

111

Awesome Ideas

For What To Do When The Kids Are Bored!

Plus 7 BONUS IDEAS



Seeme and Liz

Encouraging Language and Learning Through Play

Boredom leads to creativity, so don't feel like you always have to entertain your child or have them involved in [structured activities](#). My children love [playing with cardboard](#) when they are bored. They have created some pretty cool things such as a Skylanders Teleporter, a moving office, a marble run, Sponge Bob's house, a [Zhu Zhu pet's](#) village, and many more!

There are so many things children can do (that don't cost an arm and a leg - in fact, most of these ideas won't cost you anything other than some imagination) that do not involve a TV, iPad, structured activity (e.g. gymnastics class, dance class, sports, etc.) when they are bored.

I will share with you 111 awesome ideas that we use in our house and suggestions I have received from other parents. Some of these activities will require your involvement. Depending on the age of your child, you may be able to simply give them the idea and then let them decide what exactly they want to do.

GET CREATIVE WITH CARDBOARD

This shouldn't come as a surprise, based on what I mentioned above.



SET UP A RESTAURANT

Here is another favorite at my house. My kids love cooking the food at their [pretend play kitchen](#) and then serving it to each other or any adult willing to play the customer.

MAKE PLAYDOUGH

Use this [easy homemade playdough recipe](#) together with your child.

PLAY WITH PLAYDOUGH

Now that you have made your playdough, get out some plastic cutlery, plates, a rolling pin, cookie cutters, etc. and start playing with the playdough. If making your own playdough isn't your thing, don't worry, there is a lot of playdough you can [order online](#) and have delivered right to your door!

MAKE A TIN CAN PHONE

I used to love this type of toy phone as a child. It's a craft and toy in one!

SCAVENGER HUNT

You can make this as easy or challenging as you want. If your child is young, start simple. Give them obvious clues such as "I think something is hiding behind the couch". A scavenger hunt is great for working on following directions! Older children can come up with their own more complex scavenger hunts. Or you can come up with one and have them try to find all of the clues.

TIN CAN STILTS

Another childhood favorite of mine! The simplest way to make these is with old tin coffee cans. I like the ones from Costco. They are a great size for little feet. Turn the cans over and make 2 small holes in the bottom of each can (one on either edge). Thread string (the heavier the better) through the wholes and tie together at the top. Cut the string long enough so that it reaches the child's hands. Place one can under each foot and let them hold the string from each can as they walk.



PRETEND CIRCUS

Use the tin can stilts you just made as one of the circus acts. Gather all of the [stuffed animals](#) you have so they can perform in the circus. Set up a [tent](#) to collect tickets. Let your imagination run wild. See what you and your child can add to your circus. A tightrope (tape on the floor) perhaps?

PLAY HIDE AND SEEK

This works best if there are multiple children/adults. However, my daughter did like playing hide and seek with me when she was between 2 and 3 and it was only her and I playing most of the time. She loved it, even though she hid in the same spot every time.

You can take this as a learning opportunity and explain to your child that they need to find different places to hide and you can remember where they were. But if your child is young (under 3) she probably won't get it. But they still love this game!

PLAY REVERSE HIDE AND SEEK

This is also known as Sardines (although I am not sure why). Instead of everyone hiding and one person looking, everyone looks and one person hides. But, when someone finds the person hiding, they don't call them out, rather, they hide with that person and everyone else keeps looking.

GO BOWLING

You don't need to go to the bowling alley for this (although for older children it would probably be more fun that way). You can set up stuffed animals to knock down with a ball if you don't have any play bowling pins, or collect empty water bottles to use as pins.

If your child has a language delay, find some simple images to print out of common words (E.g. key, flower, cup, shoe, chair, bed, hat, dog, cat, etc) and tape them under the bowling pin (or whatever you're are knocking down). Each time a pin is knocked down, turn it over to see what the picture is.

BLOW BUBBLES

Bubbles are great for encouraging early language skills. But older children still find them fun. An older child can blow bubbles for a younger child. If you would rather not blow bubbles, there are many [battery operated bubble blowers](#) available as well.

PLAY IN THE RAIN

My children think I am the greatest mother on earth when I tell them that they can play in the rain. Let them get dirty, the clothes can be washed. Send them out with some beach toys and rain gear.

GO FOR A NATURE WALK

Grab a bucket, a net and a bag and go exploring. Collect things like leaves and pinecones. Try to catch a frog or insect. Talk about what you see.

