



**FUN  
THINGS  
TO DO  
BEFORE  
YOU  
ARE** **5**

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# Exploring paint with hands and feet

## RECIPE

- Paint
- Paper

Allowing your child to paint with their hands and feet offers a fantastic tactile experience and is also lots of fun.

It helps a child's intellectual development.

The mixing of colours teaches your child about their colours and how to create new colours.

Put some paint on to a tray or plate and support your child to explore with their hands or their feet.

Provide paper for making marks with the paint and mixing colours together.

**What happens when you mix the colours?**  
**How does it feel on your toes?**



# Pond dipping

## RECIPE

- Net
- Tray or bucket
- Wellies

Set off on an expedition to a local pond and you'll be amazed at the amount of different things you'll find sharing a home in the water. Begin by approaching the water quietly and move slowly. This will give you the best chance to see the wildlife, not only in the water, but also by the water's edge.

Once you're at the water's edge, look into the water first. This will give you a moment to see what it is you may catch, how it moves and where it hides! An adult should fill the tray with pond water. When you are safely set up and ready, slowly lower your net into the water.

To keep the water flowing through the net, move it gently in a figure of eight motion.

After a few loops gently lift it out, and place inside out in the water in your tray.

The catch is then ready to be observed.

**How many different creatures can you find?**

Look closely at the surface of the water, what can you see?





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# Create a house for an animal

## RECIPE

- Small sticks
- Grass
- Stones
- Moss
- Leaves

Go on a walk or look for resources around the garden and create a home for a woodland animal. Collect logs and sticks to build a structure for your animal home. Be creative with a range of natural resources to use for the roof, garden etc. Have a think about what your animal would need inside.

**How big is the animal that you think will visit?**

**Could you find some food to put inside?**

**E.g Some nuts for a Squirrel.**





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# Grow something from seed

## RECIPE

- Yogurt pot or cardboard tube
- Soil
- Seeds
- Water

Young children's curiosity and excitement over anything new makes them naturals for gardening. Growing plant seeds with children teaches them how nature works, responsibility in caring for something, and an interest of the world around them.

Begin by choosing some seeds, these could be faster growing plants or even vegetables. Place some soil into a small container (this could be an old yogurt pot) and place a seed a third of the way down from the top of the pot. Cover the seed over by filling the rest of the pot up with soil and then water.

Make sure the pots are in a sunny area or even kept on a window sill and wait for the excitement of seeing the first bit of green peep through the soil.

**How tall do you think your plant will grow?**

**Will your plant grow any flowers or vegetables or even both?**



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# Explore Autumn Leaves

## RECIPE

- Open space with trees
- Rake or broom

One of the best things about Autumn are all the amazing leaves of different sizes, shapes, and textures. As the temperature outside changes the colours of the leaves become vibrant and the texture is crunchy and crisp. Find an open space with plenty of trees and enjoy raking, sweeping, and collecting into large piles. Enjoy listening to the sound they make as you walk and jump through the leaves. Throw them into the sky and observe the colours shining through the skeleton leaves.

**How many different types of leaves can you find?**

**Are all the leaves the same colour?**

**How do the trees  
look different  
from the  
Summer time?**



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# Bird Bedding

## RECIPE

- **Wool cut into little 10cm pieces max**
- **Dog hair**
- **Moss**
- **Dry grass**
- **Small twigs**
- **Dry leaves**
- **Whisks or suet cages**

Simply push a selection of items through the whisk 'bars' until full and hang in a tree or near a hedgerow.

We've used a large S hook bird feeder hangers, as these protect and do not damage the bark on the trees.

When making nests, birds look for nesting materials that will create a snugly warm homes to lay their eggs and keeping their chicks warm once hatched. This activity can support the birds in your garden by providing them some nesting materials. You can also be attracting birds into your garden too.

