

## INDOOR ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

The unprecedented situation we find ourselves in with schools closed and self isolation for many is a challenging and tough task for any parent.

Children will react to being sick or housebound in different ways: some will become fidgety, restless and active; others may be whiny, tearful, needy and extra emotional - anxious even, some may be calmer than normal, or just generally out of sorts. Many who aren't even ill but housebound will want to be entertained as they don't know what to do with themselves.

As parents, we may also be trying to juggle working from home but hopefully these activities may help you fill some breaks and lunch times once you've covered off reading books, playing Lego, and watching a movie.

- **Positioning:** Depending on whether your child is just housebound or actually sick with Coronavirus (or anything else for that matter), you may need to plan activities that can be done lying down in bed or in a sitting position that do not require a table. Some examples include: playing with magnetic letters or shapes on a metal cookie sheet, creating paper dolls, sewing cards, or using a laptop computer.
- **Make a cosy corner, den or tent:** A child might need to be calm or rest but that does not necessarily mean staying in bed. A child who has been home for a while needs different environments. Additional spaces can be created in any room of your home with pillows, blankets, or sleeping bags. It's a great base to then start some creative activities, read, make up stories or listen to music.
- **Location:** Break up the monotony by spending time in different rooms - move from your room to theirs and try to think of different activities in each. In your room could you fill a shoe box with 'treasures' getting them to go through each interesting item and reveal the story behind the object; In their room could you line up their toys by height, name them, create a wedding ceremony with them?
- **Cooking:** Can you cook together in the kitchen, get them to peel veggies to make a hearty soup or break up spaghetti for a noodle soup, peel and blend fruit for a smoothie, bake a cake, or make fruit juice ice pops (especially useful if they have a temperature). Make sure what you are preparing fits your doctor's guidelines for what to eat with whatever illness they have and obviously make hand washing a part of the food preparation.
- **Bath time:** Have they been sweating or sick - can they take a bubble bath (if suitable & safe for them to do so) or can you create a foot spa in a bucket and give them a 'pedicure'?
- **Boxes of Fun:** For children at the younger end, a cardboard box can provide a host of creative opportunities. If you happen to have a big box, they are great to draw houses on or paint, or medium-sized boxes can be made into dolls' houses, while multiple smaller boxes make great robots or box-dogs that can take hours to create.
- **Event Planning:** Is there some event coming up that you can create crafts for - Easter, Christmas, Mother's Day, Father's Day - or a dress up day looming on the horizon that you can prepare a costume for. It could even lead to a sort through of the dressing up box - never a bad thing in most homes.
- **Photo Albums:** Most children love looking at old photos of themselves and family. It's fun just sharing memories but they can also get involved sorting the photos or putting them into hard copy or digital albums.

- **Messy Play:** Depending on how relaxed you are about mess, consider making your own slime or playdough - adding colours, scent, glitter and other tactile bits you can conjure up, or just mixing cornflour with water and colouring will keep most younger kids occupied for hours (on a tray with objects to drive through/pile on/cover).
- **Mood or theme boards:** Go through magazines together (sports, cars, food, etc). Cut out photos on a subject they're interested in and glue them on a board or large piece of card/paper.
- **Technology:** It's an easy go-to, but use listening to podcasts, audio books, or music can be used to broaden their horizons. Find some educational games that are fun or record yourselves singing or telling stories.
- **Get Outdoors:** OK we know this is indoor activities, but depending on your child's situation, and if the country is in lockdown, a short burst outside could be an option for a change of scene.

Don't forget, when your child is ill, their attention span is typically shorter than usual so it's best to plan activities that can be easily interrupted and returned to at another time. This also makes it possible for children to drift off for those all-important recovery naps - when you might choose to have a moment of shut-eye too.