MAKE A "NATURE" CRAFT

After you get back from your walk, make a craft with the items you have collected. Try putting some leaves between sheets of paper so they can dry.

GO FOR A BIKE RIDE

This is pretty self-explanatory. Get on your bikes, or walk, and explore the neighborhood!

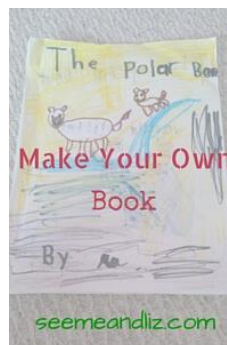
READ A BOOK

Do this several times a day, especially with younger children who are not in school or reading on their own.

MAKE YOUR OWN BOOK

When my daughter was a baby, I made her a book with pictures I took of some of her favorite toys. I printed out the pictures and put them in a cheap photo album that allowed for one picture per page. I then printed out labels with the name for each item in the picture.

We would "read" this book together. It was one of her favorite books. She carried it around with her everywhere. Now she has started writing her own short stories. And her younger brother is now starting to do the same!



**What Is The Best Toy For Learning?
Click Here To Find Out!**

PLAY A BOARD GAME

If you aren't sure what board games to start with, check out the [Top 6 Best Family Game Night Games!](#)

GO SWIMMING

Head out to the community pool (or your backyard if you are lucky and have one there) for an afternoon/evening family swim. Or if the weather is nice set up a kids pool where the kids can splash around.

MAKE A TREASURE MAP

Make a map for your child giving clues for where a special surprise can be found. This goes well with the scavenger hunt! If your child is older, have him make a treasure map for you and see if you can find the treasure he has hidden.

PLAY WITH BLOCKS

Blocks such as [Lego](#) or Mega Blocks can entertain a child for hours. If your children are older, having building competitions. Or work as a team to build an entire city. My children made their own Nintendo DS's out of Lego (because I wouldn't buy them one).

WATER PLAY

I know some parents will cringe at this, especially in the house but I can guarantee your children will love it. When it was just my daughter (before my son was old enough to want to join in on everything) I would fill the sink with a bit of water and let her play while standing in the [Learning Tower](#). She would pretend to wash the dishes - I filled the sink with plastic dishes.

Once my son wanted to be involved I put a Rubbermaid bin on the tile floor and filled it with some water. The kids put their bath toys in or used their [pretend fishing set](#) and would play for an hour to 2 at a time. Yes, there was always water on the floor, but since it was tile, I could easily mop it up. You can also put a plastic table cloth under the bin to protect your floor a bit.

PAINT ROCKS

Make paper weights or pets by painting rocks that you may have found on your nature walk. Add googly eyes to make the rocks even better!

BUILD A FORT

Pull up the couch cushions, put together some chairs and cover everything with sheets! Or get a [prefab fort set](#) such as Crazy Forts and come up with some cool configurations. You could even make a spaceship and check out the moon!

LEARN TO CODE

This is more for older children as I always recommend younger children, especially under the age of 3 learn better through playing with [traditional toys](#). Learning how to code is a great way to use other areas of the brain!

Check out [An Hour Of Code](#) for a fun free online program great for kids and adults (who don't know the first thing about coding, like me. My husband is a software developer so maybe the kids will take after him).

PLAY DRESS UP

Kids can be entertained for hours when they dress up and pretend to be pirates, princesses, firefighters, doctors, vets, etc.

PUT ON A PLAY

Encourage your older children to work together to come up with a play with their dress up clothes. But then be ready to watch them preform the play. You can't say no!

PUT ON A RECITAL

My kids love doing this with their friends. They will even make tickets to give to the adults so that we can come and sit and watch the recital.

TURN YOUR DINING ROOM INTO AN AIRPLANE/TRAIN

Here is another game my children love. Gather all of the chairs and line them up in the hallway. They make sure no seat on the plane/train is empty by letting each of their stuffed animals have a seat. Make tickets and passports and talk about where you are off to. To keep the activity going, pack a small bag with items that might be needed for the trip.

MAKE A LIST

This can be a real list or a pretend one. Make a grocery list, a to do list, a Christmas list, a "toys to donate to charity" list, etc. This is a great way to get children to practice their hand writing skills while making it seem fun.

PLAY GROCERY STORE

Gather real or pretend items and place them around a room. Make a list and decide what needs to be purchased. Then go around and find those items. Use a calculator or toy cash register to check out and pay for your items.

