

Low-cost playful ideas



In times of economic hardship, the play needs, and natural urge to play for children, will remain. Play activity doesn't need to cost lots of money or involve expensive toys or days out. There are many 'free and found' play opportunities that can take place within homes, communities, and settings.

- Visit parks, green spaces, beaches or forests.
- Play outside - get the wellies and raincoats on and jump in puddles.
- Paint the pavement, walls, fences, gates or drainpipes with water - all you need is a bucket and brushes.
- Have a family dance party or sing-a-long.
- Create a fort in your living room out of blankets or cardboard boxes.
- Go on a hike.
- Have a sunset picnic at a park or beach.
- Upcycle old toys using stickers, foam or paint.
- Try some sewing or knitting.
- Play a game of chess, dominoes, jacks or card games.
- Make a sensory bottle using old bottles, coloured water, glitter, beads, stones or anything you fancy.
- Use chunky chalk to create an outdoor masterpiece.
- Play noughts and crosses or eye-spy.
- Have a game of hide-and-seek.



- Make slime. Pour 2 tbsp of shampoo into a bowl, add 2 tbsp of shaving foam and mix. Add 1 tsp of salt and mix everything together thoroughly. Put mixture into the freezer for approximately 15 minutes.
- Make unique creations with random ingredients from a mystery bag of goodies.
- Make a mat to play hopscotch on. You can roll it out for play - an old sheet is perfect.
- Melt ice - fill cups or containers with coloured water, freeze them, and watch the ice melt as you add salt to it.
- Make a collage with paper, glue and things to stick like pictures cut out of catalogues or magazines, scraps of paper, ribbon, fabric, dried pasta, natural materials etc.
- Street play - go out to play and encourage other children to join in. Play football, frisbee, dodgeball, piggy in the middle or stick in the mud.

