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FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

BRIGHTEN UP YOUR RAINY DAY PLAY

Indoor Active Play Guide

YMCA CHILDCARE RESOURCE SERVICE



CENTER IDEAS

Rainy days don't have to be gloomy days with these fun indoor stations!

Bring the playground inside with an obstacle course. Set up 3 or more obstacles and divide children evenly throughout to avoid children waiting in a single line instead of playing. Here are some ideas:

- Crawl through a pop-up tunnel.
- Hop from spot marker to spot marker.
- Weave through cones.
- Toss scarves and count how many times you can clap.
- Jump the River (details top right)
- Have children self-select music at a dance station with ribbons and streamers.
- Have children create their own obstacle course!



Jump the River

Lay 2 ropes along the floor in the shape of a greater than sign. Children can jump across the river from the narrow end to start off and move along to the wider end for more of a challenge. Ask children to jump on one foot then try jumping on both. If children fall in the river, they can "swim" to the other side.

Yoga/ Stretching Cards

Look online for stretching cards are ideal for independent or group play. Children can self-select as many cards as they like and stretch to improve flexibility and balance. You can include this in an obstacle course too!

Balance Beam

Tape lines on the floor or lay down ropes to act as a balance beam. Include straight, curvy, and zigzagged lines. Your rope can be a tightrope or you can pretend to be different animals balancing across (monkey, lion, elephant, bird, etc.). Some animal ideas are listed on the next page. Children can balance different objects—yarn ball, scarf, bean bag, and more!

Masking Tape Maze

You can use tape inside or chalk outside to create a huge maze for children to walk, hop, or gallop through.

Spider Web

Throw newspaper "flies" at a sticky spider web made of yarn taped between two desks parallel to the floor. How many can children get to stick?

**It is said that children keep us young, but how?
When we let go of our inhibitions and just have fun
with our kids, we have the opportunity to keep our
bodies healthy and stay young at heart!**

Below are a few animals we can include in our pretend play. If you feel comfortable, add the animal sounds! If you're not there yet, ask your students what sound the animal makes.

- **Elephant:** Arms together like a trunk (you'll get more movement with both arms instead of one), lean forward and stomp around the room with heavy steps. You can make an elephant sound by licking your lips, curling them in, and blowing air out quickly as you keep your lips pressed shut.
- **Monkey:** Lean forward and hang your arms down to your sides. This can be a stationary forward fold stretch or you can hop around while swinging your arms.
- **Flamingo:** Stand on 1 leg. You can have the other foot touching your calf or thigh (but not your knee!). Once a child can balance well, ask the flamingos to flap their wings, use their hands as a beak to peck at food around them, or look up at other birds flying.
- **Frog:** Squat with hands on floor, jump and land in a squat. If a student or teacher is unable to squat, s/he can bend slightly at the knees and stand straight. Don't forget to ribbit!
- **Rabbit:** Squat with hands on floor, move both hands forward then jump with both feet forward.
- **Kangaroo:** Squat with elbows bent and hands in front of chest and jump.

- **Crab:** Walk on all fours forward and backward with stomach up.
- **Puppy:** Walk on all fours and run around like an energetic puppy.
- **Kitty:** Walk on all fours softly, taking breaks to "groom." This can be used at the end to help children wind down.

Tape Road

Tape a road throughout the classroom and let them drive! You can use hoola hoops as cars and instruct children not to bump anyone else's car. They can pretend to honk (beep, beep!), run out of gas and jump to the gas station, have a flat tire and stand on one leg, or carefully reverse into a parking space. You can talk about turn signals using hands, directions (in, out, around, forward, etc.). You can play Red Light, Green Light. A child can drive a bus to "pick up" other children for school.



Aim & Toss

Set up a target practice using ropes or masking tape on the wall or floor. Create targets of different shapes and sizes. You can even glue printouts onto cardboard according to your curriculum for additional learning! Children can throw yarn balls, fuzzy balls, beach balls, socks, or wadded up newspaper. You can find some lids to act as Frisbees. See if you can land them just right!



