

## *Special Needs Society*

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# Free or Low Cost Activities for Families to Do at Home

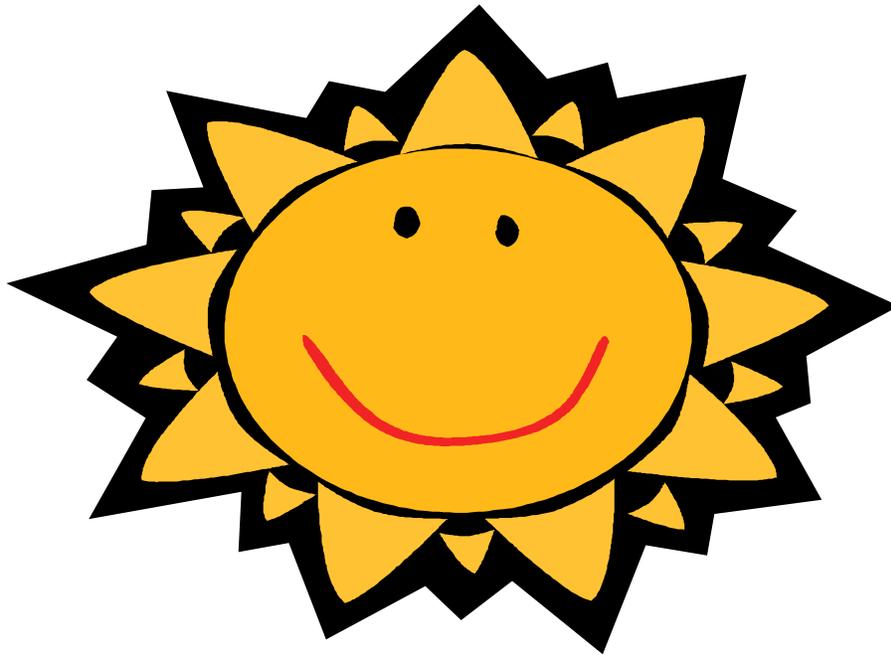




It's Summer! Keeping your child active and entertained will help make the summer fun for all. There are many free or low cost activities and things to do, this booklet lists a few.

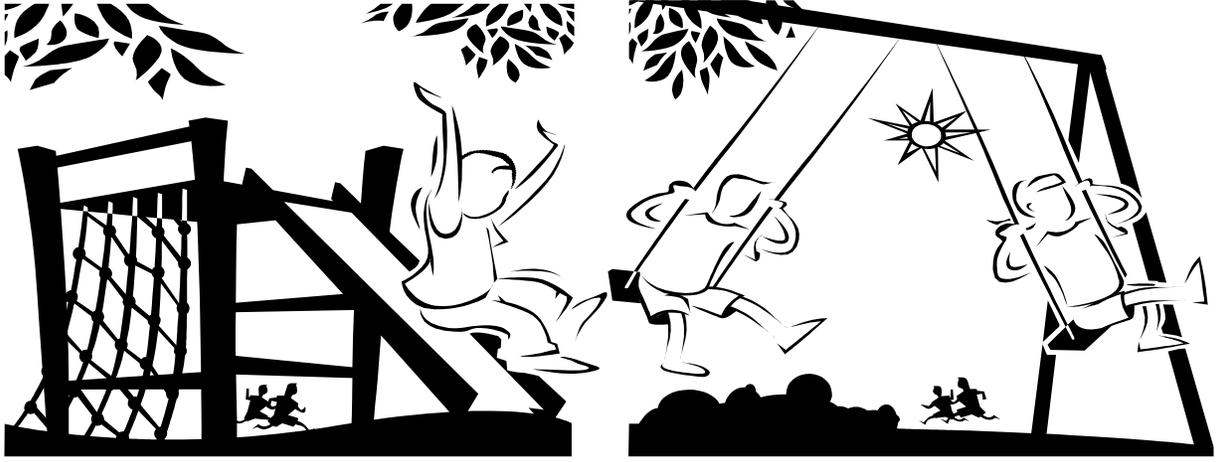
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# Outdoor Activities

**1. Go to park or playground.** Kids love to run, climb, and play with other children. For added fun pack a picnic lunch!



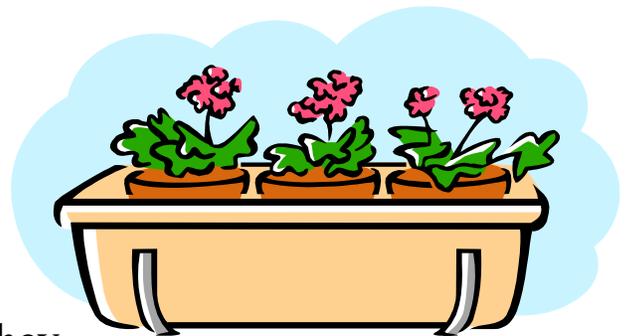
**2. Play in the sprinkler** in back yard on hot summer days.