**How do birds move?**

**Why do birds make nests?**





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# Seed bombs

## RECIPE

- **Soil, top soil works best**
- **Seeds of your choice**
- **Water**
- **Spoons and containers**
- **Egg cartons or ice cream cone**

*Mix some water with the soil to create a sticky muddy consistency. Mix in a tea spoon of seeds and stir into the muddy mixture.*

*Using your hands, squeeze and mould the seed mixture into balls shapes. Place in an egg carton and allow to dry.*

*Once dried they can be thrown and scattered where you want the plants to germinate and grow.*

This is an experience to get those green fingers nice and muddy creating seed bombs. Seeds bombs are basically soil balls mixed with seeds, once dried they can be thrown and distributed where you wish for the plants to grow, this technique offers a natural planting pattern in your outdoor spaces and wildflower seeds work best for this, which provides a brilliant nectar source for wildlife as well as looking beautiful.

**Can you predict what will happen?**

**What will the seeds need to grow?**



# Spring

## RECIPE

- Listen to the birds singing away, looking for a new home to create a nest
- Buds appearing in the trees
- Bulbs starting to raise their heads from the ground
- Fresh new colours enter the gardens or parks and flowers start to bloom
- Daffodils dance in the breeze, crocuses emerge and rise up with their bright blooms from the dark soil and snowdrops peek out from under their winter covering of fallen
- Autumn leaves.

As the colder months start to warm, new changes come with the turn of the season. We encourage you to go into the garden and look for signs of Spring. Wrap up warm, and enjoy the fresh cool air.

If you wrap up warm and get prepared, what about making a den outside?

Take some blankets old cushions and some warm drinks and create a spot to watch nature go by.

**What changes have happened?**



**What sounds can you hear?**



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# Stacking stones

## RECIPE

- Stones from the garden

Here is a very simple open ended experience. All you need are stones that children can hunt or dig up in the garden. Stones come in all shapes sizes and textures, they provide a task for children whether choosing to stack the stones, or they can be arranged in anyway a child chooses.

They're different weights, and children will have to think of ways and approaches that are best to handle them safely.

Simply provide stones and let the children do the rest.

**What have you created with the stones?**

**Can you stack the stones taller/shorter?**





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# **Worms**

## **RECIPE**

- **Worms from the garden**

Whilst enjoying the outdoors stop, look and listen to the wonders happening everyday in our beautiful natural world.

There is a whole hive of activity going on everyday by our smaller creatures in our outdoor spaces. How often do we take the time to encourage children to look? To search and observe the smaller minibeasts?



**What do you think worms do?**

**I wonder if worms can see, what do you think?**

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# Sensory bags

## RECIPE

- Zip lock bag
- Cello tape
- Nature items such as grass, flowers, stones, leaves etc.
- Optional- hair gel, shaving foam, shampoo, glue, paint.

Sensory bags allow children to explore, discover, imagine, create, and learn while engaging many of their senses.

They are great mess free sensory play. Sensory bags are easy to create, portable and inexpensive.

Sensory bags are also sometimes called squish bags.



Why have you chosen these objects?

How can we move these objects in the bag?

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# Wildflower Ice eggs

## RECIPE

- A balloon
- Wildflowers, leaves, grass
- Water
- Bowl of warm water
- Spoons

*Fill the empty balloon with the objects you have collected, then add water to the balloon.*

*Freeze the balloon overnight, in the morning cut the balloon away leaving the ice egg.*

This is a wonderful activity that allows your child to explore the outdoors by collecting natural objects of their choice. They can also explore the ice, finding ways to melt it. It enables language development, by talking about the ice together. Let your child make their own discoveries. Feel it, examine it, mix it, transfer it, and watch it.



**How does the ice feel?**

**What do you think will melt the ice?**

**What is ice?**

**What happens to it if you hold it in your hands?**

**What can you do with it?**





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# Colour hunt

## RECIPE

- Old egg box
- Paint
- Paint brush

This activity is a lovely way for your child to explore the world around them by going on a colour hunt and discussing what they have found. Allow your child to paint the egg box with colours of your choice.

You and your child can then go on a colour hunt for natural objects. When they find something they can match it with the correct colour in the egg box.



**What have you found?**

**Which colour did you match the most objects to?**

**What is your favorite colour?**

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# Potion making

## RECIPE

- Different sized containers
- Herbs or natural resources from the garden
- Water
- Food colouring
- Twigs or spoons
- Scissors

Let your child experiment with water, mixing, pouring and stirring. Can they transfer water from one container to another?