Flash Light Scavenger Hunt

Turn off the lights and hide some objects around the classroom for preschoolers to find with a flash light. They'll be begging for you to hide them again!

String Scavenger Hunt

String some yarn around the classroom, through chairs and set up treasures along the way to find! Have them follow it through, going in and out, under and over to see what they can find!

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Gather your toys and supplies that might be considered trash and allow preschoolers to search in a box. Challenge them and yourself to make a game using items found in the box.

Musical Hula Hoops

Played the same as musical chairs, but children must sit inside a hoola hoop.

The Floor is Lava

You can use spot markers to create a path for children to hop across the lava. You can model falling off a spot marker and jumping around to another spot marker. Variations include: hopping like frogs across lily pads on a pond (swim in the pond if you fall); jumping on seashells across hot sand. More imaginative play can be found on the next page.

Bubble Bath

Blow bubbles and have children pop bubbles on a non-slip surface. Children can pretend to scrub-a-dub-dub. They can pretend to be bubbles floating and twirling around. Children can also hop on bubble wrap.

Paper Plate Scooters

Give each child a paper plate "scooter." S/he can place it on the floor (works best on carpet) and use both hands to scoot around. You can have them take one item, like seed packets, from one side of the room to the other.



LET'S TAKE A TRIP!

Pretend play improves social and cognitive functioning. We can prompt pretend play by going on a "trip" with children.

TO THE CARNIVAL

Set up carnival games and have parades.

- **Bowling:** Use empty drink bottles and a ball
- **Ring Toss:** Twist pipe cleaners into a hoops to toss onto empty drink bottles
- **Animal Parade:** Pretend to be horses, bears, elephants, and lions
- **Acrobats:** Have children parade, jump, skip, or gallop across a "tight rope" (made using masking tape or rope)
- **Beanbag Toss:** Hold up a hoola-hoop for children to throw beanbags through



TO THE BEACH

Talk about what might be found at the beach.

- **Hot sand:** Tip toe quickly across the room
- **Star fish:** Stand with legs and arms out wide
- **Shell:** Curl up into a small ball
- **Crab:** Crab walk forward and backward
- **Sea Horse:** Gallop around the room
- **Whale:** move slowly
- **Dolphin:** Swim and jump around the room
- **Row Boat:** Row your boat around the room

INTO OUTER SPACE

After reading a book about outer space, you can make movements to match the words you read.

- **Space Walk:** Slow like an astronaut
- **Alien Walk:** Funny walk unique to each child
- **Spinning Planet:** Stand and spin
- **Meteor:** Sit and spin
- **Star:** Stretch like a star with legs and arms spread
- **Rocket:** Run fast
- **Orbit:** Children move around other children

SPACE BALLS

Pretend to be a ball floating around the room and then deflate to lie down.

OBSTACLE COURSE WITH OUTER SPACE THEME

Use hoops to jump between craters; use cones as planets to weave between them; throw and catch "shooting stars" (yarn balls); crouch down low and count down from 5 to "blast off" where children jump straight up as high as they can.

TO THE ZOO

Invite children to move around like different animals.

- **Snake:** Crawl on your tummy
- **Kangaroo:** Jump from a squat with hands by chest
- **Flamingo:** Stand on one leg
- **Crocodile:** Open and close arms wide for the mouth
- **Elephant:** Both hands as trunk & slowly walk around
- **Butterflies:** Flap arms and move around the room
- **Sea Lion:** Lie on your tummy & push up on your arms
- **Lion:** Crawl on all fours

FEED THE ELEPHANT GAME

Toss bean bags into a box that is decorated like an elephant with a long streamer nose.

OBSTACLE COURSE WITH ZOO THEME

Elephants stomping through the pop-up tunnel; do sea lion tricks by balancing bean bags along a rope; "swing" from spot marker to spot marker as a monkey.

PARACHUTE GAMES

Small parachutes can be used indoors with caution. If your parachute is too large, try using a twin sized bed sheet or lightweight shower curtain instead. Be sure to clear as much space as you can for your parachute fun!

