



Activities for whānau at home

One - three year olds

Sensory Glitter Bottles

These bottles provide fun for babies if you make them yourself but are easy to make with young children to use themselves.

To make the bottles you will need:

- A clean, empty plastic water bottle with label removed
- Superglue or a glue gun
- Water
- Glitter
- Food colouring
- A funnel



This sparkly sensory bottle is easy to make. It provides some visual calm for your child when they shake it or turns it

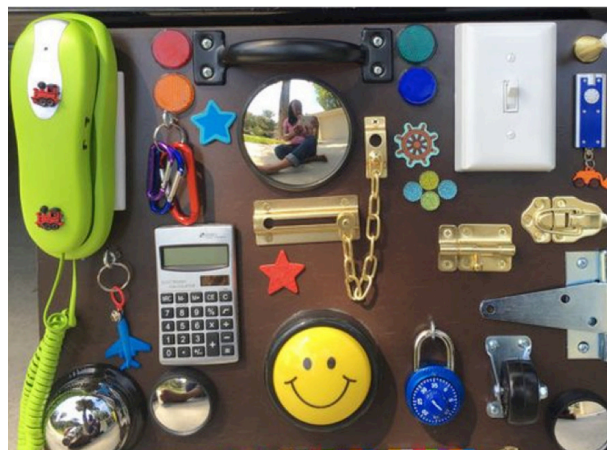
around in their hands. Plus, it can be tailored to your child's interests to make it more appealing.

For instance, if your child loves the ocean, you can use blue food colouring, blue glitter and confetti shaped like fish.

Add water until it's about three-quarters full. Next, add a few drops of food colouring and sprinkle in some glitter. Put the lid on the water bottle and shake to mix the ingredients.

Once you're satisfied with how it looks, fill the bottle to the top with water. Put the lid back on and secure it with superglue or hot glue.

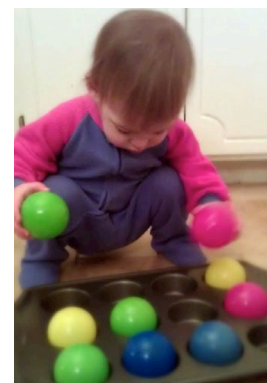
Activity boards



With a collection of old items from the landfill shop, second hand stores, hardware stores or bits and pieces from the shed these types of boards can give hours of fun and entertainment.

Muffin tin sorting

Using small balls or round shapes little ones can spend time placing them in the different muffin holes.



Balloon Badminton



What you will need:

- Paper plate
- Popsicle stick (or very strong cardboard)
- Crayons (optional)
- Balloons
- Glue gun and/or Stapler

Get your little one to design or colour in the paper plate which will become your paddle. Glue/staple the popsicle stick / cardboard to the plate to become a handle.

Blow up balloon/s and start the game. Each child can have their own paddle and balloon and can try and hit the balloon up in the air and keep it off the ground. Older children can hit the balloon to each other.

As children bat at a balloon they develop their hand eye coordination and channel their energy in a purposeful way. If the balloon breaks it is essential the adult gathers up the broken pieces to avoid a choking risk. A safe distance between players needs to be maintained.

Soft Toy Picnic

You will need:

- Teddies, dolls
- A rug
- Picnic plates and cups [or a child tea set]
- Play food or healthy snacks [soft fruit, small sandwiches]

Imaginary play helps children relax and be creative. They may draw on past experiences and memories to inform the play.

The adult may set up play resources in the living room and help get the play started.



Iced Treasures

What could be better fun than freezing small toys in a large plastic container of water coloured with food colouring. When set turn the ice block out of the container and take it outside with some children's toys. Watch them chip away to get their treasures free.



Bubble wrap runway



This bubble wrap runway activity is so easy to do at home and guaranteed hours of fun for toddlers and pre-school kids! They'll love running, crawling, sliding and skidding up and down their own runway.

All you need is a roll or a good length of bubble

wrap and some masking tape to help stick it to the floor. Hallways are a great place to have the runway. However, you can adapt the length of the runway to suit the size of the rooms in your house.

Kids can also roll their cars and trucks up and down the bubble wrap runway, popping bubbles as they go.