What resources can they add to their potion, encourage them to use scissors to cut the herbs/grass up (this supports their fine motor skills).

If you are able to, add food colouring. Do the colours mix? If so, what colours are made. Talk about what you can see and what is happening to the liquid. Encourage your child to smell the liquid, can they tell you what it smells like. Discuss the potion and who it is for. What would happen if somebody drank the potion?

**Do the colours mix?**

**Can you tell you what it smells like.**

**What is happening to the liquid**

**What would happen if somebody drank the potion?**



Photo by cottonbro from Pexels

# The cardboard box

## RECIPE

- Ropes/string/wool (no longer than 22cms)
- Clothes pegs
- Masking tape
- Coloured pens/pencils/ crayons/chalks
- Glue
- Silks/scarves/material
- Smaller boxes or containers
- Cardboard tubes
- Empty yoghurt containers
- Paper
- Paint and brushes
- Cushions
- Blankets
- carpet squares
- Old sheets
- sticks or leafy branches
- Dolls/teddies
- Balls
- Cars
- \*Scissors

To a child a box is never just a box. When it is in the hand of our children with a little bit of imagination it can be their next adventure. It can be the foundation to a role play structure; castles, boats, houses or a den. Paint to create a monsters caves or race track for cars, supporting small world. A sensory box to contain pasta, rice or pine cones; enhancing our senses when we cannot see objects. We can build our gross motors skills by crawling through, under and over boxes.



**Who could we be today?**

**Where can we go today?**

**Can you recreate any of these ideas using a spare cardboard box?**



# Sticks

## RECIPE

- A variety of different sized sticks.

We live in an amazing world and when exploring the outdoors we can find all the resources we need to be creative. Sticks are one of these resources.

Collect a variety of shapes and sizes and then support your child to use them in the following ways;

*Creating images of 2D shapes, numbers and letters*

*Making a family of stick people*

*To help them count accurately*

*To build a den*

Alternatively they can be used as an open ended experience. Just provide the sticks and let your child do the rest.



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# Natural Faces

## RECIPE

- Any natural materials you can find outside in your garden or while out on a walk.

This is the perfect way to get your child outside using the natural world to ignite their creativity. Children will have lots of fun creating different faces. The face can be as detailed as they wish and could even include eyelashes!



**What do you think you could use to create a mouth?**

**What style hair will you give your face?**

**Does your face look like anyone you know?**



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# Miniature garden

## RECIPE

- A container for the garden
- Soil
- Any natural resources your child can find.

A miniature garden makes a wonderful space for small world play. Your child could make a dinosaur land, fairy garden anything they wish really.

Small world play gives children the opportunity to be masters of their own miniature universe. It gives them the chance to stretch their imaginations and be creative in their little world, exploring different possibilities. It would be nice to sit and observe your child engaging in small world play, listen to the language they are using and use this as a chance to ask question about their play.



**What would you like in your garden?**

**Who do you think may visit your garden?**

**How can you keep your garden alive?**



# Painting with Natural objects

## RECIPE

- Any natural materials you can find outside in your garden or while out on a walk.

There is no right or wrong way to go about this activity, just let your child find their own way to explore and create. The basic principle is to apply paint to the natural objects and let them mark make on the paper. Painting with natural objects is a great way for children to explore patterns and textures as each one will leave a different mark on the paper.

Which natural object did you like painting with the best?

Which object made the thinnest lines?

Which object made the thickest lines?



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# Making Oobleck/Gloop

## RECIPE

- **Corn flour**
- **Water**
- **Food colouring**

*1. Mix together 2 parts corn flour to one part water with a few drops of food colouring.*

*2. You'll now have a slimy substance that goes solid when you apply hard pressure and is more liquid when you apply less.*

*3. The children can explore the way the goo feels and moves, and understand ideas like cause and effect. For example, when they hit the goo fast it will be hard while it will turn to liquid when they move more slowly.*

*4. CLEAN UP ADVICE - You don't want to just pour everything down the sink and clog up your drains. Wash little hands and tools in a big bowl and then leave overnight. Eventually, the corn flour will settle to the bottom and you can pour the water from the top down the sink and the corn flour straight into the bin.*

Make this mesmerising substance that is both liquid and solid all at once and you'll have yourself limitless hours of multi-sensory messy play.



