

Dress Up Box

Materials: Any clothing, old Halloween costumes

How: Allow kids to try on a variety of outfits and combinations.

Why: Develops vocabulary, imagination and storytelling.

Paper Bag Puppets

Materials: paper bags, colored paper, glue, markers and crayons, various creative materials

How: Create your puppet using the bag and its fold as a mouth. Add details such as eyes.

Why: Develops fine motor skills and imagination.

Indoor Hopscotch

Materials: Cardboard or tape and small bean bags to use as markers

How: Create a hopscotch course out of cardboard or mark one out with tape. Play a traditional hopscotch game, or just have fun hopping and following the numbers.

Why: Develops gross motor skills, supports counting practice.

Play helps develop important skills such as:

Gross Motor involves the coordinated movement of the large muscles in the torso, legs and arms. Those muscles allow children to walk, run, jump and wave their arms. Active play, sports and dancing develop gross motor skills.

Fine Motor involves the small muscles in the hands. Play that allows children to grasp, touch and roll objects such as working with playdough, putting on clothing with buttons or snaps and picking out small objects to sort, help develop fine motor skills.

Social and Emotional development allows children to learn about and control their emotions. Play that encourages sharing, partner or group play allow children to interact with others and help develop social skills and emotional control.

Cognitive brain development starts at birth and is how the child perceives and interacts with their environment. Imaginative play, alone or with others helps children engage with the real and make believe environments.

Communication is how the child lets adults know their needs and how they feel. Children use their facial expressions, body language, crying, eye movement and sounds to communicate.

Language Skills often starts as back and forth babble between a caregiver and baby. Play that allows children to hear or tell stories, engage in make-believe and name objects help develop language skills and vocabulary.



San Francisco Public Library

www.sfpl.org/bigplaydate



Children learn through play. San Francisco Public Library encourages families to play everyday.

We offer:

- Play to Learn Areas at each library
- Interactive Storytimes
- Big Play Dates geared for children aged 0-5 and their caregivers
- Community building with other families and caregivers

Here are some easy, open-ended play ideas to do at home.

Woven Paper Placemats

Materials: Construction paper or old magazines

How: Cut paper into long even strips and weave together to make a pattern.

Why: Develops fine motor skills.

Art Station

Materials: Cardboard, white paper, watercolors, brushes

How: Set up an easel using cardboard as backing for the paper and let kids explore color, line and shape.

Why: Develops fine motor skills, imagination and creativity.

Toy Car Wash

Materials: Bin or soup pot, water, soap, sponges, brush (toothbrush, kitchen scrub brush, paper towels

How: Allow kids to wash the toys and tell you what they are doing. Encourage using new words like: suds, scrubbing, rims, flatbed, tires, immerse, rinse, wash.

Why: Develops vocabulary.

Create Your Own Puzzle

Materials: Random items to trace, paper, pencils

How: Trace items on paper and write the name of each item in the void of the traced space. Encourage children to match the actual item with the traced outline.

Why: Develops letter and word recognition and spatial recognition.

Fort Building

Materials: Cardboard cereal boxes, bed sheets, tablecloths, kitchen towels, blocks, toy animals or people

How: Build structures, objects or a home for your toy. Encourage children to describe what they are doing.

Why: Develops vocabulary, narrative skills and imagination.

Bean Bin

Materials: Assorted dried beans, plastic tub, spoons, measuring cups, plastic wide mouth bottles (Avoid dried red kidney beans.)

How: Put beans in plastic tub and allow children to sift, sort, pour and create patterns with the beans in the bottles.

Why: Develops fine motor skills, provides sensory experience.

Homemade Playdough

Materials: 1-1.5c warm water, food coloring, 2 T. cream of tartar, 2c. flour, 1/2c. salt, 2 T. oil

How: Mix water with food coloring, slowly add dry ingredients until it forms a dough.

Why: Develops fine motor skills and teaches measuring.

Bubble Wrap Runways

Materials: Bubble wrap, painters tape

How: Tape long strips of bubble wrap to the floor to make a runway. Children will have a blast hopping and jumping across, puncturing the bubbles with their feet as they go.

Why: Develops gross motor skills and balance.