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Kids Activities - 10 Inspiring Ideas For A Rainy Day

By Lindsay Small

There is nothing worse than a rainy day in the middle of the school holidays, when children are cooped up inside, you have nothing planned, and the inevitable cries of "I'm bored" are not far away! Keep this list of rainy day activities ready for just such a day. Older children may enjoy choosing from the list themselves.

1. Sort through the toy cupboard:

It's surprising how much fun this can be! Get everyone together and aim to clear one shelf or drawer. You will probably find that old treasures are rediscovered, odd pieces can be thrown away, and some things will be ready to be passed down or sold. If you are not sure whether to get rid of some of the toys, try packing them away in a box and hiding them in a dark corner of the cupboard for a few months. When they come out again they will either cause a sensation, or not – which will make it easy to decide on their fate!

2. Record the sounds around you:

Get out the tape recorder and make a project out of recording everyday sounds. Try water running in the bath, someone ringing the bell and opening the door, or flushing the toilet! It certainly makes you think about things a little differently than usual. Suggest that some friends or neighbours do the same thing and then get together to see if you can identify each other's sounds!

3. Make a story tape:

Grab that tape recorder and a blank cassette, find a story you enjoy, and make your own story tape! Each child can read for a while, or can take on the part of a particular character. Make the appropriate noises too! You will probably have to practice a few times to get the hang of it, and be prepared for lots and lots of giggles! Tip: a homemade story tape makes a great present for a child who has to go to hospital or is bedridden for a time.

4. Have a jigsaw afternoon:

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Get out all your jigsaws and invite some friends around with theirs too! Clear plenty of space and have a marathon jigsaw session. Some libraries have jigsaws you can borrow too, and you can often find jigsaws for sale very cheaply at charity shops (thrift stores) and car boot sales (garage sales). Tip: if you buy your jigsaws second-hand and the box has seen better days, cut out the picture and store it in a re-sealable bag with all the pieces.

5. Have a mammoth junk modelling session with friends:

Invite a few families around and ask them to bring their craft-cupboard junk with them - boxes, containers, and other bits and pieces. You provide glue, sticky-tape, scissors, and encouragement. You could make houses, or creatures, or boats, or modern art - or you could all combine together to make one giant model!

6. Make a card house:

If you don't know any good card games or haven't anyone to play with, try building a card house! Start by balancing two cards against each other so that they stand up in an inverted V-shape. Take it from there!

7. Make an indoor obstacle course:

Check with an adult that this is OK first! Use easily movable furniture (kitchen chairs, coffee tables) to mark out a course. Create a tunnel to crawl through with a blanket draped over low tables, or space cushions around the room to use as stepping-stones. You will have lots more ideas!

8. Practice balancing:

Balancing is fun! Try walking the length of the room with a book on your head. When you can do that, try balancing two or three - then add a cuddly toy to the very top!

9. Create an indoor den:

A few blankets and tablecloths can create the most wonderful indoor den. Drape blankets between sofas and chairs, over stepladders and clothes-dryers, or tie the ends to cupboard knobs and door handles. Once the den is created find some special snacks, coloring pages and pencils, a CD player and music, a torch or two, and camp out for a while!

10. Play with string:

Older children can create some wonderful inventions with a ball of string and their imagination! A toilet roll and a sloping length of string make a great message chute or rocket. Get some action toys involved too: try making them a lift (elevator) out of a box or a basket and hoist them up! Adults should supervise constantly if there are younger kids around.

Lindsay Small is the author of "Boredom Busters for Kids" - an e-book with over 50 pages of fun

activities for kids like those above. Find it at

http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/boredom_busters.htm

. She

also runs

<http://www.ActivityVillage.co.uk>

– full of ideas and printables for parents and teachers looking

to educate and entertain their children.

How to Raise Creative Kids

By Susan Stump

"Where did he come up with that?" Kids often amaze us with their imaginative ideas, and we should give ourselves a pat on the back for playing a role in this development. Innovative thinking is essential for success in school and in life, and it's our job as parents to nurture our kids' innate desire to be creative. Inventive play fosters original thinking, an asset when children are confronted with new situations. By providing activities that use their creativity and imaginations, we are giving our children an important tool to deal with life down the road.

Give them ideas.

Children come up with things to do on their own, but we also need to provide them with new ideas of interesting activities. Think back to what you did as a kid. Did you write a diary, create elaborate puppet shows, or sing and dance for relatives? Share ideas from your own childhood experiences. Offer creative writing ideas like writing an episode for a favorite television show or writing a new ending to a favorite story. Craft projects offer another outlet for inspiring imaginations. Craft kits, especially those from Curiosity Kits and ALEX, offer a wide variety of unusual and fun projects. They've brought us a long way from the sock puppets of our youth. These manufacturers offer ideas and supplies to make such things as scrapbooks, powerballs, soaps, candy, sun catchers, dolls, planes, dinosaurs, jewelry treasures, and lots of decorative items. Kids can gather ideas from the instructions, and then give the projects their own unique touches.

Keep ideas fresh.

Pick up any parenting magazine and you'll find lots of ideas to get those creative juices flowing in your kids. Search the web and check out craft stores. Keep a journal or file for magazine clippings and ideas as you find them. Stockpile so that you'll know how to answer the whiny "I'm bored" call from your kids.

Give them freedom.

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Once you've given your kids some suggestions and supplies, step back and see which they choose and where they go with them. This unstructured play time gives kids an opportunity to stretch their creative muscles. Watch as they incorporate your ideas and branch out on their own.

Set an example.

Chances are, if you are a creative person, your child will be too. You display creativity in your everyday activities like when you reason with a disgruntled child, change lyrics to songs, and maybe even do some interpretive dancing to entertain a toddler. Your children see your silliness and it rubs off on them. You surely use creativity to juggle your and your family's schedules. It's a great idea to point out to your kids how you use creativity in your daily life.

As parents, we always try to do the very best for our kids and provide opportunities that will help them mature into intelligent, capable adults. Nurturing their creative spirits helps them along this road. With their well-developed imaginations, maybe they'll turn it into a yellow brick, pink polka-dotted road with sparkles!

Susan Stump is the mother of two children and the owner of ChildCrafter, Co. – Craft Kits and Subscriptions that Inspire a Child's Imagination. This work-at-home-mom offers a great selection of creative craft kits from ALEX, Quincrafts, and Curiosity Kits from her catalog and website

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