Fun Indoor Activities!

The following is a list of fun indoor activities for you to enjoy with your family during the wintertime! Divided by age, they are simple activities that make it easy to get an hour a day to play and can be done with everyday items you most likely can find in your home.

**For Infants**

**“Maze”**

Create a simple L-shaped maze on the floor through the following steps:

1. Drape sheets or towels over chairs and tables to make walls.
2. Place the baby in a sitting or crawling position at one end of the maze.
3. Peek around the corner and say “I see you! Can you come to me?”
4. Continue encouraging the child to crawl toward you.

Adapted from: *Mississippi early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers*

**“Crossing the Midline”**

Include activities that help the baby’s right arm and leg cross over to the left, and the left arm and leg cross over to the right.

1. Place the baby in a seated position.
2. Sit or kneel in front of the baby hiding a favorite toy behind your back.
3. Hand the baby the toy so he/she has to reach across his/her body to get it.
4. Some Tips:
   - Repeat and encourage the baby to use both hands.
   - Make a game of the activity to keep the baby interested.

Adapted from: *Kids in Action*
“Move Your Head”

1. Lay the child on his/her back on a soft surface.
2. Place a musical toy or rattle on either side of the baby's head and shake/play it to make noise.
3. The infant should turn his or her head in the direction of the toy.

Adapted from: SHAPE America's Head Start Body Start Program

“Can you Find Me?”

1. Lay the child on the floor where you can make eye contact with him/her.
2. Start with your face above the child, making playful eye contact and soft noises.
3. Move your face from side to side so the child will follow you with his/her eyes.
4. Move a little more so the baby has to move his/her head to follow.
5. Stand up and move a few steps away from the child.
6. Make fun noises, when he/she makes eye contact get excited, provide praise.
7. Continue moving around to have the child move and look in different directions.
8. Try moving behind the baby so he/she uses his/her body to find you.
9. Provide praise and encouragement throughout activity.

Adapted from: SHAPE America's Head Start Body Start Program

FOR TODDLERS

“Drum Beat”

MATERIALS NEEDED:
- Plastic bowls or drums

DIRECTIONS:
1. Tap a bowl or drum counting along with the beat - “1, 2, 3.”
2. Have the children begin tapping and counting together.
3. If using a variety of bowls or drums, allow the children to take turns with each.

Adapted from: Mississippi early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers. 2010
“Snowstorm”

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Cotton balls
- Small basket, bag or bucket

DIRECTIONS:

1. Spread cotton balls on floor.
2. Have children run around and pick them up placing them in a basket, bag, or bucket.
3. After all cotton balls are collected throw them into the air so they fall onto the children.
4. Encourage children to collect as many as they can with their arms and hands as they fall.
5. Have the children pick all cotton balls up and start again.

Adapted from: SHAPE America’s Head Start Body Start Program

“All Aboard”

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Two pool noodles
- Imagination!

DIRECTIONS:

1. Pair with a child (or have two children together).
2. Have pairs stand a few feet apart and connect to each other by holding the ends of two pool noodles.
3. The person at the front of the train faces forward holding one pool noodle in his right hand and one in his left. The person in the back also faces forward holding one pool noodle in his right hand and one in his left.
4. Have the train chug around the room.
5. They can stop to pick up a passenger for the middle of the train.

Adapted from: SHAPE America’s Head Start Body Start Program
“Sock Toss”

MATERIALS NEEDED:

• Laundry basket or box
• Pairs of socks

DIRECTIONS:

1. Roll pairs of socks into balls.
2. Place an empty laundry basket about two feet from children.
3. Show children how to toss socks underhand into the basket.
4. Demonstrate taking turns by having children and staff alternate.
5. Have children practice counting or name color of socks while they toss.

Adapted from: SHAPE America’s Head Start Body Start Program

FOR PRESCHOOL

“Bean Bag Toss”

1. Give two children a bean bag and have them stand 2 steps apart facing each other.
2. Have one person throw the bean bag and the other catch it. If they are successful, they each take one step back.
3. Have them keep repeating until they drop the bean bag. When they drop it, have them start over standing close together in their original positions.
4. PRO TIP: No beanbags? Use scrap paper rolled into a ball, tied up socks or small stuffed animals like beanie babies!

“Animals”

Have children walk around in a circle acting like different animals, such as a:

• Horse • Lion • Butterfly • Duck • Bear
• Dog • Seal • Bird • Frog • Crab
• Cat • Fish • Monkey • Elephant

Try having children act like animals, while going under a limbo stick. A broomstick or foam pool noodle work great too!

From: http://fitness.preschoolrock.com/index.php/flexibility_activities
“Obstacle Course”

Have children walk, jump, and crawl over/under things in an obstacle course through the room. Use these examples:

- Crawl under desks or chairs.
- Use pieces of paper as “stepping stones.”
- Make a tight rope out of masking tape.
- Have an area of water that they have to swim across.
- Put an object on the ground that they have to jump over.
- Put two chairs closely together that they have squeeze through.

