ACTIVE PLAY AT HOME

Try these active play ideas at home. These can be great for children on rainy days.

Movement games
Try inside games like musical statues, Simon Says and Hokey Pokey and outside games like handstands, cartwheels or playing a game of hopscotch.

Ball games
Use balls of different sizes and weights. Show your child how to roll, bounce, catch and bat using the balls.

Kicking
Teach a child to kick using a large, soft ball. Initially a child will walk into the ball to kick it and then develop the ability to stand on one leg and kick a stationary ball.

Imitation games
Young children love to imitate adults. Clap your hands, move around the room in different ways (jump, skip, and hop) and watch your child try to do the same. Also try playing games with them that involve a quick movement like squat to stand (e.g. being a jack-in-the-box).

Music
Young children love music so sing, play music and dance with them. Choose an action song Head, shoulders, knees and toes or Hokey pokey.

Pretend play
At this age, children love to pretend and imagine. A cardboard box can be a boat or racing car, they can run and leap around like a wild animal or superhero and dance, hop, skip and balance like a fairy.

Little helper
Young children love to help. Involve them in daily routines like unpacking and packing away the toys (if safe to do so), and setting up games.

Cardboard boxes
Cardboard boxes are great toys. They can be taped together, painted and decorated to become cars, towers or tunnels. Cut the ends off two cardboard boxes, line them up and tape them together. Ask your children to crawl through the tunnel to you. Cut windows and a door into a large box and you have a house.

Chase me
Toddlers will start to run and they will love to be chased and caught. They also like to hop like a kangaroo or run fast like a cheetah.

Inside ball games
Use scrunched-up newspaper or socks to make balls and use a laundry basket as a goal.
**Sand or water play**
Toddlers love to play in sand and water. Give them some plastic containers like cups, buckets, spades, funnels and a watering can, with a tray or large bucket of water or sand. Children can be active digging, carrying buckets of sand and walking in the sand. Remember, never leave a child alone with water.

**Going walkabout (exploring)**
As toddlers get older, you can take them on longer walks. A local park or duck pond can be an exciting place. Show them interesting areas and tell stories about the place, people, animals, trees and plants.

**Playgrounds**
Visit your local park for a play on the swings, slides, see-saws, monkey bars or flying fox.

**Obstacle course**
Develop an obstacle course for your child to walk around. Include opportunities for them to squat down to pick up a toy, walk on a variety of surfaces such as slopes, uneven ground such as grass or soft mats and stepping up very low steps.

**Bubble play**
Play with bubbles and try to catch them or jump on them to make them pop.

### Ideas for homemade active play equipment
You do not need expensive toys for children. Try some of these homemade ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Homemade ideas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wedge</td>
<td>Rolled-up towel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bean bags</td>
<td>Scrap material sewn in a square or rectangle and stuffed with dried beans or sand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buckets</td>
<td>Ice-cream containers and boxes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skittles</td>
<td>Empty plastic bottles and cartons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markers</td>
<td>Empty ice-cream containers and towels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box car</td>
<td>Empty boxes with the bottom cut out</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parachute</td>
<td>An old bed sheet or blanket</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building blocks</td>
<td>Empty food or milk cartons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markers (e.g. for soccer goals)</td>
<td>Boxes, empty food or milk cartons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal rings or targets</td>
<td>Upright box with a hole cut out of one side or a washing basket</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totem tennis pole</td>
<td>Tennis ball in an old stocking suspended from a tree branch or washing line, away from any windows</td>
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The NSW Ministry of Health wishes to acknowledge the following sources: South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health Districts Healthy Eating and Active Play at Playgroup manual and case studies, and the NSW Ministry of Health Munch and Move program and Local Health District resources.

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