WHEN THE PARACHUTE GOES UP

To the Tune of: When You're Happy and You Know It

*When the parachute goes up stomp your feet
When the parachute goes up stomp your feet
When the parachute is high, it floats up in the sky
When the parachute goes up stomp your feet.*

Encourage children to think of other movements (bend your knees, nod your head, shout hooray).



PARACHUTE NAME GAME

To the Tune of: Row, Row, Row Your Boat

*Up, up, up it goes
Down, down it comes
If your name is (Child's name)
Now's your turn to run*

As you sing the song have the children raise the parachute above their heads. When a child is named have him/her run under the parachute. Then slowly lower the parachute to try and trap the child. Continue until all children have had a turn.

PARACHUTE SWIM

Lay the parachute out on the floor with the adults all around on their knees. The children sit or lie in the middle of the parachute. The adults/and or other children make waves with the parachute.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Active play helps children be better learners, improve social skills, increase self-esteem, and leads to more fruitful careers. Here are resources that can help.

GoNoodle.com

GoNoodle helps teachers and parents get kids moving with short interactive activities. Desk-side movement helps kids achieve more by keeping them engaged and motivated throughout the day.

GoNoodle is designed with K-5 classrooms in mind.

Key Features

- **Free:** Any teacher, anywhere, can create a free GoNoodle account and start using movement activities right away.
- **Research-based Activities:** Using exercise science and cutting-edge research, we've designed all of GoNoodle's activities to be healthy for the body, engaging for the attention, and beneficial to the brain in specific ways.
- **Fast:** Transition from listless to engaged in minutes. GoNoodle takes no time to setup, has content of a variety of lengths (from 1 minute to 20 minutes), and just requires you to press play.

GoSmart.NHSA.org

Search for an activity according to age, setting, and materials. Games are simple and range from newborn to 5 years old.

FunClapping.com

FunClapping is a site with several clapping game ideas including the words and short video demonstrations. Clapping games provide several benefits:

- Improves Spatial Awareness
- Improves Motor and Cognitive Skills
- Neater Handwriting
- Fewer Spelling Error
- More Focus and Less Tension

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS *

- Imaginative play improves executive function
- Children who are highly engaged in the fantastical play show the greatest gains
- Children whose play was highly fantastical also demonstrated the greatest gains

* The Effects of Fantastical Pretend-Play on the Development of Executive Functions: An Intervention Study, University of Alabama, 2015

Diane Craft's Active Play

Active Play is designed for Family Child Care Providers. Several easy to follow examples of activities using household items make changing up your Active Play on a budget.

<http://activeplaybooks.com/book-and-dvd-set/>

Growing Up Wild

Growing Up WILD is a curriculum that helps connect children to the outdoors in a number of ways:

- Several of the 27 activities, and over 400 experiences, involve children directly exploring nature outdoors.
- All of the activities include a Take Me Outside section that offers specific suggestions for getting children active outdoors, with nature walks, physical games, and other activities.
- Many of the activities' Centers & Extensions and Home Connections sections include ideas for furthering children's exploration outdoors.

<http://www.projectwild.org/GrowingUpWILD.htm>



Let's Wiggle with 5-2-1-0

Let's Wiggle with 5-2-1-0 is local public health initiative to promote the physical activity components of the Florida Department of Public Health 5-2-1-0 Northwest Florida. You can find free printable Activity Cards for bean bags, balls, hula hoops, parachutes, spot markers, non-equipment, and other activities.

<https://www.letswiggle5210.com/prek/>

The complete toolkit that includes resources to promote healthy eating can be found at:

https://issuu.com/5210letsgo/docs/running_pdf_of_entire_toolkit_-iss

The Learning Station

The Learning Station consists of a trio of Early Education Specialist with varying backgrounds. Their goal is to provide music that stimulates a child's heart, body, and mind. Though their CDs are available for purchase on their site:

<http://www.learningstationmusic.com/>

They also have a YouTube station with their music available for free:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/TheLearningStation>

Cosmic Kids

Cosmic Kids offers yoga and mindfulness videos. Be sure to check out the less than 10 minutes category to keep preschoolers engaged.

www.cosmickids.com/category/watch/



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