**3. Visit a pet store;** be sure to let your child know you are just going to look at animals.

**4. Splash in puddles.** After a summer rain, put on rubber boots and splash pants and go for a puddle walk, splashing in puddles as you go.

**5. Go to yard/garage sales or the farmers market with you child.** Give them a small amount of money to buy themselves something. You could also go to the dollar store. Your child will enjoy looking at all the items and will be sure to find a treasure of their own.

**6. Plant some flowers in a container;** your child can help take care of it through out the summer!



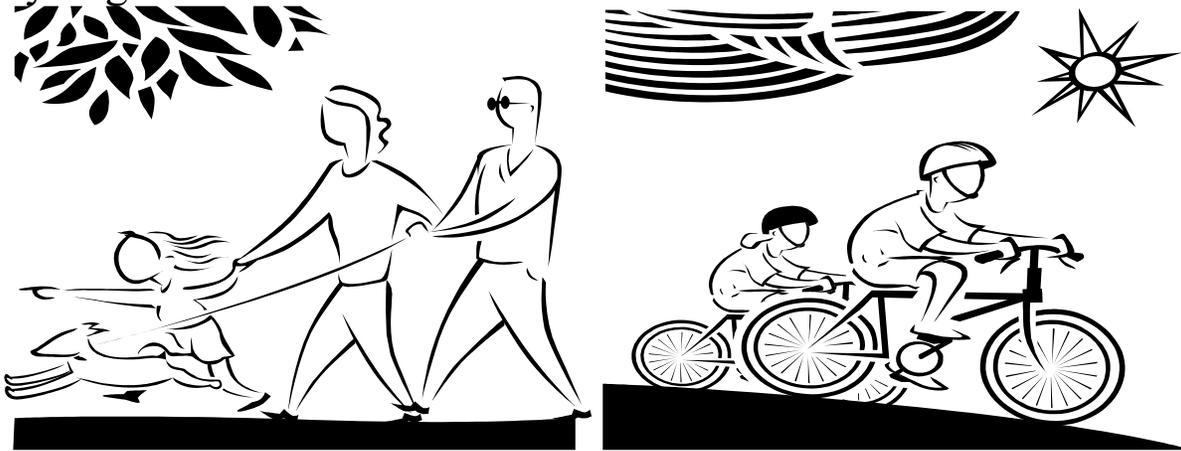
**7. Visit local zoo, museums or local attraction.** Contact these facilities and see if they have any discounts or specials.

**8. Play soccer** in your yard or at local park.

**9. Go on a bug hunt**, kids will loves to go find bugs in the yard. You can even purchase a bug container, bug tweezers, a butterfly net, and a magnifying glass from the dollar store. Be sure to teach your kids not to squish the bugs and to not touch bees or wasps. If you put any bugs in your container, remember to release them back to the wild.



**10. Go for a hike, walk, or bike ride.** Find local trails and parks to walk through. Take water along and you could also pack a picnic lunch to enjoy. Great way to get active.



**11. Sidewalk chalk.** In a safe location let child draw pictures or use chalk to create a hopscotch game.

**12. Water games.** On a hot summer day let child run through sprinkle, wade in a kiddie pool, play with a bucket of water and plastic cups, or even let them play with the hose.

**13. Bubbles.** Everyone loves bubbles. Buy at dollar store or make your own solution ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of liquid dish soap, 2 cups of water, and 2 teaspoons of sugar). Pour solution into a shallow container and use household things to try and make bubbles, (string, rubber bands, spaghetti strainer, straws, slotted spoons, or anything else you can think of).

**14. Bubble art.** Add a few drops of food colouring to bubble solution and blow bubbles onto white paper. Create amazing artwork!



**15. Build a rock garden.** Kids loves rocks, so let them collect various rocks and arrange them in a garden. For added fun, they could paint the rocks!

**16. Go swimming.** Go to local swimming pool or to a lake. See if your local community park has a “Spray Park”. Be safe in the water.

**17. Set up a net in yard.** Set up a badminton net or tennis net, or create one from clothesline and a sheet. Use a blow up beach ball to play volleyball or purchase a badminton set.



# Indoor Activities

**1. Visit your local library.** Contact your library as many offer free or low cost story readings, craft projects and classes. May need to purchase an annual library pass.

**2. Go bowling.** Contact local bowling lanes to see if they have a discount day.

**3. Craft at local craft store.** Contact your local “Michael’s Craft Store”, ask about any craft workshops they may have and costs invoved.

**4. Play board games.** Always good rainy day activity.

**5. Read books** with your child or make up stories with your child.

**6. Color pictures or paint.** Drawing pictures of the weather, animals, places your child would like to go, or other interest your child has.



**7. Crafts.** Purchase a bunch of craft supplies from dollar store or other stores, (glue, scissors, pom poms, contruction paper, sand, stickers, crayons, paint, paint brushes, markers, yarn, buttons, feathers, sponges, foam sheets and shapes, ribbon, glitter, fabric, chalk, sand, sea shells, pasta noodles, and what ever you see that you think would be fun). You could also use other things found in your home (pasta noodles, paper, yarn, recyclable containers, Q-tips). Go on a nature walk and collect leaves, small sticks, rocks, pinecones, etc. Let your child use their imagination to create.

**8. Indoor camping/forts.** Throw a sheet over kitchen table or crate fort from other furniture in home. Pretend there is a campfire and sing campfire songs, pretend to roast hotdogs and marshmallows. You could make smores in the microwave; all you need is graham wafer crackers, marshmallows and chocolate chips.

**9. Make a puzzle.** You can buy puzzles to make or create your own. To make your own draw a picture or cut out a picture from a magazine, cut it up into pieces then put it back together.

**10. Dance.** Put on some dance music and just dance, be silly and have fun. Great activity for rainy days!



**11. Painting to music.** Set up a painting area, easel or on table. Play different types of music (fast, slow, classical, rock, dance, etc.). Ask your child how the music makes them feel and how their painting expresses that feeling.

**12. Play dough or clay.** Make play dough and mould and create. Let your child use spoons, plastic knife, rolling pins, and any other child safe tools to mould and shape the play dough. Teach your kid how to roll balls, “snakes, cut the play dough, etc.

**13. Silly putty or slime.** Take a break from play dough or clay, and play with silly putty or slime. Your child will enjoy the change.

**14. Rhyming.** Play rhyming games, sing rhyming songs, or read and teach your child nursery rhymes or poems. You can say a word and have your child say a word that rhymes with it, or as many words as they can think of. Rhyming is a game that can be played anytime, anywhere!

## Cooking with Your Child

**If your child does not like to eat a variety of foods, engage them in food preparation for themselves and other family members. The average child needs over 50 exposures to new foods to accept them. Children with special needs require more exposure periods.**

Start with easy recipes or let your child put the finishing touches on some meals (for example spreading jam on toast or adding toppings to pizza). Let your child help with basic steps of recipes, measuring, adding, pouring, spreading, sprinkling, squeezing and mixing ingredients. Be sure to teach your child about kitchen safety and nutrition. Keep children away from hot surfaces, knives, and other dangerous kitchen tools.

Be prepared so you do not have to leave child unattended while you go to grab something you forgot.

As an added activity you could even prepare a shopping list from a recipe with your child and go to the store to buy those items needed for the recipe.



Your child will be proud of the food they make!

Here are few ideas to get you started:

- 1. Make fruit Popsicles.** You can purchase plastic popsicle moulds from store or use paper cups and popsicle sticks. Use your child's favourite fruit juice or yoghurt, fill the mould or cups, place in freezer for an hour or till the juice starts to freeze then place sticks in centre of mould or cups and place back in the freezer to freeze completely. Enjoy!
- 2. 5 minute make your own ice cream.** In a medium zip loc bag out in a cup of milk and a teaspoon of vanilla, seal bag. In a large zip loc bag put in a 1/3 cup of salt and fill bag  $\frac{3}{4}$  with ice cubes. Place the medium bag in the large bag, seal and shake for 5 minutes. Then open and enjoy ice cream.

**3. Plan a family pizza night.** Everyone must help with preparing the pizza.

Making a pizza is a great way to get a child involved in making a meal. You can make your own crust or buy store bought crusts. Let kids spread pizza sauce on the crust, and then let them add toppings (pepperoni, cooked diced chicken, cooked ground beef, crumbled bacon, diced tomatoes, pineapples, onions, peppers, shredded cheese, ham slices, or any other great topping you can think of! You can even add toppings to halved toasted English muffins.



**4. Sandwiches.** Let your child create a sandwich with ingredients that you give them. Provide them with bread (try different kinds, whole wheat, white, raisin, rye, etc). You can create many different sandwiches; let them have peanut butter and raisins, diced fruit, chopped nuts, coconut or chocolate chips to sprinkle on, or try a more traditional sandwich and give them mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, relish, sliced cheese, slices of tomatoes, lettuce, spinach, bacon, ham, chicken or other sandwich meat. Get creative and have fun with your child.

