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Rainy Day Activities For Kids

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Uh Oh!

The kids are home and it's raining. You know what comes next, right?

"I'm bored!!!"

"There's nothing to do!"

"Moooooooooom!!!"

Yeah you know what I'm talking about. They can't go outside because it's too soggy out there and you really don't want them sitting like zombies in front of the electronic babysitter for hours, or playing video games till their gray matter starts to have the consistency of Swiss Cheese, do you? No, you don't. You're a good parent, a responsible parent. You know that by stimulating their little minds and encouraging their natural creativity and desire to be active you're continuing to be a good parent.

There's nothing worse than an idle child with nothing to do, so why not give them some simple and easy to do crafts? If you're not a crafty-person (and a lot of us aren't) it might seem a bit daunting to you. Perhaps the last craft you created was when you pressed your hand into some clay in grade school to make a gift for your mother or father. If that's so, don't panic. All it takes for you to be able to do this is a little ingenuity—and some planning ahead.



Grab a Box or Not

Planning for rainy day craft activities doesn't have to be complicated or even expensive. You have a few options to create a crafty storage area.

First option, you'll need a craft box. You can make this as difficult or as simply as you want. I've had friends who have simply taken a cardboard box with a lid, written 'Craft Box' on the top and filled it with their goodies; others take the same box and have turned it into a work of art by affixing feathers and buttons and even painted pictures on it. It all depends on what amount of effort and time you want to put into it. After all, it's not the box but what's inside that count in the end.

Second option, designate a drawer in your kitchen as the craft drawer and fill it with your goodies.

You can use a tackle box for your small craft box. They're great because they have little compartments for holding your small stuff—like googly eyes, rhinestones, buttons or pieces of glass. The bigger compartment can hold your glue gun and large pieces of felt and any other crafty items you've got. You can also purchase any size plastic tub to use for a craft box—in fact some empty tubs are made for just such a purpose. They come with drawers and trays with lots of compartments to store your items. However you make or buy your craft box, make sure it's special to your children.

Another great idea is to use an over the door plastic shoe holder. They are fairly cheap and you store a LOT of items in them without taking up a drawer or any counter space in your kitchen. Because the little plastic areas are see-through, you're instantly organized! You can see everything you have at a glance.



Fill'er Up!

There are some essentials you'll want for your rainy day craft box. Of course those items will include glue, glue sticks, paper, scissors, crayons, markers and even perhaps some water-based paints.

Children can do the most creative things with the most innocuous items and you can help them make things on the cheap. Having fun doesn't have to be expensive!

If you have young children, make sure that you keep the small craft items out of reach so they're no danger of choking.

As I said before, you can fill up your craft box, or drawer, or over-the-door craft holder relatively inexpensively.

What I like to do is pick up things at garage sales or thrift stores. Buttons, small pieces of colored glass and paper. Lots and lots of paper, in all sizes and colors and shapes. When I'm doing a project and I've cut up paper, I never throw the unused pieces away. Rather, I keep them and put them into my craft box. You never know when they might come in handy.

Colored pieces of felt, bottle cleaners, googly eyes and any other item that seems odd but could come in handy later. Never toss anything out without first putting it in your craft box—just in case. Aluminum foil is also a must-have for your craft box.

Even old socks, ones that your children have outgrown or ones that your husband has gotten holes in. can be used for exciting craft ideas! Make a sock puppet!

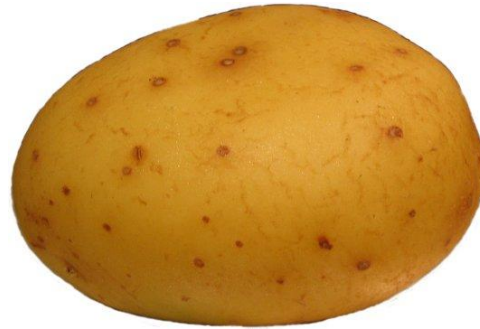
Crafty Ideas

Here are a few rainy-day craft ideas to keep your kids busy when they're trapped inside. Most can be done using items found around your home so they're fun AND inexpensive!

Tin foil Shapes

You'll need some tin foil and your imagination only.

Take a sheet of foil and squeeze it, ball it up, shape it into something fun. Use enough aluminum foil to firmly twist and ball up to the desired design. You can mount it on wood block with glue gun, or thumb tacks. For an extra challenge try to make a body shape, that will balance on a string tied tightly between two chairs. Make figures and make a play with them. Using yarn, you can attach hair to them with a glue gun.



