

Learning *at Home*

10 Ideas From Your Kitchen Cupboards

There are so many ways to spark children's interest and learning. With these unique, open-ended activities using household materials, children (and adults) can explore concepts of science, math, art, language and so much more. Note that these suggestions will give you a place to start and can lead in many directions based on children's interests. For additional Learning At Home ideas, visit our [Family Resource page](#).

- ▶ Get out the pots and pans, add spoons, and be ready to make some music! Experiment with different utensils against metal bowls or pots. What sounds do the wooden utensils make versus plastic or metal?
- ▶ Create your own sensory table with a bin. See below to find out how!
- ▶ Instead of a paintbrush, experiment with new painting tools like sponges, scrubbers, straws, and potato mashers. You can even use foods such as apples or potatoes for stamping.
- ▶ Turn any colander or wide-weave basket (like a laundry basket) into a loom. Tie the ribbon at one end and go!
- ▶ Use toothpicks, tongs, or chopsticks to play a fine-motor pick-up game.
- ▶ Everything kid-sized is more fun! So create a scrubbing station with one bin filled with soap and water and another with just water for rinsing. Add plastic gloves and an apron and you are ready for washing toys, dolls, and dishes!
- ▶ Freeze toy figures – people, animals, beads, etc. – in a bowl or freezer bag filled with water. Once frozen, become an archeologist by chipping away at the ice to get to the surprise in the middle.
- ▶ Create a kitchen scavenger hunt: Find two round things, three red things, one thing bigger than your shoe, etc.
- ▶ Fill a bowl with soap and water and experiment with making your own bubble wand. Use clothes hangers, floral wire, or jewelry wire to bend your wand into shape.
- ▶ Mix, measure, and pour when letting children help in the kitchen. Check out our [Family Resource page](#) for a guide on food prep tasks for children as well as kid-friendly recipes.

How to Make a Sensory Bin

Add any of these materials to your homemade sensory bin for some creative (and maybe a little messy) fun!

- ▶ Choose a leak-free container for your bin that is not too deep. Under-the-bed storage bins work well for this and can easily be put away when play is finished.
- ▶ Sand and water are great filler options to stimulate the senses and allow children to explore concepts such as measurement, volume, and changing properties.
- ▶ Add tools from your kitchen for children to explore and help make things happen: measuring cups, bowls, spoons, sponges, colanders, whisks...the list could go on and on!
- ▶ Add a little something extra every once in a while to change how the children play. Add soap and a whisk to water for them to stir up bubbles. Put in a few drops of watercolor paint to change the water's look. Put a little water into the sand to let children mold it into shapes. Look for types of sands that might be a different texture or color. Grainier sands can be ground down with a mortar and pestle.
- ▶ Worried about the mess? Lay a plastic tablecloth underneath your bin to help catch any of the overflow. Keep towels or a small dustpan and brush on hand for children to clean up messes on their own.
- ▶ Help keep germs at bay by having children wash hands before AND after playing in sensory bins. Filler materials should be alternated routinely and the bin clean and sanitized.