MENTOS ROCKET CAR

If the rocket car seems a bit too much, give the mentos rocket a try. All you need is a 2 liter bottle of coke (some say diet is better than regular) and a few mentos. Drop the mentos in and watch it explode.

BAKE COOKIES

There are many simple recipes that you can do with your child. I find it easiest when I get all the ingredients ready and measured (especially with younger children) before getting started with my child.

PLAY IN THE KITCHEN

The kitchen is one of the most social rooms of a house. There are many opportunities for language development and learning in a kitchen as well. Read [3 Fun Kitchen Activities For Kids!](#) for some ideas.

HAVE A PICNIC

This can be done indoors or outside! Talk about what you will need for your picnic and gather everything up.

BUILD A ROAD

My son loved doing this when he was between 2 and 3. We would cut out black pieces of construction paper (any color is fine) into "roads" and tape them together to make various road systems. Then take some small cars and drive them around.

HAVE A PUPPET SHOW

You can make sock puppets or use stuffed animals. If you have a large cardboard box or piece of cardboard/bristol board, use this as the theatre.

GO TO THE LIBRARY

You don't always have to buy new books when your child gets bored with the ones you have at home. You can spend as little or as long as you would like at the library. Most libraries have "story time" and other programs geared to children under the age of 3. Make sure you take advantage of these free programs.

PUZZLES

Puzzles are great for children of all ages. Start with insert puzzles and move up to jigsaw puzzles as your child gets older.

PAPER MACHE

Make your own paper mache head with a balloon or create a pinjata!

VISIT A PET STORE

You don't have to spend money on zoo passes, especially when your child is young and you don't plan on spending the entire day there. Walk around the pet store and look at all of the different animals. Talk about each animal you see (e.g. what is the animal called, what sound does it make, what does it like to eat, what color is it, etc.)

FINGER PAINT

Finger painting is fun for children of all ages, from babies to school aged children!

MAKE SHADOW ANIMALS

Use a flashlight to make animals and designs with your fingers.

PLAY HOPSCOTCH

This can be done outdoors with chalk outside or indoors on a carpeted area with masking tape.

MAKE A SCRAPBOOK

Collect some old pictures and glue them onto sheets of paper. Decorate the paper with glitter, pompoms, stickers, etc. Staple all of the pieces of paper together to make a book.

INVENT A SECRET CODE/LANGUAGE

This is another favorite for my kids. They have made up their own language but I am pretty sure they just make it up as they go and it changes every time they use it.

PLAY SIMPLE GAMES

Some ideas include "what time is it Mr. Wolf?", "Red Light Green Light", "Red Rover", etc.

PLAY BASKETBALL

Use a soft ball and small net or even a bucket/bin and this activity can be done inside.

MAKE YOUR OWN FRISBEE

Decorate a plastic lid with paint, markers and stickers. If you already made stilts (number 7), save the lids from the coffee cans to make a Frisbee.

BE A SCIENTIST

Young children will be thrilled to see what happens when you mix baking soda and vinegar. You can also purchase [science kits](#) for older children.

DIG FOR DINOSAURS

Let your inner archaeologist out! Set up your own dig in a bin filled with sand (or an outdoor sandbox) and hide small dinosaur toys in the sand. Or check out some dinosaur kits such as [Back in Time with Dinosaurs](#) (a Magic School Bus Science Kit).

MAKE A BUG HOUSE

Use an old jar or container. Decorate it and poke holes in the lid. Then find some bugs to catch!

MAKE JEWELRY

Use macaroni and string with younger children. Spray paint the macaroni first if you want it to be colorful. You can also use beads of any kind. My daughter has a few "jewelry making kits" that she loves.

TIE DYE A T-SHIRT

Or get some fabric markers and color a picture onto an old shirt.

MAKE SOCK PUPPETS

Find some old socks and use buttons and glue for the eyes, or just color them on with marker or fabric paint. The puppets can then be used in the puppet show.

PLAY BALLOON VOLLEYBALL

You can fill the balloon with a bit of water to make it heavier. It shouldn't pop with only a bit of water. But if it does, remember, it is just water and it will dry.

WRITE A LETTER TO A RELATIVE

Letter mail is becoming a thing of the past, so surprise a relative or friend with a letter or picture in the mail.

SET UP A POST OFFICE

This is for pretend letters. Use stickers as stamps that can be purchased. Pack toys into small boxes to be shipped.