Craft Magazine Collage

You will need:

- Magazines
- Paper
- A glue stick
- Scissors for the adult

This is a shared activity and may promote looking, pointing and language. The adult may look through a magazine with the toddler. If the child shows interest in a picture the adult may cut it out and help the toddler stick it onto a sheet of paper or in a booklet. This may be displayed on the fridge or in their room.

Hide and Seek

Ask your child to hide their eyes while you hide a toy. Next, ask your child to hide the toy while you cover your eyes and then pretend to hunt for it

Encourage older toddlers to hide under their blanket, behind the curtain or under a table while you count and then look for and then find them

Choose a spot as a 'home base' where the seeker stands and counts while two or more children/adults hide. The seeker then goes and finds everyone who is hiding

Ribbons in a jar



Find a suitable clean, empty plastic bottle that is easy for children to manipulate the ribbons in and out of. Find a selection of different coloured, textured, sized and shaped ribbons.

They may want to just take them out. Try starting with the ribbons inside to pull

them out one at a time, and then push them back in!

Older children can also try to find the ribbon that is the longest. And maybe another activity could be to line them up from shortest to longest, or to see if you could find two of the same size.

Homemade Balance Beams



This would be a great activity for the back garden or if there was a larger space safe inside.

Find some planks of wood or use ribbon, tape or wool to mark a line and get the children to walk along holding your hand trying to balance. As they progress they may want to do it without holding hands or they might like to design the course themselves.

Matching activities



These memory activities can be sewn or made on card. Great fun for all the whānau and lots of great learning takes place too.

Playing with cardboard boxes

Playing with cardboard boxes: why it's good for children

A big empty box is a great starting point for creative and imaginative play. Your child can decide how to change the box into something they can use for pretend play, like a castle, shop, cave and so on. Then they can use their imagination and problem-solving skills to turn their ideas into reality.

Cardboard boxes can also encourage physical play. Often the first thing your child wants to do with a cardboard box is to climb into it – and perhaps jump out to surprise you!

What you need for playing with cardboard boxes

Boxes of any size are fun to play with and will get your child's imagination working. If you can find a really big cardboard box, your child can fit inside it and create something amazing. You might be able to get cardboard boxes from local supermarkets and other shops.

If you want your child to be able to change or decorate the box, some of these might be useful:

- scissors or a craft knife (adult use only)
- tape and glue
- paints, marker pens or thick crayons.

Depending on how your child wants to use the box, he could also use things like:

- colourful paper, foil, cellophane or fabric to decorate the box
- paper plates to use as the wheels of a car, bus, truck or train
- puppets and a bit of fabric for a curtain to make a puppet theatre.

How to play with cardboard boxes

There's no 'right' way to play with a cardboard box, so let your child decide what they want to do and follow their lead. You could start by just talking about the box together. For example, ask, 'How big is it? Can you fit inside?' or 'What does it remind you of? A house? A car?'

If your child needs suggestions to get started, you could try these ideas:

- Make a house. Cut open a window and a door and let your child add cushions and other 'furniture'. They could bring in some toys for a tea party.
- Make a plane or a car. Use paper plates for wheels and steering wheels. Cut off the box flaps and stick them back on as the wings and tail of a plane. Let your child draw or paste markings and racing stripes.
- Make a robot costume. Cut out a head hole and armholes for your child and let them decorate the box with foil and coloured markers.
- Make a puppet theatre. Cut a doorway and a window on opposite sides of the box. Hang a curtain over the window and let your child put on a show for the family from inside the box.
- Decorate the box. Cut holes for your child to stick colourful cellophane over. Let them draw or paint on

it and stick paper or scraps of fabric of different textures inside and outside for a sensory experience.

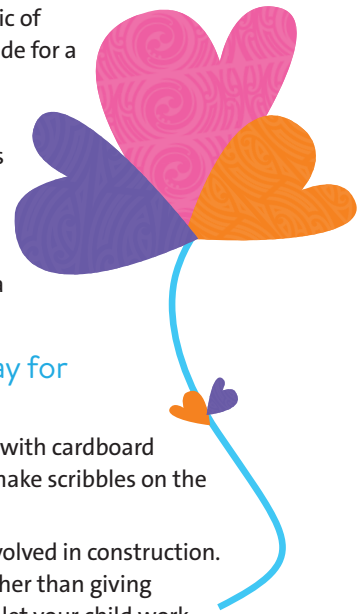
- Use the box to encourage active play. For example, turn it sideways to make a tunnel. Or your child could be a Jack-in-the-Box – crouching low inside the box and then jumping up like they are on a spring.

