type activity too! Short video by **Your Home Based Mom**

Juice-tastic!

The traditional way...works well with tangerines or oranges. The kids put segments into a glass, bang and bash them with a teaspoon until they've got as much juice out as possible, add water (sparkling if you like) and hey presto! Add berries and any other juicy fruit for a mocktail. Yum!



Knife Practice

Young kids love this. Set them up with either a normal table knife and various soft fruits to make a fruit salad, or a sharp knife and some veggies, for everyone to share. Older children might well enjoy whittling away at a stick...

Earn Some Money!

Put a list of extra jobs up on the fridge, with a value next to them. The kids can choose to do one or more, whenever they like and you can add jobs to the list whenever you like! They can either save their earnings, or you could all have an outing to a charity shop or secondhand book shop.

Ideas: Wipe grubby marks off the walls, wipe radiators, wipe banisters, clean sinks, vacuum, fold laundry, put laundry on, walk the dog, clean the bikes, make all the beds, tidy a drawer, collect unwanted toys into a pile, sort out a kitchen cupboard...anything you genuinely need doing!



Den Building

Strangely enough, children will get much more excited about this if you start them off in a room they don't spend much time in (like the bathroom). Bath dens are lots of fun for example. A blanket, a duvet, a parachute, some tape...

Obstacle Courses

Pull all the cushions off the sofa, dot some coats around on the floor and start them off with the rule 'no feet can touch the floor' or 'you can't stand on anything <insert the colour of your carpet or floor>'. Leave them to it and / or suggest extra obstacles they could add to make it more complicated.

Dressing up in each others, (or your) clothes

This really makes giggles! You'll definitely score extra points if you manage to wear something of theirs when they were least expecting it!

Put On A Performance

This could be a play, a puppet show, a dance...anything. It will of course need careful planning (not by you!) and tickets will need to be made and no doubt sold. Not to mention the snacks that need preparing for the interval...

'Crazy Wednesdays'

So called by my friend Carol. She describes them as a 'free-for-all mess making, snack eating, science experimenty day of bedlam. The promise of a day like this is bound to put the kids in a good mood. I'd suggest striking a deal where everyone helps to clean up at whatever time O'clock you decide.



Recycled Sculpting

Pull some items out of your recycling, give them some glue, tape, string, rubber bands and paint and let their imaginations run wild. Running a competition for the hardest worker is bound to spur them on.



Glow in the Dark Bowling

This is really fun. You need a large clear plastic hamster ball, fill it with some activated glow sticks, tape it closed, make the room dark and roll it towards one or more empty plastic water bottles!

Soft Toy Hide & Seek

Get creative! One person leaves the room while the other(s) hides the soft toy in ridiculous hiding places, such as up trouser legs or down socks.



Balloon On A Wire Races

So much fun! Thread a drinking straw on to some string and tie the string from one end of the room to the other as tightly as you can. Bring the straw to one end of the string and blow up a balloon but don't tie it closed! Then tape the balloon to the string like this, let go of the balloon and watch it whoosh across the room!



Card Tricks

This is a great one that you can learn very quickly and torment the kids with, until they torment you enough to teach them how to do it. Then they can torment each other and their friends!



Indoor Time Trials

As before, decide on a course and time each child as they run from Point A to Point B. If you've got stairs (and they're old enough to be safe running up and down them), then all the better as it will wear them out more. So for example: run twice around the room, crawl under the kitchen table and count to 3, up the stairs, into your bedroom, touch your bed and back down the stairs. Tip: children love designing courses for each other too!

Soft Toy or Sock Balancing

Find something long, like a long wooden spoon or an umbrella. Get the kids to try to balance a soft toy, sock or hat on the end of it. Extra points for being able to walk, or do an obstacle course and balance at the same time!

Acrylic painting canvasses

Small canvasses are very cheap and acrylic paint dries very quickly. This is very important when you have impatient children! They could paint something for the own wall, to prop up on a shelf, or as a present for a friend or relative.

Pebble Fairy Houses

I can't stress how cute these are! We're definitely going to make one and haven't yet, so no image but, you **MUST** have a look at [Goods Home Design](#)'s images!



Sticky Spider Web

You stick strips of masking tape across a door way, or up the stairs and throw scrumpled up tissue paper at them, seeing how many 'spiders' you can get to stick!



Air Dry Clay

This stuff is brilliant - it stays mouldable long enough for you to have an amazingly creative session with it, and yet it will dry enough overnight so you can paint it. Make bowls, figures, board games...anything they fancy. Available from art shops or on-line.



Tape & Crepe

This is brilliant and totally different to the Sticky Spider Web. An obstacle course where you go over and under strips of masking tape taped across your hallway...without bringing any of them away from the wall. Click to read how we got on with it...!



Pulleys

Hours of fun and can be done inside or outside!! They will need help to set it up the first time but will then spend ages sending little messages (and treats) back and forth to each other. Try it!



Two-Ingredient PlayDough

One part cheap hair conditioner + two parts cornflour. If it's too wet, add more cornflour. Or do what I do and put some cornflour into a bowl and just keep adding the hair conditioner until it feels soft, mouldable and NOT sticky. It keeps in the fridge wrapped up airtight for ages.