PRETEND TO BE A SPY

Give your child an old camera and let them take "secret" pictures. Pretend a pair of sunglasses are spy glasses. Use the tin can phone (number 5) as a spy walkie talkie.

PLAY GO FISH

This is a simple game that can be played with a variety of different cards. You can even make your own. Find some pictures online and print out 4 copies of each. Glue them onto index cards and make your own game.

PLAY TWISTER

This is another game you can make yourself. Cut circles out of various colors of paper (heavy weight paper is better so it won't rip) and tape them to the floor. Make small cards with pictures of colors and body parts (hands, feet, head, nose, finger, knee) and put them into a bag.

Pull out a body part picture and color picture and then tell your child what they need to do (e.g. put your nose on the red circle). You can make different shapes to make the game more difficult. Or use numbers instead of shapes.

HAVE A CAMP OUT

You can do this in your backyard or indoors!

MAKE AN OBSTACLE COURSE

Use your imagination. This can be done indoors or outdoors.

MAKE YOUR OWN WORD SEARCH

This is great for older kids. Have them come up with a list of words and then show them how to draw a big chart (large enough to fit the longest word). Fill in all of the words and then add random letters to hide the words. Give the word search to a sibling or another family member to complete.

PLAY RHYMING GAMES

Shout out a word and see who can come up with as many words that rhyme as possible. Get silly and make up your own words.

HAVE A PARADE

Use toy instruments or find items around the house that can be used as instruments (pots, pans and wooden spoons come to mind). Dress up clothes would work well for the parade. I would probably save this activity for a day when you have had a good nights sleep and don't have a headache!

ADD-A-WORD GAME

Make your own funny story. One person says a word and then the next person adds a word. Keep going to make a funny story. This is great for long car rides!

HAVE A TEA PARTY

This is similar to a picnic but probably appeals more to girls. Although there is no reason why boys can't play tea party.

LEARN TO HULA HOOP

Once you have the hang of it, have a contest. See who can hula hoop for the longest.

PAPER AIRPLANE CONTEST

Make paper airplanes and see whose will fly the farthest. Decorate your plane with stickers, glitter and marker.

MAKE A PIZZA

You can use pita bread to for a quick and easy pizza crust. They make great personal size pizzas. Add whatever toppings you like best. Talk to your kids about kitchen safety!

MAKE A PILLOW CASE DRESS/SUPER HERO CAPE

Find an old pillow case and cut a whole at the top for your child's head to come through. Let your child decorate the dress/cape. Use string/wool to make a belt.

GO TO THE PARK

Explore the neighborhood park. It is great to learn new words and get some exercise. Older kids can play games like "hide and seek" at the park.

LEARN SOME SIGNS

This can be fun for older kids. It can be a secret language as well!

PLANT FLOWERS

Let your child help you plant flowers outside. Or find a small flower pot and plant a flower to keep in the house. Talk to your child what a plant needs to grow and thrive.

WRITE A POEM

This is a great way to practice rhyming words and printing. Mail the poem to a friend or relative!

PRACTICE GYMNASTICS

Set out some blankets and pillows and come up with a gymnastics routine. Somersaults and jumping jacks count too!

BE A TEACHER

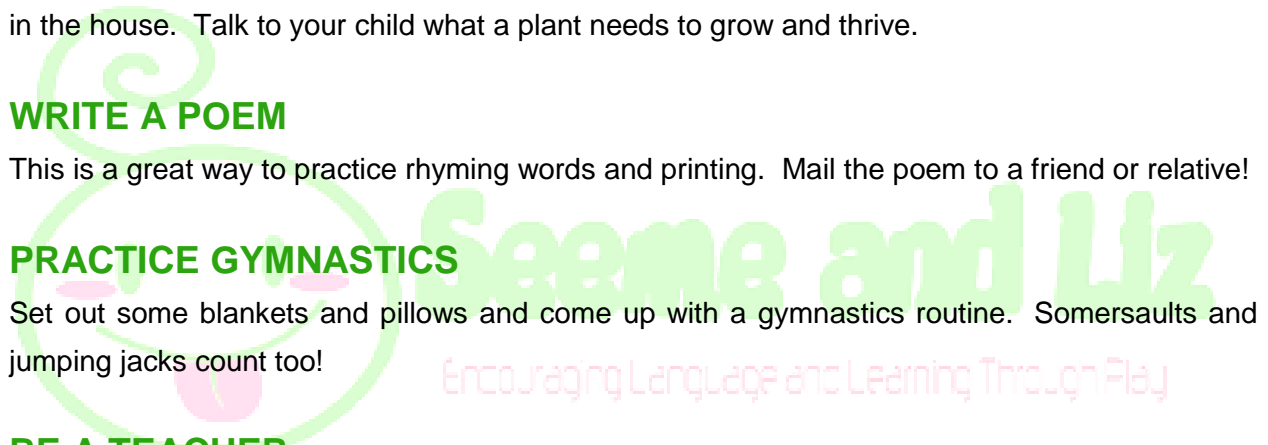
Gather friends, stuffed animals, siblings and pretend you are a teacher. Give the class an activity to do and help those who can't do it on their own. Remember to take attendance!