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# Story bags

## RECIPE

- A favourite picture book
- A soft material bag
- Items from the story

Create a story bag with items from a child's favourite story and let the child explore the bag, matching the items up to parts of the book as they go.



Can you help me retell the story?

What was your favourite part?



# Den building

## RECIPE

- **Structure** – use furniture, chairs, sofa, tables and bunk beds for the base structure
- **Cover** to make it enclosed – blankets, duvet covers, towels
- **Cosiness** – the most important ingredient to a den. Use duvets, teddy's and lots and lots of pillows to make it cosy!
- **Decoration** – decorate your den with drawn pictures, signs, ribbons and anything else you have to hand!

Den building is a fantastic activity to enjoy with your children. It is easy to do, you can do it anywhere and it will keep them busy for hours whilst developing key skills such as; problem solving, creative and critical thinking, persistence and many more! Children love to explore their creative side, and a den can be whatever they want it to be!

Let them create their own structure, using whatever materials you can offer them to support their creative thinking and spark their imagination.

Of course we're not saying leave them to it entirely, as they may need your help and will enjoy spending the time playing with you.



# Seasonal loose parts

## RECIPE

**Small loose parts that reflect the season. This may include;**

- natural materials such as leaves and flowers
- small items such as glass nuggets and buttons
- pegs
- pieces of ribbon
- stones
- a mat to create the picture on

This activity enables children to use loose parts that link to the season and displays their creativity. You can use a variety of small objects; some can be bought from local pound shops or charity shops and others you may find around your home. This pictures show a winter scene. Think about what you will provide for your child to create their picture onto. The picture above uses a laminated paper doily. Some ideas include a plain placement, a log slice and a cork mat.



**Can you talk to me about the different parts of your picture?**

# Getting dressed

## RECIPE

- Clothes
- Time

It is so important to encourage your child to be independent. Self-help skills are important skills to master. Give your child the opportunity to get themselves dressed. To start with you may have to support them by putting things the right way. Things won't go to plan to begin with, they may put their head through an arm hole but it takes time and practice. Encourage and support this skill, it will help them to be independent.

**Would we wear a jumper in the summer?**

**What is your favourite item of clothing?**

**You may want to let them help you pair up the socks!**





# Cooking

## RECIPE

- Recipe/method
- Scales
- Utensils
- Ingredients (this will depend on what you are making)
- Bowls/baking trays

Choose a recipe that you can cook together. Talk about what you are making and the ingredients you need. You could go shopping together to buy the ingredients. Once you have everything you need, allow your child to help you set the temperature on the oven. Discuss how to keep safe and hygienic before you start cooking.

Support your child to measure out the ingredients, show them the numbers on the scales and what they mean. You could introduce vocabulary that include: grams, ounces, pounds. By letting your child stir and mix the ingredients, it helps them to strengthen their muscles and this can support early writing skills. If cake cases are needed, let your child count them out and place them in the tin.

Once you have made your recipe, put it in the oven and talk about what it looks like now and what you think it will look like once it is cooked.

Let your child wash up the pots and pans with you, help you put things away and most importantly taste the end product together, chatting about what you did and how.



**Why do you think we need to wash our hands before cooking?**

**Can you remember what ingredients we have used?**

**Can you count... cake cases?**

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# Setting the table

## RECIPE

- **Cutlery-  
knives, forks, spoons**
- **Dinnerware-  
plates and cups.**

Getting your child involved in helping to set the table ready for a meal is a little job they'll enjoy carrying out! You can encourage them to problem solve and identify how many forks they will need for everyone and then give them the task of counting the correct amount out. Your child will then need to ensure they have shared the cutlery and utensils out equally.



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# Sharing a story

## RECIPE

- Your favourite book, this can be a story book, factual book, whatever you wish
- Somewhere comfy to sit or lay

Make sure you have a comfortable place to sit, and give yourself time to share a book with your child. Take time to look at each page, show them that the print goes from left to right by following the words with your finger. Talk about the pictures on each page. What can they tell you about the pictures? Change the tone of your voice to add expression. Once you have finished the story talk about it. Let your child get involved!

