ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO AT HOME THESE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Early childhood education and care teachers from TAFE Queensland South West have put their heads together to come up with their top activities you can do at home these September school holidays to keep your kids entertained.

“We don’t stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing,” said Early Childhood Education and Care teacher Ro Jacobsen from TAFE in Toowoomba.

“Play allows children to build, imagine, experience, investigate, explore, create, observe, predict and use their senses, but best of all, it’s heaps of fun.”

“It doesn’t take much to thrill a child. In fact, it is often the small things that make for the most meaningful childhood memories.”

Here are some cost effective activities for you to do with your children these holidays.

Activity One: Flower Painting with Balloons
This is a great activity for children to learn about colours, to promote fine motor skills and explore different materials. Have fun with your child and create together!

What you need:
Balloons
Poster paints
Paper / cardboard
Plastic plates or bowls (or any other container for paint)

Method:
Blow up balloons approximately 1/4 of their size and tie off. Pour a little paint into the containers, place the balloons in the paint, and then on your paper to make different flower patterns.

Activity Two: Hungry Caterpillar Fruit Tray
Looking for a way to make healthy eating fun and get your kids interested in cooking? Help them create a yummy fruit platter based off the beloved The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle and enjoy the fruits of your labour together.

What you need:
Chopping board
Knife (used with supervision)
Variety of fresh fruit
Plate
Cookie cutters
Method:
Wash hands and fruit separately before starting. Using a chopping board and knife, peel and slice a variety of fruit. We suggest using grapes, watermelon, rockmelon, mandarins and sultanas, or whatever is available in your fridge.

Arrange fruit close together on a plate to make a caterpillar shape. Once the caterpillar has taken shape, add something small like sultanas for eyes and legs. Using a cookie cutter, cut fruit shapes to decorate the surrounding areas.

**Activity Three: Chinese Rubber Band Skipping Rope**
Remember the days you spent outside in the sunshine singing and playing jump rope? You can share this experience with your children by making your own easy-to-make skipping rope out of rubber bands. Enjoy the beautiful spring weather and skip with your child!

**What you need:**
36 Rubber Bands (minimum 3 inch bands)
Your hands (or feet)

**Method:**
Start by holding one rubber band loosely in one hand and insert a second rubber band through the centre of the first one about a third of the way. Slip the remaining part of the second rubber band around the side of the first rubber band, and back through the centre. Pull the second rubber band all the way through so that it is tight. Continue chain-linking the rubber bands until the rope reaches your desired length and tie off. If the rope isn’t strong enough, try repeating the exercise with two rubber bands at each step.

If you’re having trouble, hop onto YouTube and search *jumping/skipping rope from rubber bands*, there are plenty of tutorials.

**Activity Four: Goop**
This activity creates endless amounts of fun as children explore through sensory play. Make two separate batches and allow children to explore and mix colours.

**What you need:**
2 packs of cornflour
2 cups of water
Food colouring
Large bowl or container for children to get both hands into

**Method:**
Mix cornflour and water (adding the water gradually) together in a large container and add food colouring if desired.

This mixture will feel hard to press, however get your hands into the mess, manipulate it, and watch as it becomes runny.
Activity Five: Action Shot Bookmarks
Want to encourage your kids to read? Make a fun bookmark to turn this quiet activity into a must-do.

What you need:
Action shot of your child
Coloured ribbon or wool (with tassel if possible)
Glue
Scissors
Contact paper
Backing cardboard

Method:
Take a photo of your child posing as if they’re hanging onto a rope. Print out your photos and cut out as close as possible around the photo of your child. Using a glue stick, mount your photo to cardboard to make your bookmark a little sturdier. However, DO NOT glue down the hands. Then cut out around the photo again.

Next, slip in your tassel between the photo and the cardstock backing. Try to look at the hand position and then place the tassel so it looks like the children are actually holding it. Then put some glue on the cardboard and the photo, and press them together. After it has stuck, trim off the excess string on the other side. Finally, cut out a piece of contact paper to cover the back and front of the bookmark. Adhere it to both sides, smooth it down and cut out around the bookmark leaving a trim around the edges.

Parental supervision is required at all times during these activities.

For more information about TAFE Queensland South West’s Early Childhood Education and Care offerings or for any other courses, please visit www.tafesouthwest.edu.au or call 1300 914 754.

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