MAKE A KALEIDOSCOPE

A kaleidoscopes can entertain a young child for quite some time. Make it even more fun by creating your own!

HAVE A SKIPPING CONTEST

See who can skip the most times before tripping on the rope. Do it frontwards and backwards for more of a challenge!



START A STAMP COLLECTION

This is an oldie but it's a good one. Kids love collections. Why not collect stamps. They are getting rarer each day. Stamp collecting is a great way to teach patience as it takes a while to soak the stamp off of the paper and you have to wait for the mail each day to see if there is a new stamp.

MAKE STAINED GLASS

You can do this quite easily with some popsicle sticks as the frame. Mix a few drops of glue with paint or food coloring and "paint" it on to some plastic wrap. Cover that with another piece of plastic wrap and then attach the popsicle sticks to make a frame.

MAKE CARDS

Pre-make some birthday or Christmas cards to have on hand for when you need them.

MAKE SOMETHING OUT OF CLAY

You will need to purchase some [modeling clay](#) for this. It is a great activity for older children who are no longer interested in playdough or want a change.

CLOUD GAZE

This is kind of like star gazing except it can be done during the day. Lay on the grass and look at the clouds. Talk about the funny shapes you see.

BUILD A TIME CAPSULE

Make a time capsule. Put some items into a box, plastic container or resealable bag. Write a letter explaining what each item is that will go into the time capsule. Bury it or hide it away in the house somewhere.

START A ROCK COLLECTION

Find an old cardboard box and decorate it. This box can hold all of the rocks you collect. Turn some of the rocks into pets!

MAKE A BIRD FEEDER

A simple one I was just told about requires an orange cut in half with the contents scooped out. Then poke holes around the top (where it is open). String some yarn/thread through the hole so you can hang it. Fill the orange with birdseed.

HAVE A PRETEND BIRTHDAY PARTY

Wrap some old toys, make a card, make party hats and use play food as the birthday cake. Don't forget to sing "happy birthday". My kids love having birthday parties for their stuffed animals.

HAVE A STARING CONTEST

This is pretty self-explanatory I think.

BUILD A SNOWMAN OR SNOW FORT

Only applicable if there is snow, as you may have guessed!

MAKE FINGER PUPPETS

Cut the fingers off a rubber glove. Add faces, hair, clothes. These can also be added to the puppet show.

MAKE GOOP

It can get messy so make sure to keep the goop in a bag for storage. You may also want to set some rules around where the goop can be played with.

SET UP A MINI GOLF COURSE

You can do this indoors by laying cups on their sides and using them as the holes. Outdoors, you can bury the cups in the ground, leaving just the very top of the cup showing so the ball can roll into the cup.

MAKE A RECYCLED WIND CHIME

Head to the recycle bin and see what you can string together to make a wind chime - Reduce, **Reuse**, Recycle!

MAKE A SENSORY BIN

Fill a plastic bin with rice or dried beans. Then hide little toys in it. Let your child explore with with her hands. See if she can guess what she found before looking at it, using only the sense of touch. You can also use cups to "fill" and "empty".

MAKE A SNOW GLOBE

Fill a jar with water and sprinkles. Add pebbles, beads, foam letter/shapes. You can also add a bit of food coloring if you want to change the color of the water. Make sure the lid is screwed on tight. You can add a bit of glue to the lid to make sure it never opens.

INVENT A CRAZY MEAL

Worm salad sounds good, doesn't it? Think about how you would make something like this, then write the ingredients on an index card for future reference. I know my kids would include gummy worms and lots of fruit in their worm salad. I would add some yummy yogurt dressing!



DO A GOOD DEED

Come up with ideas how you can help someone. This could be as simple as finding a toy to donate or perhaps going through your cabinets and finding a few cans of food you can bring to the local homeless shelter. Talk to your child about others having less than them.

