

Friday

BOX OF STUFF

Children love to play with boxes, tubes, stones, balls and spoons. They use these items to move, combine, redesign and construct their own play.

Found objects with no specific instructions are good for imaginative play. They encourage children to use their imagination and develop more skills and competencies than they would with ordinary manufactured toys.

Parents can encourage this by providing an open container or box to store any found objects that your child might be interested in, you could even start a collection off with a few of your own.

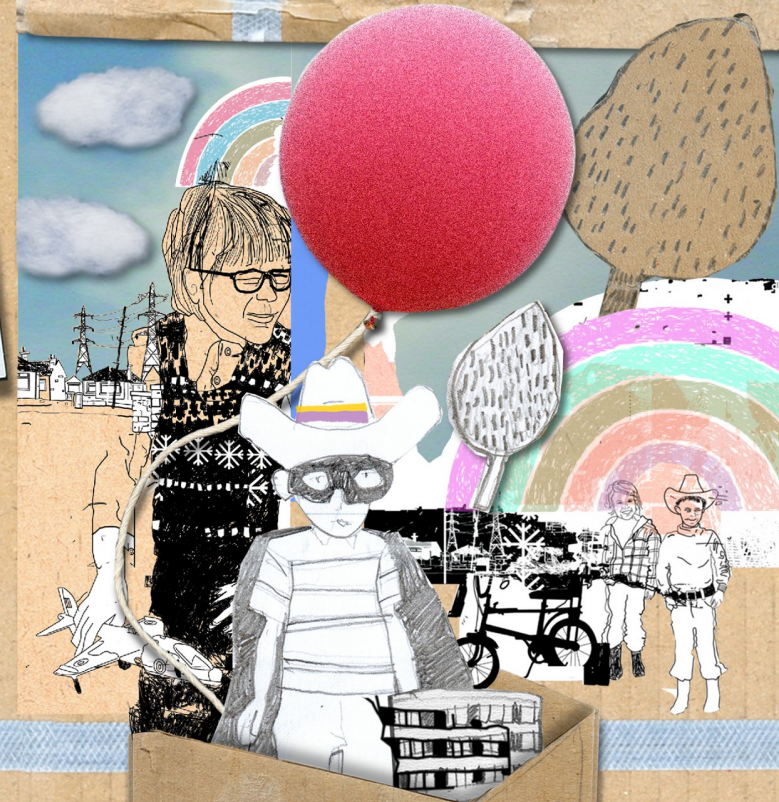


Sunday

SPLASHING

Water is one of the basic elements of children's play and it provides endless opportunities for curiosity, experimentation and imagination.

Water play can take place inside or outside and can simply begin with a child helping you with the washing up. You could add extra elements such as tin foil boats. Outside why not let the children paint a path or wall with water by providing a bucket and large sized brushes. Even if it's raining put wellies and raincoats on and go for a puddle walk. Once everybody is waterproof you can both enjoy the simple fun to be had from splashing in puddles together.



Saturday

MUSIC AND RHYTHM

Children of all ages love to express themselves through music. Music and rhythm are an essential part of any child's life, from the steps they make, to songs heard and sung during the day.



You don't have to be good at music either, the important thing is to show that it is fun and to make it interesting for the child. A song could begin during a walk to the park, using the rhythms of your feet and words that develop from the things you see. Pots and pans from the kitchen make a great set of drums and even clapping games from you own childhood are an important source of music and rhythm.



PLAYBOARD: WWW.PLAYBOARD.ORG



PARENTS ADVICE CENTRE:
WWW.PARENTSADVICECENTRE.ORG



BELFAST CHILDRENS FESTIVAL:
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USEFUL LINKS

make time for play

PLAY IDEAS FOR PARENTS



TURN OVER AND SEE

WHY IS PLAY IMPORTANT?

Play is a child's way of being in the world and it starts from the moment they are born. Through play children have the opportunity to learn about themselves and the world around them.

PLAY IS IMPORTANT FOR PARENTS TOO!

Despite the increasing pressures of modern life, finding time to play with your child is a great opportunity for both of you to benefit from the shared experiences that helps strengthen the bond between parent and child.

MAKE TIME FOR PLAY (EVERYDAY)

Good quality play needn't cost anything except time. Try setting aside 20 minutes each day that are free from distractions such as the phone, where you and your child can be relaxed in each others company.

Why not ask your child to choose a time for this to happen. Play is a child's world so it's important to let them take the lead. Listen to your child and try not to take control of things.

Take time to think about how you used to play as a child, this is a chance to rediscover those simple pleasures over again. Don't feel that you have to be in charge of the play.



Monday

DRESSING UP

Dressing up is a great way for children to pretend, to express feelings and to discover about the world.

As a parent you can encourage your child to dress up by providing lots of props and dressing up clothes such as old hats, scarves, belts, shoes, material which cost nothing and offer more scope for imaginative play than a pre-bought costume.

Have a box or cupboard set aside for this so that the dressing up materials can be easily accessed and your child can dress up when ever they want.



Wednesday

EXPLORING

Set aside some time to go for a walk and instead of your usual route, why not let your child decide the direction and become explorers together.

It's a chance for you both to discover new things about where you live There might be a street that you haven't been down before, or you could discover somewhere that you never knew existed.

Why not create an explorer kit and bring it with you. You could include items such as a magnifying glass, camera, containers for collecting things, a water bottle and even a blanket for sitting on.



Tuesday

NATURAL PLAY

Being outside with your child is a great start to all sorts of play opportunities. Sharing time outside encourages children to appreciate the sights, sounds and smells of the environment around them.



You can support this by encouraging your child to collect natural materials such as leaves, branches or conkers. Why not fill an old tray or container with soil and water for some muddy fun and introduce the objects that you have collected.

Thursday

FORT BUILDING

Building a den or fort has always been popular with children. Being able to design and build a secret hideaway inside or outside can be fun for young and old.

Use blankets, sheets, clothes dryers, old cushions or if you are outside bits of plastic and wood. Encourage play by introducing items such as torches; create atmosphere with music and sound; why not take pictures and dress up? You could 'christen' the den by cooking up a nasty feast (prawn cocktail flavour crisps dipped in chocolate for example!).