**5. Cookies.** Make your child's favourite cookies with them.



**Remember cooking is a creative and fun activity! Enjoy!**

# Homemade Play Dough Play Ideas

\* Food Colouring may stain clothes, hands or other things and surfaces it comes in to contact with.

## **Things to do with play dough:**

**Make an impression:** With a rolling pin, help your child roll out a handful of play dough. When the dough is smooth and flat, your child can press small objects with different shapes and textures (fork, buttons, dried pasta, seashells, toy cars and trucks) into the dough to make imprints and create an interesting pattern. Poke a hole in the dough near the edge, then allow it to dry and paint it. Tie a ribbon through the hole and hang it up.

**Roll it:** Show your child how to make a long dough "snake" by using the flat of his hand to roll a lump of play dough back and forth on a flat surface. When your child has made a few, help your child coil them into plates or bowls. When they're dry, paint them and give them as gifts! You can also use long rolled pieces to make letters, numbers and shapes.



**Shape it:** Roll out the dough to about a quarter-inch thick. Then have your child pick their favourite cookie cutters and show them how to lean on them with both hands to cut out shapes. Next, help your child use a spatula to lift the cut-outs onto a piece of cardboard or a tray to dry. When the cut-outs are fully hardened, glue blank magnets to the backs and decorate the refrigerator.

**Snip and cut:** Learning to use scissors can be a challenge for many kids because it's difficult for them to hold and cut floppy paper. Try cutting play dough! Roll out half-inch thick sheets, pass out the child-safe scissors, and watch your child become a super snipper. Play dough is a good learning material because its rigidity provides resistance so your child can feel what he's doing with the scissors.

**Create and Talk:** Try to mould animals, snowmen, people, cakes, pizza or other creatures from the play dough. Talk with child about how play dough feels smells and what they are doing with the play dough, rolling, squishing, etc.

## Homemade Play Dough Recipes

### 1. Cooked Play Dough

2 cups of white flour  
2 tablespoons of cooking oil  
1 teaspoon cream of tartar  
2 cups of water  
1 cup of salt  
Couple drops of food colouring

Put water in medium or large pot; add a couple drops of food colouring. Add the rest of the ingredients, stir and mix well.

Cook slowly on medium to high heat, stirring constantly till mixture thickens. Cool and then play! Store in a plastic container in the fridge.



### 2. Gingerbread Play Dough

1 cup of white flour  
½ cup of salt  
2 teaspoons of cream of tartar  
1 cup water  
1 teaspoon oil  
Spices: Cinnamon, Allspice, Ginger, and Nutmeg

Mix all dry ingredients together in large pot; add small amounts of spices until desired scent is reached. Mix water and oil in a separate bowl. Add liquid to dry ingredients in large pot, mix well. Cook for two to three minutes on medium high heat, till mixture thickens to dough. Cool and enjoy!

### **3. Microwave Play Dough**

1 cup water  
1 cup flour  
2 teaspoons of cream of tartar  
1 tablespoon of cooking oil  
½ cup of salt  
Few drops of food colouring

Mix all ingredients, except food colouring, in a microwave safe bowl. Microwave for about one minute, and then stir. Microwave for 30 more seconds, and stir again. Repeat heating 30 seconds at a time and stirring until mixture becomes dough. Knead the play dough, when cool enough to touch. Add a few drops of food colouring and mix in. Enjoy!

### **4. Kool Aid Play Dough**

1 cup of water  
3 teaspoons of Cream of Tartar  
1 cup of flour  
1 package of Kool-aid mix  
1 tablespoon of cooking oil  
½ cup of sugar

Mix all the dry ingredients together in large pot. Add the oil and water. Stir over medium heat until dough forms. Remove from heat, cool and enjoy!

## **5. Jello Play Dough**

1 cup of flour

½ cup of salt

2 tablespoons of cream of tartar

2 tablespoons of vegetable oil

1 cup of warm water

3oz of jello box mix or 4 servings size box

Mix all ingredients in large pot. Stir over medium heat until thickens. Remove from heat; stir until cool enough to touch. Knead cool dough, Enjoy!

## **6. Liquid Starch Silly Putty Recipe**

2 cups of white glue

1 cup of liquid starch

Food Colouring

Mix the white glue and liquid starch in a bowl, add a few drops of food colouring, stir well. If mixture is too sticky, add a little more liquid starch. If the mixture is not sticking together, add a little more glue. Once silly putty is mixed have fun, pulling, twisting, moulding and even cutting with child safe scissors! Store in an airtight container in fridge.

## **7. Cornstarch Slime Recipe (Goo)**

1 16oz/454g box of cornstarch

1 ½ cups of water

Food colouring

Empty cornstarch into a bowl, add water, and a few drops of food colouring, and mix with spoon or hands. Slime will harden when you squeeze it, but will flow like a liquid when poured!

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