PAPER BAG PUPPETS

These are super easy and fun. And can also be added to the puppet show (number 38). Either cut out eyes, nose and mouth or draw them on with paint or markers. Add ears, feathers, a tail, etc.

WATER BALLOON FIGHT

We go through so many balloons every summer. I find that regular size balloons are more fun and last longer than the small ones that are meant to be water balloons. They don't pop as easily and you can make them small or really big. The bigger you make them the easier it will be for them to pop.

SURVEYS

Come up with a survey. Write down all of the questions (or you can write down the questions your child comes up with if they are not yet writing). Poll friends and family.

MAKE PAINT SWIRL ORNAMENTS

Even if it isn't Christmas, these are fun to make. Plus they can make cute Christmas gifts, so hang on to them if it is July when you are reading this. You will need to get some clear glass ornaments, a few colors of paint and some glue.

Take the top off the ornament, add a few colors of paint and a few drops of glue. Cover the opening of the ornament with a paper towel and then shake and swirl it around. When there are no more clear spots left, turn the ornament upside down (into an egg carton works well) so any excess paint/glue can escape.

OUTDOOR BUBBLE BATH

Fill a small kid's pool with lots and lots of soap and water. Make soap hats and beards. Have a "soap ball" fight!

PLAY CHARADES

This game is a classic. For younger children (who can read), write simple ideas on a piece of paper that they can act out. For example, firefighter, waiter, doctor, erupting volcano, etc.

SIDEWALK CHALK

Get outside and draw. Lay down and trace each other's bodies. Add crazy things to the outlines such as wings or horns or an extra arm.

HOSPITAL/DOCTOR

Take a doll or stuffed animal to the "hospital" or Doctor's office. A toy stroller can be a wheelchair, toilet paper can be used to make a cast. Don't forget to check the patient's temperature.

PLAY HOUSE

Everyone can have a role - mom, dad, brother, sister, baby, family pet. Let your imagination run wild.

MAKE YOUR OWN WRAPPING PAPER

Draw your own designs on paper - the bigger the piece of paper the better. If you don't have any big pieces of paper, don't worry, just tape smaller ones together. Then make a gift that you can wrap with your new paper.

MAKE A PICTURE FRAME

Use popsicle sticks to make a picture frame. Decorate the frame.

That was all 111 ideas, head to the next page for the bonus section!



What Is The Best Toy For Learning?

Click Here To Find Out!

BONUS IDEAS

SWIM IN THE BATHTUB

This is great for younger kids. Let them wear their bathing suit and goggles. Find toys that will sink that they can look for.

PLAY FLASHLIGHT TAG

Turn off all of the lights. Everyone gets a [small flashlight](#) and plays a regular game of tag, in the dark, with flashlights.

HAVE A POTATO SACK RACE

Assuming you don't have potato sacks on hand, you can use pillow cases. Playing this on a carpeted area is best as falls don't hurt as much.

HAVE AN EASTER EGG HUNT

We do this year round at our house. Get some [plastic reusable eggs](#) that open up. I fill them with messages, jokes or pictures of funny things. One egg will have a treat in it such as a small toy or candy. The kids get to hunt around the house for the eggs.

PUT ON A MAGIC SHOW

It is really funny to watch young children try to do magic. Encourage them to keep trying to do new tricks.

ROLL REVERSAL

Choose an amount of time (30 minutes, 1 hour, etc) where you will pretend to be someone else. You can be someone in your family, a friend, or even a pet!

I have saved the best one for last! Head to the next page to find out.

ROCKET BOOSTER PACK

This is fun to make and can be played with many times and in different ways.

You will need two empty water bottles (750ml - 1 liter size), gold spray paint, hot glue gun, clear tape, red and yellow tissue paper and yarn or string. Use the tape to secure the bottles together side by side. Then spray paint them.

Cut 2 pieces of string, each one long enough to fit over your child's shoulders (picture a backpack). Attach each one piece of string to one bottle and the other piece to the other bottle using the hot glue gun.

You are making straps for the booster pack. When worn the bottles should be facing down. Tear pieces of the tissue paper and put it into the the open end of each bottle to look like flames. Your kids can explore new planets with their booster packs!



and Liz
Learning Through Play

I hope you have enjoyed these ideas and that they have helped alleviate some of your child's boredom! Feel free to share this guide with friends and family. All I ask is that you do not make any changes to it.

Happy Playing!

Tanya