“Simon Says”

Explain the following directions to the children:

1. Call out directions to perform a specific movement: touch your nose, toes, shoulders or ears, stretch to the sky, run in place, jump 5 times, skip, act like an animal, etc.
   - The children should only follow your direction if it starts with “Simon says.”
   - If they follow your direction when you do not say, “Simon says,” they will receive a consequence, such as five jumping jacks, large arm circles, bunny hops, etc.
2. Play a practice round so the children understand the rules and are maintaining safe distances from each other.

“Fruit Basket”

1. Create 4 groups and assign each group a corner of the room.
2. Give each group a fruit name like apples, oranges, bananas or peaches.
3. Call two of the fruit names and have those groups run and change places.
4. The groups maintain the same name throughout the game.
5. If you call fruit basket all of the children run and sit in the center of the gym or play area.

Adapted from: http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/pe/contents.htm
“As If”

Read the follow sentences and have children act them out:

1. Jog in place as if a big scary bear is chasing you.
2. Walk forward as if you’re walking through chocolate pudding.
3. Jump in place as if you are popcorn popping.
4. Reach up as if grabbing balloons out of the air.
5. March in place and play the drums as if you are in a marching band.
6. Paint as if the paint brush is attached to your head.
7. Swim as if you are in a giant pool of Jell-O.
8. Move your feet on the floor as if you are ice skating.
9. Shake your body as if you are a wet dog.
10. Have children create new sentences for additional activities.

FOR SCHOOL-AGED KIDS

“Sharks and Minnows”

Before you start, set up a play area with visible boundaries (if outside use cones). Review how to play:

1. Choose two children to be sharks and everyone else will be minnows.
2. Sharks stand in the middle of the play area and say, “Fishy, fishy, come out and play.”
3. Minnows slowly walk towards the sharks.
4. At any time, sharks can yell, “Shark Attack!”
5. Minnows must run to the opposite boundary line without being tagged to remain safe.
6. If a minnow is tagged, he/she becomes a shark.
7. The last 2 minnows remaining win the round and become sharks for the next round.

Adapted from: www.playworks.org/games
“Flag Football Agility Course”

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

• 3-8 footballs
• Cones for boundaries
• 3-8 scarves

BEFORE YOU START:

• Set up a play area. Have at least 2 children stand inside the boundaries, with a larger group you may have more. Have all other children line up with a scarf in their pocket or waistband hanging half way out. Children with a scarf should also have a football when it is their turn.

HOW TO PLAY:

• One person with a football must skillfully make it to the other side without losing their scarf or going out of bounds. If their scarf is taken they are now in the middle and the person who got the scarf can get in line. If they go out of bounds they are automatically in the middle and their scarf is given to another child.

Adapted from: www.playworks.org/games

“Everyone’s It”

BEFORE YOU START:

• Establish boundaries. Demonstrate safe tagging: light touch on the shoulder. Review the boundaries and the consequence for going outside of them, start over from zero or perform 10 jumping jacks to get back in.

HOW TO PLAY:

• The object is for children to tag and keep a running count of everyone they touch in one minute. No one is “it” and no one stops playing or “freezes” when tagged. When one minute is up ask children to yell out how many people they tagged. Start over, but in this round challenge them to get a higher number.

Adapted from: www.playworks.org/games
“Red Light, Green Light”

BEFORE YOU START:
• Define playing area with a start and finish line. Review rules.

HOW TO PLAY:
• Select one child to be the caller while all other students stand at the start line.
• When yelling “green light” the caller must turn around so he/she cannot see anyone.
• The caller will turn around when yelling “red light” and everyone must freeze.
• Anyone moving is sent back to starting line.
• The first person to reach the caller is the caller for the next round.

Adapted from: www.playworks.org/games

“See you Later Alligator”

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:
• Cones to set boundaries if needed
• 2-5 scarves
• 5-10 hula hoops

BEFORE YOU START:
• To begin, select 2-5 children to be ‘game wardens’. Give each warden a scarf so everyone will know who they are. Place the hoops randomly around the play space. The rest of the students are the alligators.

HOW TO PLAY:
• On “GO,” the alligators run from the game wardens to keep from being tagged. If an alligator is tagged, the game warden and alligator switch roles (the scarf is given to the new warden).
• Alligators are safe when in a hoop, but only 1 alligator is allowed in the hoop at a time. If someone is in the hoop, the other person must say, “See you later alligator” to enter the hoop and the other must leave. No one is allowed to enter the same hoop they just left. This game can go on f-o-r-e-v-e-r!

Adapted from: www.playworks.org/games
“Jump Whistle”

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:
• Whistle

BEFORE YOU START:
• Make sure children know right and left, front and back.
• These are the 4 sides to which they must jump.

HOW TO PLAY:
• Have all children face forward. Each time the whistle blows children are to jump.
• One whistle: jump front, center
• Two whistles: Jump front, right, center
• Three whistles: Jump front, right, back, center
• Four whistles: jump front, right, back, left, center
• Children should always end up back at center, facing the leader. You can mix up the whistles, one, two, three, two, one, three, two, or four. The object is to see how well the children pay attention and can keep up.

Adapted from: www.playworks.org/games

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