



Winter Activities - Indoors & Outdoors

20 Activities For 20 Days!

Playing outdoors in the cold is not only great fun but it is also good for children. It can boost their immune system and help them fight off infections. As little as 15 minutes outdoors can give a child their daily dose of Vitamin D which helps lift mood, increase energy and sharpen memory.

<p>1. Wrapping with Foil</p> <p>Foil is sensory and crunching and wrapping with kitchen foil will help strengthen fine motor skills. Provide your child with lots of different bits of foil, add play food and let the children wrap. Encourage your child to pick out the right size foil sheet to wrap food—(estimating and predicting) Alternatively allow children to wrap items from around the house.</p>	<p>2. Pretend to be nature pirates</p> <p>How much hidden loot can your child fit in a miniature treasure chest? Search for tiny natural items in your garden and see who can fit the most inside a matchbox or other small container. Look out for mini discarded snail shells, twigs, shiny pebbles and petals and leaves. Set a time limit and see who will be the winner! (Source: Woodland Trust)</p>	<p>3. Go for a Nighttime Walk</p> <p>With the dark afternoons and nights, winter is the perfect time to take your preschooler on a walk. Make a DIY Paper Lantern by decorating a white paper bag with tissue paper, paints and stickers. Once decorated pop a torch, battery operated tea light or fairy lights into the bag. Alternatively bring a torch.</p>	<p>4. Blowing Bubbles</p> <p>Blowing bubbles in very cold weather can be exciting for young children. In very cold weather bubbles will form small ice crystals on the surface and freeze. Give your child plenty of opportunities to experiment with bubbles in cold weather and help them blow them on different surfaces to see how the bubbles react.</p>	<p>5. Sound Hunt</p> <p>Create a list of sounds (many websites will have printable picture lists), alternatively draw your own pictures and encourage early mark making by getting your child to mark against each picture when they hear the corresponding sound. Examples for your list include - dogs barking, birds chirping, water running, branches snapping, leaves rustling, ducks quacking, etc.</p>
<p>6. Chalk Play</p> <p>Chalk can be used to create many outdoor games. Draw shapes on the ground and get your child to run to the correct shape. Draw large circles in different colours and encourage your child to jump into the correct colour circle. Draw straight lines to practice balance walking.</p>	<p>7. Take a Penny Adventure</p> <p>Simply use a coin to decide which way to go on a walk. Heads could be left and tails could be right. You could end up going round in circles but you could also find yourself somewhere that you've never been before.</p>	<p>8. Go on a Nature Hunt</p> <p>Head outdoors with a picture list of items such as leaves, stones, grass and twigs. Bring a bag for your child to collect the items on the list. Engage your child's senses by getting them to find - sounds – such as birds chirping, water running; touch - feel the bark on the tree; smell – leaves and flowers.</p>	<p>9. We're Going on a Bear Hunt</p> <p>Winter is a great time for a brisk walk in the woods so why not incorporate some favourite stories to make your walks even more exciting. We're Going on A Bear Hunt is perfect for getting the children's imaginations racing.</p>	<p>10. Go on a Muddy Puddle Walk</p> <p>Head outside in warm clothes and wellies and find some puddles. Jumping develops balance, strength, and agility so encourage your child to make big jumps and little hops. Smaller movements such as kicking, stirring and tapping the water are also excellent for improving balance and strength</p>
<p>11. Nature Faces</p> <p>Gather together twigs, stones, leaves and moss and use them to make nature faces. At home mix the natural items with toys and play dough to extend your child's play. Funny faces can be made using play dough and natural items. Playing with trucks, dolls and animals can be enhanced with natural items—creating building sites, farms and fairy gardens, etc.</p>	<p>12. Camping Indoors</p> <p>Let your child pack a backpack with snacks, pyjamas and change of clothes. Create a makeshift campsite in the living room. Eat camp food such as hot dogs/burgers and hot chocolate. Sit around in a circle singing songs and telling stories, using only torches for lights.</p>	<p>13. Teddy Bear Picnic</p> <p>Gather all the teddy bears/stuffed animals for a tea party. Spread out a rug on the floor and set extra places for the bears. Serve bear snacks with toast or pancakes, decorated with banana for ears and nose; raisins or blueberries for eyes. Fruit could be provided for the bears and your child could be encouraged to feed their bears.</p>	<p>14. Make a Rain stick</p> <p>You will need: cardboard tube; card or tinfoil, dry rice, pipe cleaner, crayons or paints. Decorate the cardboard tube, cover one end with tinfoil or card and secure with tape. Add dry rice and a pipe cleaner to the tube. Cover the other end as before. Shake the rain stick and make some rain sounds!</p>	<p>15. Indoor Snowballs</p> <p>Scrunch up paper, tissue paper is best. Get your child involved in making the snowballs. Place a basket/box at the end of the room and get the children to toss the snowballs towards the laundry basket</p>
<p>16. Bubble Foam</p> <p>You will need: baby/toddler bubble bath or body wash, water, food dye (optional) and large container. Mix 2 parts bubble bath with 1 part water, add food colouring. With a hand mixer or blender whisk until stiff peaks form. Provide your child with cups, bowls, spoons, forks etc. Dolls, trucks etc can also be added for imaginative play.</p>	<p>17. Colour Match Game</p> <p>You will need: card (cereal box) felt tips, coloured clothes pegs. Draw coloured circles around the edge of the cardboard matching the colour to your clothes pegs. Begin with only a few colours and increase as your child becomes more competent. Game — child pegs correct colour peg to circle on card. Great for fine motor skills.</p>	<p>18. All in a Row</p> <p>If your child enjoys lining their toys up why not make it into a fun game? Stick decorators tape to the floor/carpet and encourage your child to gather their favourite toys and create a massive line up of cars/animals/dolls/trains etc. Your child will soon be absorbed in imaginative play while also developing their fine motor skills.</p>	<p>19. Sink or Float Game</p> <p>You will need: a plastic bucket, or alternatively fill the sink or bath with water, collect items from around the house such as wooden stick, metal spoon, small ball and any other toys or household items. Encourage you child to guess whether the item will sink or float before placing in the water.</p>	<p>20. Car Ramp Race Track</p> <p>You will need: a cardboard box flattened to create a length about 3 feet; brush handle taped down the middle to stop cars colliding. Mark out 2 tracks, one on either side of the broom, create an outside barrier by turning up the edges along both sides of the track. Add a finish line and place the top of the track against sofa to provide height. Let the racing and learning begin!</p>

Useful Resources

Outdoor Clothing - Lots of layers and wellies as young children can get cold easily. For indoor play—cardboard boxes and household items.

