



Things to play with around your home

There are lots of things around most people's homes that can be played with. Although you might think play means games and toys, children can play with lots of things that encourage their imagination and ingenuity. For example, things like cardboard boxes or old sheets can be played with in different ways.

Getting ready

- Make sure things are properly washed and dried before your child plays with them.
- Use your judgement about fragile things. Think about whether you'd mind if they got torn, messed up or broken.
- Avoid plastic bags and wrapping because of the risk of suffocation, especially if there are small children around.
- Avoid small things such as bottle lids or shells that young children could choke on.
- Remember the official hygiene advice and help your child to do the same.
- Check for sharp edges.

Here are some ideas of things you can find around the house for your child play with...

Packaging and recycling

You can offer your child some of the things that are often thrown away or recycled:

- Silver foil, aluminium food trays, cellophane wrapping
- Plastic bottles and containers
- Cardboard boxes – for example, cereal boxes, eggboxes, toilet roll tubes or packing cases.

Household items

Many things you use at home every day can be great for playing:

- Sheets, duvets, pillows, old clothes
- Chairs, tables, cardboard boxes
- Pots, pans, wooden spoons
- Papers, chalk, balloons, paint
- String, elastic bands, pegs, paper clips.

Activities

- Make models, puppets, shields and musical instruments.
- Take out frustration by squashing pillows or stamping cardboard boxes until they are flat.
- Draw pictures on card and cut them into jigsaw puzzles.
- Set up pretend shops, schools, kitchens, banks, post offices, beauty salons, hospitals and cafes.
- Collect and sort things to play with in water.
- Make dens, shelters and cubby holes.
- Play at dressing up, put on shows, make up soap operas and dramas.
- Make a small indoor garden, planting seeds and watching them grow.
- Invent new board games.

Items from nature

Natural things such as seed pods, shells, plants, twigs, sticks, pebbles and stones have always been used for play. You may already be able to find some around the house or you might be able to collect some and bring them inside to play with.

- Only collect small amounts of items from nature outdoors.
- Don't damage plants, trees, habitats, nests etc.
- If you can, return items to nature after you have played with them.



The *IPA play in crisis* series is designed to offer straightforward advice and suggestions to help you and your child keep playing through the coronavirus pandemic.