Glittery Flower Decoration

One toilet roll tube, scissors, glue and glitter and you have a really lovely hanging glitter flower! Video in the link. (Thank you Vicky!)

Brown Paper Crafts

You can make some really lovely things! A quick search on google images will inspire the children to make something that's just right for them. We made a paper bag owl, a paper plate shark and a paper bag tree...



Recycled Fabric Gift Tags

A clever friend made this using an old pair of pyjamas. I'd love a whole stack of these! So cute.



Petal Trees

This is a lovely simple one! If you don't have access to any petals, pop into your local florist and see if they have any lying around they'd be happy to bag up for you. Glue, petals, paper and pens, or charcoals and you're off!



Make a Narnia Crown

So easy, yet dramatic. You just need paper, tin foil, tape and a stapler!



Paper Folding Art

My favourite two books are [here](#).

OR for free simple origami instructions, see [Red Ted Art](#).



Vintage Style Box Letters

Great to put in their rooms or to give to a friend. My daughter made an 'E' for her friend, wrote on the back and gave it to her as her birthday card. One of our boys made a glittery 'N' with curls inserted in on the back side...



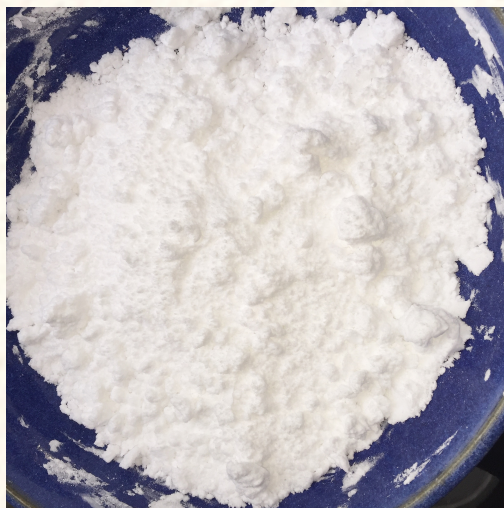
Make a Box House

Pure creativity in a box. Literally. A perfect little home for a soft toy or favourite toy figure. My then eight year old made this little Christmas house last year, but the principles are the same. Just provide the box, the idea, some craft things and leave them to it!



Make Snow!

This stuff is funky! You can mould it, crumble it, throw it and it even feels on the chilly side...



'Science & Blue Salad'

Wow the kids while they learn how plants take up water. Let the kids enjoy turning chinese lettuce and white flowers blue! Or any colour you fancy really...



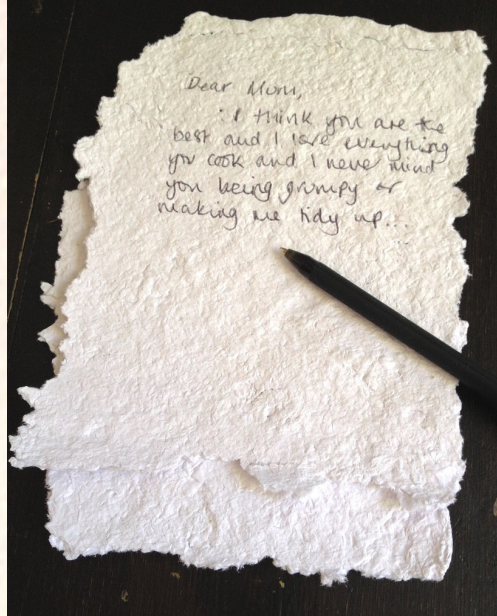
Weaving

Amazingly simple! by Artbar Blog



Homemade Paper

Unbelievably easy to make! You can write on it and a few sheets tied together with a ribbon or natural twine makes a gorgeously rustic homemade gift.



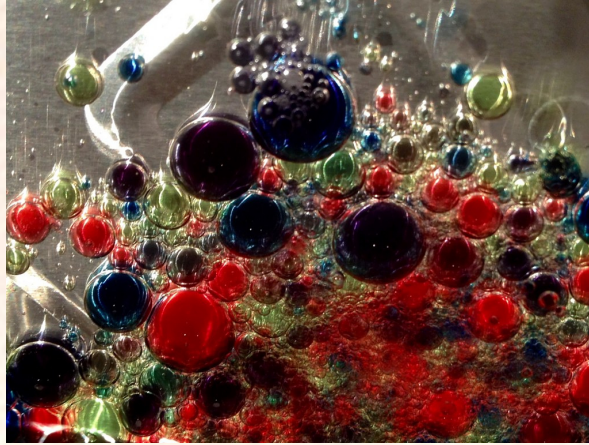
Salt Crystal Garden

For an amazing overnight transformation!



Fizzy Oil Drops

Mesmerising drops of colour that dance before your very eyes.



Candle Dripping

A very unusual but remarkably addictive activity. You'll need to heavily supervise the little ones, but the older ones should be fine. Just remember to tie hair back!



Lime Volcanoes

Colourful & Fragrant! Just a lemon or lime, bicarbonate of soda, food colouring and a dash of dish soap:



Sponge & Duct Tape Boats

These look so cute and easy to rustle up! by **The Craft Train**

Perler Bead Stretch Bracelets

These Fish or Fruit Perler Bead Bracelets from **Pink Strikey Socks** look amazing! (thank you Lucy!)