Discuss with your child what their favourite part was or their favourite character?



Can they tell you what happened in the story or what they think may happen next?



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# Star Gazing

## RECIPE

- Night time sky
- Blanket or dry area to lay
- Possible binoculars

Night time can be a fascinating adventure for children and to have the opportunity to see the moon and the stars is amazing. It enables you to support and extend children's interest in the natural world and outer space too. Experiences with light and darkness allow children to appreciate the awe and wonder of the world around them.

The moon changes from a full moon to a crescent moon and back to a full moon in slightly less than 30 days. Talk about the shape of the moon, has there been any changes since you last looked.

**Introduce new vocabulary:** Full moon, crescent moon, star, planets.

How big are the stars

How far does it go?

Look at the stars,  
are they bright?  
Do they Twinkle?



What is it like on the moon?

What could be in outer space?

Can you make shapes out of the stars?

# Salt dough decorations

## RECIPE

- 1/2 cup of flour
- 1/2 cup of salt
- 2 /3 cups of water
- Natural objects
- Round cutters
- Rolling pin

This is a lovely craft activity that enables children to collect their own natural objects and make them into a decoration. You and your child can make the salt dough together. Once the dough is made it can be rolled out then your child can press their objects they have collected into the dough. The dough can be left to air dry (this may take a few days). For younger children they can explore the dough and natural objects, they may want to roll the dough up or squish it all together.

What happens when you press your natural object into the dough?



What does the salt dough feel like in your hands?

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# Rhyme Time

## RECIPE

**A comfortable space,  
could be during bathtime,  
getting ready for bed.  
Time  
Rhyme book (if needed)**

Make sure you are comfortable and have time to share rhymes together. Make it fun, don't rush and please realise the importance of rhyme.

Enjoying Rhymes together can give your child the opportunity to develop their listening and talking skills, which will later lead to their early writing. Nursery rhymes feature a lot of repetition, which is good to help your child remember the rhymes!

You can encourage the use of different voices, tones and articulation of words. Your child will learn new vocabulary, talk about different words and what they mean. Children can learn new techniques of language, such as alliteration e.g. Baa, Baa Black sheep. Hearing and saying rhymes will also encourage your child to be imaginative, use their imagination in a Fairy Tale land.

**What do you think  
the character  
looks like?**

**What words are rhyming words?**

**What was the rhyme about?**



# Pots and pans

## RECIPE

- Pots
- Cans
- Colanders or sieves
- Wooden spoons

Placing several different pots, pans, and other cooking utensils nearby gives children an chance to experiment with sound, rhyme and beat; while making sweet music.



What else can you make the noise with?

What can you do to make a loud/quiet/soft sound?



# Playdough

## RECIPE

- 2 cups plain flour
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup salt
- 2 tablespoons cream of tartar
- 1 to 1.5 cups boiling water (adding a little bit at a time until it feels just right)
- Food colouring (optional for colour)
- Natural extracts (optional for added smell)

*Mix the flour, salt, cream of tartar and oil in a large mixing bowl. Add food colouring (and natural extracts) TO the boiling water then into the dry ingredients. Stir continuously until it becomes a sticky, combined dough. Allow it to cool down then take it out of the bowl and knead it vigorously for a couple of minutes until all of the stickiness has gone. This is the most important part of the process, so keep at it until it's the perfect consistency! If it remains a little sticky then add a touch more flour until just right*

This is a fantastic activity that helps support Gross motor and Fine motor development which are essential for pencil grip and writing. There are a million things that you can add to dough to make it a different colour, give it a different smell or change its texture!



# Listening to sounds

## RECIPE

- Clear space outside
- Grass area or seating area

Use this time to close your eyes, and listen to all of the sounds you can hear around you.

Take your time and enjoy the fresh air. What can you hear, are the sounds loud or quite, high or low? Can you identify the sounds you can hear?

Try this in different places, are the sounds different?



## Listen

What can you hear?

Can you identify the sounds you can hear?

Are the sounds loud or quite, high or low?

Are the sounds different in different places?



# FUN THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU ARE 5

Contributing schools so far are:

