

**LIZELLE KEYSER**  
**Paediatric Occupational Therapist**

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Dear Parents,

Your child learns by exploring through their senses. These activities have been developed for you to do at home with your child, with resources which you most likely might have within your home. You can choose from the activities, which best suit your child. The week schedule has an overview of all the activities.

**Movement:**

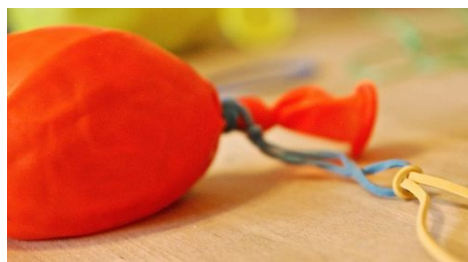
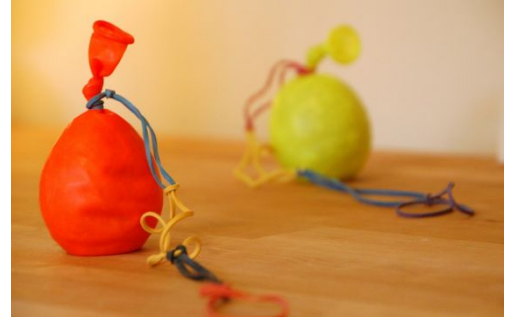
Stringy Balloon Yo-Yo:

Materials needed: Balloons, elastic bands and rice (or water)

Steps to play: <https://tinkerlab.com/balloon-yo-yo/>

Preparation:

- Fill the balloons with small seeds, beans or rice; by using a funnel. You can even fill it up with water.
- Let out all the excess air and tie a knot in the end.
- Secure one rubber band around the knot on the balloon, with a knot in the rubberband.
- Attach three more rubber bands onto each other by looping them one onto the other. You can loop on as many as you need to get the desired length for your child.



Play:

- The child throws it as a yo-yo, and it will bounce back to them. This is a great distractor, especially when going out.

Fun with balls:

Materials needed: Bag of plastic balls, Light laundry basket, some plastic bowls, soup spoon, drying rack

How to play: <https://toddlerinaction.com/5-easy-ball-toddler-activities-at-home/>

- Balls on the drying rack: <https://youtu.be/JijruqRY2cA>  
This is a simple, fun, no-prep activity, that your child can do anytime. They can drag the ball basket over and improvise. Putting the balls on the drying rack can be quite fun. It is spontaneous, engaging, fun and safe.



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- Balls soup: [https://youtu.be/Dvj\\_c7nq8u8](https://youtu.be/Dvj_c7nq8u8)  
Get the soup ladle or a big spoon here, and let's start cooking our ball soup. It's colorful, fun and obviously very tasty. The main thing – it keeps them busy and happy. You can also give different large plastic bowls for him to dump and fill with the balls.
- Colours, letters and shape sorting with balls: <https://youtu.be/gLvr1TbPURA> Sort coloured blox and balls into different containers, e.g. the same colours



Sticky spider web:

<https://handsonaswegrow.com/spider-web-halloween/>

Materials needed: Painters tape or masking tape; any doorway, hallway or narrow space

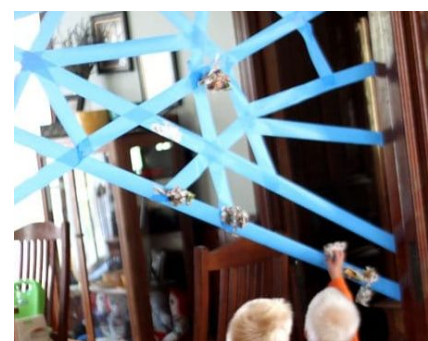
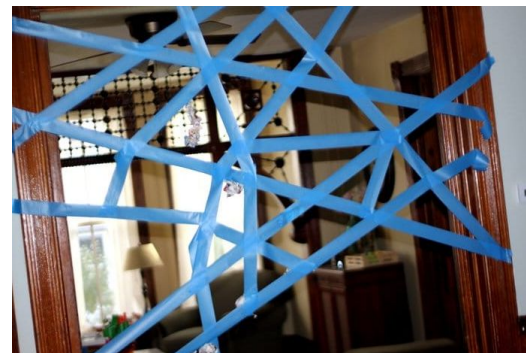
Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Decide on the ideal space to place this. Take into account any risks e.g. furniture in the area, which the child can hurt themselves on. Remove any of these.
- Make it to the top half of the doorway, as the children would try to run through it and tear it down, if it is too low.
- Make a 'spider web' with the tape, by putting a few strands of tape from one side of the doorframe to the other side. Then from top of the doorframe to the bottom of the lowest vertical tape.

Play:

- Let your child crunch up pieces of newspaper into balls.
- They then need to throw the balls towards the spider web and see how many will be stuck to the web. (Make sure they throw towards the sticky side of the tape.)



There are loads more tape activities:

<https://handsonaswegrow.com/active-ways-to-learn-indoors-tape/>

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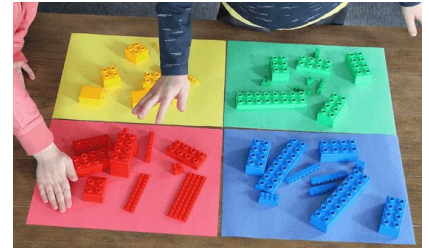
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Pillowcase race:

Materials needed: Pillowcase or t-shirt

Steps to play:

- On hardwood or tile floors, sit on a pillow case (or a t-shirt) and use your arms and legs to scoot around. Have a race and see how fast you can go.
- You can scoot around to fetch objects and sort it in colours in plastic bowls/baskets.
- Another idea: Setting up an obstacle course with tape beforehand and they need to scoot through the course.



The following blog have loads of fun indoor activities:

<https://whatmomslove.com/kids/active-indoor-games-activities-for-kids-to-burn-energy/>

**Tactile stimulation:**

Sensory bags:

Materials needed: Zip-lock food bag, tape, 60 ml baby oil, 60 ml water and food colouring

Steps to play:

Preparation: <https://everydaychaosandcalm.com/oil-and-water-sensory-bag/>

- First seal the closed sides of the bag, by putting tape all around. As we are using oil, it tends to leak out easily.
- Put the baby oil in the bag. Add a few drops of food colouring to it.
- Then put the water in the bag also.
- Let all the air out of the bag by pressing lightly on the bag, before sealing/closing it.
- Use tape (Sellotape/masking tape) to seal up the bag opening, to prevent leakages.



Play:

- Your child can squish the bag. It works well if you tape it to a low spot on a wall or table, for the child to move the liquid, without tearing the bag.

Dry textured play:

Today, we will look at making coloured pasta.

Materials needed: Dry pasta, food storage bags, food colouring, hand sanitizer or vinegar and plates/bowls

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Divide the pasta into food storage bags.

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- Put a squirt of hand sanitizer in the bag for the base and shake the bag to help it cover the pasta. (If you are concerned that your child might put the pasta to their mouth, I would suggest to rather use a bit of vinegar as the base, rather than hand sanitizer)
- Put a few drops of food colouring, one colour in each bag.
- Let the air out of the bag and close the bag.
- Shake the bag, for the food colouring to mix with the pasta.
- Pour the pasta onto a plate or bowl and let it dry.



<https://www.kidspot.com.au/things-to-do/activity-articles/make-coloured-pasta-jewellery/news-story/4628efd2d7aba9244b24f4d894c6dc9a>

Play:

- Sensory bin: Put the pasta with other toys, scoops and bowls for your child to explore.
- Extra ideas: Place some pipe cleaners in foam/box or styrofoam. Let them lace the coloured pasta into and onto the pipe cleaners to make crazy pasta sculptures:



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Messy play:

Materials needed: Paint, cardboard/paper, cardboard roll, cling film

Steps to play:

- Non-messy option: Place drops of paint on paper and cover it with cling film.

Play:

- Your child rubs the cling film with their hand to mix the paints and make their picture. When they are finished, you lift up the cling film and let the picture dry.

- Messy option: Place paper inside of a cardboard box. Put drops and lines of paint on the paper.

Play:

- The child rolls a cardboard roll (e.g. roll from kitchen paper or foil) over the paint, to make the picture. Let it dry.



Messy play with ice:

As this is edible, they can place it in the mouth without concern. **NOTE:** If your child tends to put things to their mouth and swallow, you need to make sure that the ice is not a choking hazard.

Materials needed: Ice blocks (various sizes), water, bowls, spoons, smaller containers, food colouring, hammer (optional)

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Make ice cubes in the freezer. Place the ice cubes in a bowl.
- This is great for outside play when it is warm. Place various size bowls with spoons and smaller containers outside. Put water with some food colouring in one bowl. Place the ice cubes in another bowl.
- You can even offer more than one colour e.g. blue water (water with a drop of blue food colouring) and another bowl with yellow water (water with a drop of yellow food colouring). When these are mixed during play, the colour changes to green.
- Another option: Freeze small toys inside the ice cubes for further discovery.

Play:

- Your child explores the water and ice play.
- Some more ideas:



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**Oral motor:**

Blow the balloon:

Materials needed: Balloon

Steps to play:

- The child blows the balloon. You can put a target on the floor e.g. with tape or just a basket on its side. Your child should blow the balloon to the target.
- If you have more than one child in the home, they can have a race.



Drinking from a sports bottle & other oral motor ideas:

Materials needed: Drinking from a sports bottle

Steps to play:

- Instead of giving a drink in a cup, provide a drink with a straw or with a sports bottle, to encourage sucking. This increases oral motor stimulation in the mouth and helps to organise a child internally.

Other oral motor ideas:

- Use a vibrating toothbrush to brush teeth.
- Place yogurt, applesauce or pudding on the corners of their mouth and tell them to lick it off.
- Blow raspberries
- Lick popsicles or ice lollies on the outside of the mouth.
- Drinking through a straw. Try thicker liquids such as milkshakes or pudding through a shorter straw.
- Chew with back of mouth on chewy foods such as dried mango strip, beef jerky or licorice.
- Chew on crunchy snacks such as celery or carrot sticks.
- Eat gum.

Bubble snake:

Materials needed: Empty water bottle, sock/cloth, elastic band, dish soap

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Cut the bottom off your empty water bottle.
- Cut the cloth in a circle, larger than the bottom of the water bottle. Rather cut it too large, as you can cut it smaller. You can also use a sock, which you do not need to cut.
- Place the cloth onto the bottom of the water bottle with an elastic band.
- If you use a sock: put the sock onto the bottom of the water bottle (no need to cut).
- Put some dish detergent in a bowl and add a bit of water.



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Play:

- Dip your Bubble snake into the dish detergent and you are ready to go.
- Blow into the bottle and make large bubbles.



Hawk Hug:

Crossing your arms in front of you, hold your left shoulder with your right hand and your right shoulder with your left hand. Breathe in and out for 5 slow breaths. Then pretend that your hands are like hawk wings, and alternating each hand, gently flap them against your shoulders for a minute or so. If you feel comfortable doing such, close your eyes as you “fly”. After “flying” for a few moments, give yourself a hug.



**Auditory:**

CD Cymbals:

Materials needed: 2 CD's, strips of fabric or ribbons

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Cut off two pieces of ribbon or strips of fabric. Loop a strip of fabric through the hole of an old CD and tie it off at a point where the fabric strap will slide snugly around three or four fingers of your child's hand.

Play:

- Your child places them on their hands and hits them together to make a sound. While your CDs don't make the resounding crash that real cymbals do, they certainly produce a fun and satisfying "clack."



Calming music:

Calming background music can settle the mood:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xir91dOrO64&feature=youtu.be>

Notice if the music and visuals excite or calm your child.

Taxing noises for noise sensitivities:

Taxing noises: Use an easy-to-use recorder such as a microphone app. Record sounds that your child is sensitive to or cannot tolerate. Play the sounds back throughout the day at a reduced volume as a way of desensitizing.

Apps:

It is worth looking at this Fan App, if your child easily wakes up from noise in the environment. It is found that the white noise from the fan can mask other background noises. Play this in the background, when your child goes to sleep and is sleeping. (You can also use a small fan, turned away from the child; to get the same effect.)



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[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.sleep.fan&hl=en\\_GB](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.sleep.fan&hl=en_GB)

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/sleep-fan/id492869515>

**Dances:**

Koo Koo Canga Roo Youtube channel encourages kids to get moving!

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLE8B1DE388BFF8B78>

The Learning Station Youtube channel:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4Hdb26\\_xnPQsntwLazMqYw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4Hdb26_xnPQsntwLazMqYw)

**Proprioceptive/calming:**

Great video about our proprioceptive system and why it is important:

<https://youtu.be/b2iOliN3fAE>

**Towelling:** Put lots of cream on your child's hand and forearm. Firmly massage the forearm and hand; then rub it with a dry face cloth in the direction from the elbow to the fingertips. If this is done firmly, it gives a deep pressure feeling; which can be quite calming.

**Therapy ball activities for proprioception:**

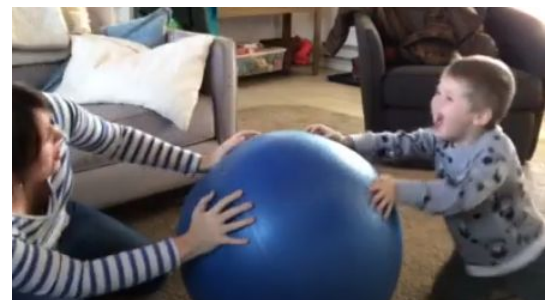
Materials needed: Therapy ball

Steps to play: <https://youtu.be/x3ubWw9TA3o>

Listen to the Youtube video for instructions and demonstration on how to use the therapy ball. This is especially great if your child is boisterous, seeking out movement, crashing and bumping into things.

**Pushing the ball:**

- Stand on either side of the therapy ball and push the ball away. Your child needs to try and push the ball away with their hands.
- You can also use a ball each, to push against each other. Try to push the other person away.
- You can push the therapy ball against your child's body and they need to try and push it away for that body part e.g. their body, head, hip.



**Crashing:**





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- Help your child to climb on the ball either by standing, sitting or rolling. Let them jump onto cushions or mattress for a soft crash landing.

Roll and crash:

- Another great way for crashing is to roll with your body over the ball and then crash onto the cushions or mattress.



**Visual motor skills:**

Post the roll:

Materials needed: Paper towel holder, toilet paper roll/paper towel roll, scissors

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Cut the toilet paper roll into smaller circles.

Play:

- The child needs to place the circles onto the paper towel holder.
- Also try:



Net ball:

Materials needed: Ball (different sizes), Net bag (which fruit or veg comes in) or a long sock.

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Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Place the ball in the net bag or sock.
- Tie it to a length of rope.
- The rope needs to be long enough to get the ball level with the child's chest.
- Suspend the ball from a horizontal pole or even from a nook in a doorway.  
(Some outside washing lines work great.)



Play:

- Push and catch: The child pushes the ball away with both hands and then catches it again.
- Batting: The child hits the ball with a bat.
- Remember: The smaller the ball, the more difficult. You can initially also use a balloon tied to a string, as they move slower; before attempting a ball.



Scoop and transfer:

Materials needed: Two large bowls, various plastic toys, large food spoon.

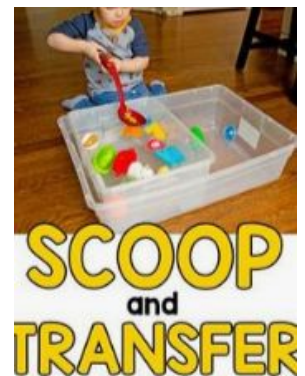
Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Place the plastic toys within a bowl of water.

Play:

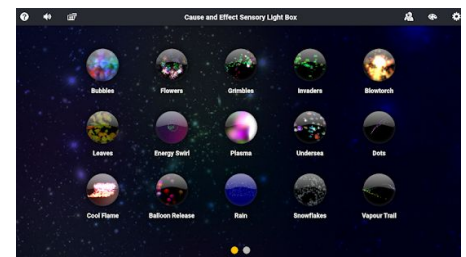
- The child needs to scoop the toys out of the bowl of water and place it in the bowl next to.



Apps:

Lightbox App

<https://lightbox.cognable.com/>



<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=air.com.cognable.lightbox>

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/sensory-light-box/id533976433>

**Fine motor skills:**

Wisk the Pom poms:



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Materials needed: Whisk, large pom poms

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Place all the Pom poms inside a kitchen whisk.

Play:

- The child needs to take the pom poms out of the whisk and place it in a small bowl.

Clothing peg :

Materials needed: Toilet paper cardboard rolls, clothing pegs

Steps to play:

- Demonstrate how to put the clothing pegs onto the end of the cardboard roll.
- Give the child a few clothing pegs and rolls to experiment with.
- Extra idea: By colouring the clothing peg and the roll, you can change it to a colour matching or even a number/letter matching activity.
- Other clothing peg activities:



Push and pull toy box:

Materials needed: box, screwdriver, straws

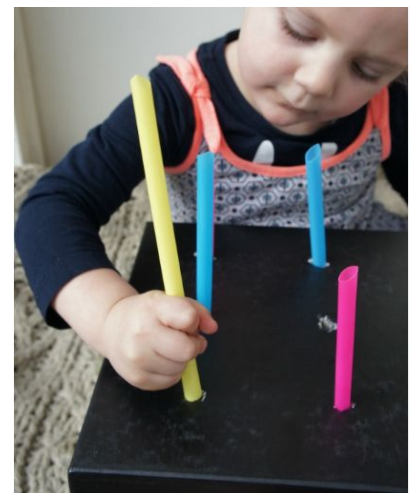
Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Press holes in the top of the box with a screwdriver. Be careful. The holes need to be large enough for a straw to snugly fit into it.
- If you want to give the activity a colour matching element, you can draw different coloured circles around the holes, or the child to match the colour of the straw to the hole.

Play:

- The child presses and pulls the straws in the holes. You can first start off by putting all the straws in the holes. The child needs to pull them to take them out.



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- Then they need to put it back in the holes.
- If they find this easily, you can move onto pipe cleaners. To press pipe cleaners into the holes is more fiddly.

Feed the rubber bands:

Materials needed: 5 to 10 rubber bands or hair bands, cardboard tube or even a muffin pan turned over (use the back of the cups)

Steps to play:

- Hold the rubber band with two hands and place over the container, one at a time.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further advice or have questions.

Kind regards,

*Lizelle Keyser*

**Independent Occupational Therapist**

