

The Creative Homemaking Guide to
Games and Activities for Kids



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Rock Paperweights

Give each child a rock that has been washed with soap and dried. Have the children decorate the rocks with craft paint to create their own unique paperweights.

Paper Masks

Cut 8 ½ x 11 pieces of paper in half. Give each child a piece of paper and a crayon or marker. Have each child fold their piece of paper in half and cut a hole that their nose will fit through. Have them cut a small hole first, then adjust the hole to fit the size of their nose. Have the children try on their masks and let them try to figure out where the eyes should go. They can then cut out holes for the eyes. Let the children decorate their masks with different facial expressions.

Jigsaw Puzzles

Give each child a piece of cardboard, a picture from a magazine, some scissors, and some glue. Have the children glue their pictures onto their cardboard. When the glue is dry, have them cut their cardboard into the shape of jigsaw puzzle pieces. When they have finished, have them trade puzzles and have a race to see who finishes first.

Graph Paper Drawings

Give each child a sheet of graph paper and a pen or pencil. Have each child draw a picture on the graph paper using only the lines on the graph paper. Curved lines are not allowed. Let the children color their creations. Have them share their pictures with each other when they are done.

Pudding Finger Painting

Pudding

Vinyl tablecloth

This activity is fun for all, and safe for young children who can't help but put their fingers in their mouth. Cover a table with a vinyl tablecloth. Put some pudding at each child's place. Let them play!

Homemade Paste

1/2 cup flour

Cold water

Add some cold water to the 1/2 cup flour until it is as thick as cream. Simmer and stir on stove for 5 minutes. Add a few drops of peppermint or other extract to give it a pleasant smell. Store in refrigerator in an airtight container when not in use. Boiled paste lasts longer and sticks better than no-cook paste.

Kitchen Collage

Rice, pasta, dried beans

Spices

Homemade paste (see recipe on pg. 6)

Cover a piece of cardboard or paper plate with homemade paste. Let your child create a collage using any number of materials from the pantry. For added fun, you can dye the pasta and then add small amounts of each type of pasta to the liquid. Dry on newspaper covered with wax paper. The larger the pasta, the longer it will take to absorb the color. The little bow ties take only a second or two.

Noodle Necklace

Give each child a long piece of string and plenty of macaroni noodles. Let them string the noodles on the string and tie the ends in a knot. Have the children paint the noodles with craft paints. If they would like to, the children could use a marker and write friends' names on some of the noodles to make a friendship necklace. Let the necklaces dry before wearing.

Playdough

2 cups flour
1 cup salt
4 teaspoons cream of tartar
2 cups water with food coloring
2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Mix all ingredients together in a non-stick sauce pan. Cook over medium heat until mixture becomes a hard ball. Knead while warm for a smoother consistency.

Collages

Give each child newspapers, scissors, glue, and notebook paper. Have each child cut words and sentences from newspaper pages and combine them to create a unique story. Have them arrange their sentences on the notebook paper and glue them in place. A theme for the stories can be decided beforehand. Let the children share their stories with each other.

Tin Can Ice Cream

Ingredients:

1 cup milk
1 cup whipping cream
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
Nuts and/or fruit (if desired)

Other items:

1 bag crushed ice
1 small bag rock salt
1 1-lb. tin can (with lid)
1 3-lb. tin can (with lid)
Heavy-duty duct tape

Place the first five ingredients into an emptied 1-lb. tin can with tight fitting lid that is taped closed (coffee and lemonade cans work great!) Pack the large can with crushed ice around the smaller can. Pour 3/4 cup rock salt evenly over ice. Put the lid on the big can, secure with tape. Get a partner and roll rapidly back and forth on a concrete slab for 10 minutes (non-stop). The outside of the can will start to get frosty and cold.

Don't give up! Remove inner can, use a rubber spatula to scrape down the contents on the inside and stir the mixture. Repack the small can into the large one. Drain off the water. Add more rock salt and ice. Securely tape the cans back up. Roll back and forth for 5 minutes. Your ice cream should be done! Enjoy about 3 cups of ice cream!

Flubber

1 1/2 cups warm water
2 cups white school glue
1 1/3 cups warm water
3 tsp. Borax
Food coloring

Mix 1 1/2 cups warm water, glue, and food coloring together. In a separate bowl, mix 1 1/3 cups warm water and Borax together. Pour the glue mixture into the Borax mixture and take out of the bowl to knead until flubber is soft and consistent in form. Store in Ziploc bag or tightly sealed container. This stuff is really fun! Enjoy!

Fingerprint Drawings

Give each player a sheet of paper and some crayons and markers. With a parent's supervision, let the children use different colored ink pads to make fingerprints on their paper. Have the children use the crayons and markers to transform their fingerprints into cute characters and whatever else they can imagine!

Paper-Mache

Soak old newspapers in water in a non-rusting container. Reduce paper to pulp by tearing it into bits and by stirring mixture with stick or wooden spoon. Make heavy thick paste with flour, water, and small quantity of salt. Mix paste with paper pulp. Stir until paper-mache feels like modeling clay. Use this mixture to model forms, mold over objects for masks, bowls, or to form "elevations" on flat surfaces (such as topography maps) by adding a succession of layers. Paint when dry.

Colorful Layered Sand Jars

- Any empty, clean jar with a lid the label removed (baby food jar, mustard jar, etc.)
- Lots of salt
- Colored chalk (a great way to use up those small, broken pieces)

Place some salt in several bowls (use one bowl for each color you will do.) Take chalk and grind and rub the chalk into the salt, until the salt is colored and the chalk is used up. Layer the colored salt into your jars. You can spoon it in very carefully or make your own funnels from paper. Use a stick to push the salt layers down on the inside of the jar to make wonderful ripples in the colors, if you choose. When the jar is filled, twist the lid on very tightly.

Homemade Bubble Solution

1 cup water
2 tablespoons light corn syrup
1/3 cup dishwashing liquid

Combine all ingredients. Mix solution well and allow to sit for 1 hour before using. Cover and label any leftover solution and store in the refrigerator. Have fun!

Break the Balloon

Tie a balloon around each child's ankle. The children should try to break each other's balloons by stepping on them, trying not to get their own balloon broken. The last child with an unbroken balloon wins the game.

Bean in Your Shoe

One player goes out of the room. A dried bean is given to one of the players to put in his or her shoe. Play some music and have all the players dance, each child pretending to have a bean in their shoe. The player that left the room comes back and tries to guess who has the bean in their shoe. If they guess right, the person with the bean in their shoe gets to guess next. If they guess wrong, they get to leave the room again and try again. If they guess wrong a second time, they get to choose who gets to leave the room next.

Find the Button

The players sit around a table with their hands underneath the table. One player is holding a button. The “finder” keeps his or her hands above the table. The others players pass the button to each other underneath the table. The finder says “stop” and tries to guess who has the button.

Memory Test

Give each player a piece of paper and a pencil. Set a variety of household items on a tray and let the players see the items on the tray for approximately 30 seconds. After the time is up, have the children write down the names of as many of the items as they can remember. Whoever guesses the most correctly wins.

Hot and Cold

Have the players hide an object while one player leaves the room. When the object has been hidden, the player that left returns to the room and guesses where the object has been hidden. This player must move around one step at a time while the other players call out “Warm!” or “Cold!” or “Colder!” or “Warmer!” or “Boiling!” until the player finds the object. The closer they get, the “warmer” they are. The further away they get, the “colder” they are.

Lucky Number

Give each child five buttons. The players go from player to player, exchanging buttons with each other. They can give away as many or few as they want, but they cannot refuse buttons from other players. After approximately 2 minutes the leader calls “Stop!” The leader then calls out a “lucky number” between one and twenty. Whoever has that number of buttons wins.

Cat and Rat

This game is best for 10 or more players. The players hold hands in a circle. One player is the rat on the inside of the circle, and one player is the cat on the outside of the circle. The cat tries to break through the circle to get to the rat. The players in the circle try to prevent the cat from getting to the rat. When the cat succeeds in breaking through the circle, the players the cat broke between are the next cat and rat.