Adapting cardboard box play for children of different ages

Let your younger child take the lead with cardboard boxes. Let him climb in and out, or make scribbles on the box with markers.

Encourage your older child to get involved in construction. But help them to solve problems rather than giving them all the solutions. For example, let your child work out whether glue or sticky tape works best, or which way up the box should be for a puppet show.

Below are some ideas that you and your child/ren might like to try out...



Sand play



Some whānau will be lucky enough to have their own sand pit at home but if you don't you can still use it on a smaller scale. Sand play is great for the senses and a wonderful way for children to play imaginatively. With an empty tub and a small amount of sand you can create hours of fun for littlies. Add toy animals, cars, sticks, shells or kitchen items (funnels, sieves, cups, bowls and spoons) and there will be hours of fun to be had.

Obstacle Course



For inside or outside play. Inside use pillow/ cushions (to go over), chairs (to go under / through),
For outside use rope, garden equipment, bikes / ride-ons, ladders, hoops etc.

Lacing activities



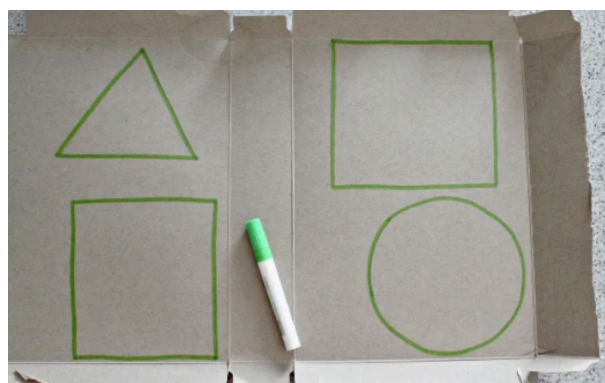
This is a great activity using empty cereal containers. All you need are empty containers and a few shoes laces.

Flatten cereal boxes and open to the blank, cardboard side.

Use a marker to draw or trace shapes for your lacing cards.

Cut shapes out of the cardboard and punch holes around the perimeter.

Help your child lace the shoe laces through each hole until they've completed the shape. Or you could practice pulling the thread across the shapes and connecting dots on the opposite sides.



Safety memo for this age and stage

Adult supervision is the key to preventing injuries.

BEING THERE WHERE YOU CAN SEE AND HEAR YOUR CHILDREN AND ARE ABLE TO HELP THEM QUICKLY IS 'ACTIVELY SUPERVISING' THEM.

- Toddlers can control their movements but have limited communication skills. They often suffer injuries due to their increased curiosity, activeness and interest in exploring their surroundings.
- Falls: look at placement of furniture; do not place it in front of windows. Ensure stairs have some sort of barrier placed at the top or bottom.
- Suffocation or choking: grate, cook, finely chop or mash your toddlers food and make sure they sit while they eat, sit with them. Small toys, smaller than a pingpong ball are choking hazards.
- Poisoning: Toddlers will still put things in their mouths as they explore and learn what is safe. To reduce the risk keep all poisons including medication out of reach and out of sight.
- Burns: Hot water or drinks are commonly spilled, toddlers are at higher risk of burns with their thin skin.
- Put hot drinks or food in the centre of the table and try not to use a tablecloth or place mats as small children can pull these off the table.
- **The purple section Safety in your Plunket Thriving under Five has details on many of the most common injury prevention topics.**

Acknowledgements

This list of activities has been put together using a number of sources. We would like to acknowledge the following sites that we have used as part of this list.

Flo.health
Todaysparent.com
Babyschooling.com
Under5s.co.nz
Momjunction.com
Lessons4learners.com
Imagination Tree
Scholastic.com
Chelsea.co.nz
Livewellplaytogether.com
Raisingchildren.net.au
SLFP.org.nz
Jugglingwithkids.com
Learning4kids.net
Handsonaswegrow.com
Goodtoknow.co.uk
Mykidstime.com
Pinterest