

PRESCHOOL ACTIVITY IDEAS

1. **PLAY DOUGH:** Great for strengthening hands!

Microwave Play Dough Recipe

This recipe takes no time at all to make with your favourite helper(s). It doesn't make a large amount and is so quick and easy you can make many different colours!

Food Colouring (a good measure for stronger colour)

1 cup water

1 cup flour

½ cup salt

2 tsp. cream of tartar (very important)

2 Tbsp. cooking oil

1. Combine water and food colouring, then other ingredients in a large microwaveable bowl. Give a good stir. Use a spatula and push any play dough mixture on the sides of the bowl down to the bottom.
2. Cook on high for 1 minute.
3. Remove from the microwave and give a good stir. If you forgot to wipe down the sides of the bowl you will find you have crispy bits on the side of the bowl. I advise tossing the crispy bits out as they will make your finished play dough lumpy.
4. Return the bowl to the microwave and cook again for 1 minute on high.
5. Stir (should be thick and hard to stir). Now let stand for 3 minutes.
6. Knead for about a minute, then store in an air tight container.

Now Play! Roll, cut with pate knives and scissors; squish, pinch, mold, sculpt, and make prints in it with buttons, pasta, sticks, LEGO blocks and any parent-approved found item. Add some dramatic play with figures, animals, cars or ideas like making a zoo, your favourite food, etc. Above all, have fun!

One activity that was a big hit with the children in the fall was to stick uncooked spaghetti in the play dough and carefully add fruit loops on each spaghetti. Below are some pictures of a play dough bake shop and a hedgehog tea party.



- 2. LEGO/DUPLO:** Free play or add a challenge! If you invite your child to think about an idea, you will be amazed at what they come up with.

Dramatic Play Ideas

Build:

- A zoo or a house for an animal
- A robot
- Something to go with your favourite book
- Dinosaur land
- Play ground

Math Play Ideas

Build:

- Using only one colour of blocks (sorting)
- Something with only 5 blocks, 10 blocks, etc.
- Something square, triangular, rectangular
- Something taller than/smaller than
- Build something heavy, light, heavier than/lighter than
- Something longer than/shorter than; count the bricks in your line
- A tower with a pattern

Technology Play Ideas

Build:

- A boat that floats
- Something that flies
- A marble run or maze
- A bridge
- A very tall tower—at what point does it fall over? Why?

Literacy Component

- Ask your child to share what they are doing. Practice listening and asking questions.
- Write down the story based on their creation and either take a picture or ask your child to draw a picture of it. They can make a book of everything they made during their time off school to share with friends and family.

- 3. CHALK GAMES:** Fine motor and gross motor skills, and also fresh air!

- Make a chalk maze with twists and turns; walk the line without stepping off.
- Draw a series of lines, then see if your child can jump from line to line or jump over the lines without touching them.
- Have your child draw a series of X's (another opportunity for counting!) and see if they can hop along the trail—first two feet, then one foot.
- Help your child draw a network of railroad tracks on your driveway or sidewalk—here comes the train! Don't forget stations, the round house, and lots obstacles!

- Have your child draw a set of circles (or triangles, squares, rectangles) and then challenge your child to throw a pebble into each one.
- The classic game of hopscotch.
- Have your child make a large-scale map with paths to all their favorite places— i.e. the playground, a friend's house, preschool.
- Trace your child's shadow with chalk and then have fun adding facial features, clothing, fancy jewelry, a kite on a long string, etc. The best time of day is when the sun is fairly high in the sky, that way the shadow won't be too long and distorted.
- Draw pictures for passersby to enjoy
- Challenge your child to make up their own game.

4. WINTER IN SPRING ACTIVITIES: It is hard to go back to winter after a taste of spring, but here are some ideas to try in the cold weather.

- **Ice Marbles**

Take a balloon, add a few drops of food colouring, fill up the balloon with water—no bigger than a basketball—then place outside in the snow over night. Make a bunch. You could also fill up different plastic or metal containers with water and add food colouring. The next day, cut off the balloons/remove the ice blocks from containers. Now your child can create ways to play outside with them or make a sculpture!



- **Snow Sculptures**

- What creature haven't you made this winter? Have you tried a snow octopus, snow caterpillar, snow monster?
- Try making a snow bouquet. Sculpt a vase out of a mound of snow – you could decorate it with pebbles. Now collect weeds, dried grasses, branches with winter berries or just a collection of interesting twigs from around your yard, or from your last walk. Experiment with different arrangements till you get just what you like. Maybe it is so much fun you will make a whole flower shop of snow vases!
- Dig out the summer small shovels and pails to build a snow castle.
- Also, with your shovels and pails you could make snow pies. What yummy pies could you make—pebble meringue pie, dirt crust chocolate pie?
- Snow Maze or Roadway: make pathways in your yard by shuffling your feet. The paths can be roadways and you can make little areas for a house, a store, a fire station, etc. You could also make a maze of intersecting paths. Then pretend to be a car or truck moving along the road or play a game of tag.

5. A COLOUR BOOK: The idea is for your child to make their very own book! This works for all stages, from scribbling to drawing.

Take a page of white paper, the heavier the better, and ask your child to scribble/draw with only one colour. You can use anything or everything—crayons, markers, colored pencils, pastels, chalks, watercolours or scissors, glue and coloured paper—whatever suits. This activity can be guided with questions like: can you make a dark blue line? a light blue line? dots? curves like a rainbow? Can you draw me everything you can think of that is blue? Can you draw me a world where everything is blue? Some children naturally want to author the page without any help or need for guidance and some will need you to scribble with them and make a game of it (first you draw, then it is my turn). The last page could be a rainbow-like page with all the colours and don't forget about a cover page with title and author.

After you have made a page for each colour, poke holes in the edges of the papers and tie them together with ribbon, string, or twist ties. I predict your child's first authored book will be a much loved and read treasure. This activity does not need to be done all in one sitting!