Balloon Race

Give each child a self-addressed postcard. Have the children write notes on their postcard that state they are having a contest to see whose balloon travels the farthest. Also ask that the location, date, and time that the balloon is found be written on the postcard by the person who finds the balloon and that the person drop the postcard in the mail. Place the postcards in ziploc bags and attach them to the balloons. Set a date for when the contest ends, and launch the balloons!

Farm Animals

Secretly give the name of a farm animal to each player. The leader yells “Go!” and each player acts out their animal at the same time. At the end of 2 minutes, each player writes down as many of the animal names as they can remember. The player that remembers the most animal names correctly wins the game.

Living Sculptures

Divide the children up into pairs. One person gets to be the clay, and the other person gets to be the sculptor. The sculptor molds the clay into any shape they want to (without hurting the clay). Faces can be arranged into odd expressions, arms and legs can be bent and arranged, and heads can be turned or tipped. When all the sculptors are finished with their creations, they get to put their sculptures on display. The pairs get to switch places after the exhibit.

Storytelling

The players sit in a circle. Have one player begin telling a story. After 1 minute, let the next child continue the story. Let each player have a chance to add to the story. Continue going around the circle if the children want to keep adding to the story.

Dog Bone

All players are seated in a group. One player is selected to be the dog. The dog sits with his back to the rest of the players. A bone (eraser, ball, or some other object) is placed on the floor behind the dog's back. One at a time, each player tries to sneak up behind the dog and steal his bone. If the dog hears a sound from the player trying to sneak up behind him, he "barks" and the other player returns to their seat. If someone is successful in stealing the bone, that player returns to their seat and hides the bone. All of the players then say, "Dog, Dog, where's your bone?" The dog has three chances to guess who stole his bone. The person who stole the bone gets to be dog next.

Balloon Relay

Have children form two equal lines next to each other. The players in each line should be 3 feet away from each other. Give the first player in each line an inflated balloon. Have the first player in each line pass their balloon between their legs to the player behind them. They have to throw the balloon, they can't hand it to them. The balloon is passed down the line until it gets to the last player, who brings the balloon back to the first player in line. The line that finishes first wins.

Hit the Can

Set up some tin cans on cardboard boxes (outdoors). Draw a line about 10 ft away from the boxes. Line up the players and give them each three balls to try to knock down the cans. Whoever knocks down the most cans wins.

Drop the Handkerchief

The players stand in a circle with one player walking around the outside of the circle. The player on the outside of the circle drops the handkerchief behind someone. The person with the handkerchief must get up and chase the other person around the circle, trying to beat them back to their spot in the circle. The player who gets their first gets to remain in the circle, the other player gets to drop the handkerchief next.

Break the Balloon

Each child receives a balloon. The first child to blow up their balloon and pop it wins (show the children how to tie the balloons before the game begins).

Duck, Duck, Goose

This game is a variation of “Drop the Handkerchief,” except the players are sitting in a circle. Instead of dropping a handkerchief, the player on the outside of the circle walks around the circle tapping each player on the head while he or she says “Duck, Duck, Duck (etc.), Goose.” The player can say “Duck” as many times as they want to. The player who ends up being the “goose” must chase the other player around the circle, trying to beat them back to their spot in the circle. Whoever gets there first gets to remain in the circle, the other person gets to walk around the circle next.

Count the Jelly Beans

Fill a jar with jelly beans and have the children guess how many jelly beans are in the jar. Whoever guesses closest to the correct number wins the game.

Telephone

The players sit in a circle and the leader whispers a short phrase into the first child's ear. The children takes turns whispering the phrase into each other's ears until it gets all the way around the circle. The last child gets to tell everyone what was whispered into their ear. Chances are it isn't what the first child heard!

Blind Man's Bluff

Choose one child to be blindfolded. Let the child wander around the room until they touch another child. The blindfolded child tries to guess who they have touched. If they are correct, the other child gets to blindfolded next. If they are wrong, they get to be blindfolded one more time. If they are wrong a second time, they get to choose who gets to be blindfolded next.

Penny Dropping

Give each player 5 pennies. Place a jar on the floor behind a chair. Have the players take turns kneeling on the chair and trying to drop their pennies into the jar. Their hand should not go lower than the top of the back of the chair. Whoever gets the most pennies in the jar wins the game.