Potato Prints

You'll need

Potatoes

Poster paint or tempera

Paper, cardboard, or wood

sharp knife

pencil

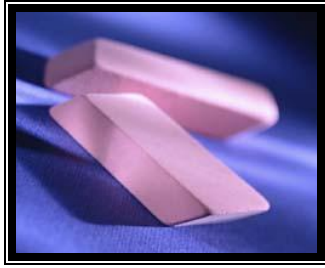
1. Cut potatoes in half or thirds.
2. Draw desired design onto potato with the pencil.
3. Young children can carve their whole design with the pencil but if more detail is preferred, an adult needs to cut around the pencil outline.
4. Place paint in tray or paper plate in a thin layer.
5. Press potato design into paint and firmly press onto paper for impression.

Don't have Paint ????

Coloring with marker onto the potato works as well although it produces a lighter effect.

Mom's Tip: Practice a couple of times to get the feel for how much paint you want on your print.

To accomplish a textured effect try letting layers dry and adding prints on top in different colors.



Making Stamps

You'll need

Any of these items

Rubber erasers, Cork board, Styrofoam, cardboard

Inner tube rubber, Felt squares

Sharp utility knife

ink pad

Glue gun

1. Cut the desired shape out of a rubber eraser for example:

The tip of a pencil eraser will form a circle,

Add notches to create flowers, carve letters

(don't forget to reverse for printmaking)

2. When using felt, cork or cardboard attach the stamp to a wood block with a glue gun.

Two inch dowel pieces work well.

3. Press stamps onto ink pad and press on paper.

Mom's Tip:

Stamps will last longer if you keep a damp sponge at work area to dab after each color.



Sock Puppets

Making a sock puppet:

Socks, all kinds and colors

Yarn

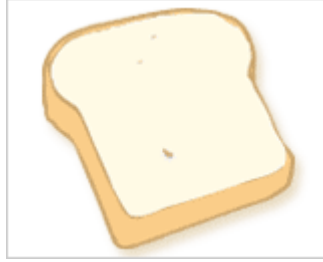
Glue gun

Googly eyes

Imagination

No one can resist a sock puppet. Use any kind of sock—the more colorful the better. Using a glue gun, attach yarn hair, maybe even a yarn moustache. Stick eyes on, wait till everything is dry and then have a puppet show! Recreate a scene from one of your favorite cartoons. Use a pink sock and make Patrick, a yellow sock to make Sponge Bob.

Using a cardboard box, you can create a stage where your sock puppets can put on plays. With a bit of creativity, you can have hours of fun!



Bread and Glue Clay

Easy Recipe

You'll need :

8 slices of day-old white bread

(Less expensive fluffy type)

1 /2 C. White Glue

Food color

Flour for work space

Wax paper

To Make:

Remove Crusts. Break bread into small pieces and put in mixing bowl. Pour glue over bread. Mix with one hand until it becomes a sticky mass. Take the out of the bowl and form into a ball .With both hands keep patting into a smaller ball until it becomes just slightly tacky. Dust work surface with a small amount of flour and knead gently until it becomes smoother and more pliable. Knead firmly at this time. Knead until texture is satiny, about 5 mins.

Wrap tightly with plastic to store. Remember to seal the unused portion while working.

To color dough tear of portion needed , flatten and add color directly onto dough. Blend until satiny again.

Add flour, if needed to achieve the proper texture.

Air dry. Drying times vary depending on thickness.
To speed up drying place on cookie sheet and leave overnight in an unlit oven. Paint with acrylic paints (optional) and seal with spray on finish.



Toothpick shapes

You'll need the following:

Toothpicks
marshmallows or gum drops

Insert the toothpicks into the marshmallows. Keep adding marshmallows to make any shape you wish. For example: star, hexagon or complex structures like a tall building or a bridge



Finger Painting

There's nothing more exciting to a child than getting themselves all dirty. As parents and caregivers we're always telling them to stay clean, to wash their hands and don't touch.

Now you're going to give them the opportunity to touch and to get dirty and to play!

You'll need some water soluble finger paints. They come in all colors and they're so much fun! Whether from a squeeze bottle or a jar—dipping their little fingers into the wet muck gives them tactile sensations and a creative outlet.

You'll need paper and paints. Also, it would be a good idea to have the child wear old clothing or an apron to keep the paint from their clothing.

These are just a few ideas to get you started on making some exciting memories with your children—as well as keeping their little imaginations active during dull and rainy days.