Musical Chairs

Place some chairs in a circle--there should be one less chair than the total number of children. Start playing some music and have the children walk around the inside of the circle until the leader stops the music. When the music stops, the children race for a seat in the circle. The child left without a seat is out of the game. One chair is removed from the circle, and the music is played again. The game continues until there is only one chair and one child remaining. That child wins the game.

Dodge Ball

This game requires two teams with an equal number of players on each team. One team forms a circle, and the other team scatters inside the circle. The players making up the circle throw a ball at the players inside the circle, trying to tag them. The players on the outside pass the ball to each other, taking turns trying to tag the players on the inside of the circle. Players may run into the circle to grab the ball, but must return to the edge of the circle before throwing the ball. If a player is tagged, they must go outside of the circle and wait until that inning is over. Innings are 5 minutes each. At the end of an inning, teams switch places. The team with the most “tags” wins.

Hidden Messages

Write the names of small gifts on pieces of paper. There should be one piece of paper per child. Place the messages inside balloons and blow up the balloons. Attach the balloons to a sturdy piece of cardboard that is mounted on a wall. Let each child break a balloon with a pin. The child receives the gift named on the piece of paper in his or her balloon.

Odd Ball

Players form a circle with one child in the middle of the circle. The players forming the circle should have their legs spread apart, feet touching each other’s all around the circle. The child in the middle tries to throw a ball out of the circle, between two players or between the legs of a player. Players can stop the ball with their hands, but they cannot move their feet. If the ball goes between a player’s legs, that player is the next to be in the middle of the circle. If the ball goes between two players, the person on the right is next in the circle.

Keep-Away

Players form a circle with one player in the center of the circle. One player remains in the center of the circle. Players pass a ball to each other across the circle while the player in the middle tries to intercept the ball. When the player intercepts the ball, the last player to throw the ball is next in the center of the circle.

Nursery Rhyme Game

Divide the players into teams. The leader assigns a nursery rhyme to each team. The teams take turns acting out their nursery rhymes. Whichever team guesses the nursery rhyme correctly gets to act out the next one. Continue for as many nursery rhymes as you can think of.

Tiddlywinks

Each player needs 1 medium-sized and 1 large button. The players begin at a starting line, and using their large button to “snap” their medium-sized button, each player tries to be first to get their button across the finish line (about 10 feet away). First across the finish line wins.

Crows and Cranes

Divide the players into two teams. One of the teams is the “crows,” the other is the “cranes.” Line the teams up facing each other, about 5 feet apart. The leader flips a coin. Heads-up is crows, tails-up is cranes. Whichever team is chosen (for example, crows) must turn and run in flight, with the other team (cranes) chasing after them. The cranes must try to capture (tag) the crows before they cross a given line. Tagged players are considered captives of the other team and must help their captors tag the other team during the next round. The coin is flipped before each round to see which team must flee their captors. Whichever team succeeds in capturing all the players on the other team wins.

Lion's Den

Have the players form a circle (the lion's den). One player is selected to be the lion, and another player is selected to be the hunter. The lion and hunter stand in the center of the circle. The players forming the circle stand far enough apart from each other that a player could pass between them. To begin the game, all players except the lion and hunter close their eyes, and the lion counts to ten. The hunter tries to slip out of the circle between two players. Anyone who hears the hunter may point to where they think the hunter is. The lion determines if the guess is correct. If the guess is correct, the hunter trades places with the person who pointed to him. If the hunter is able to get out of the circle without getting caught, he gets to be the hunter again.

Rabbit

Divide the players into groups of three except for two players, who are the hunter and homeless rabbit. Scatter the groups on a playing field. In each group, two of the players hold hands to form a "home" for the third player (rabbit). The rabbit stands in his home. The hunter chases the homeless rabbit around the playing field, trying to catch the rabbit. When the rabbit gets tired, he may go into one of the "homes." The rabbit already there must leave his home to be chased by the hunter. When the hunter catches a rabbit, the two change places and the game continues.

Grin or Bear It

All players except one line up in a row. One player moves down the line, making faces to try to make each player in line laugh. The children standing in line try not to laugh. The first player to laugh gets to take the next turn trying to make the other players laugh.