

# Mummy, I'm

**S**pring can be a fickle - while one day can be warm and sunny, the next can turn out into a washout. So how can you entertain your little ones when running around in the garden is not an option?

## LITTLE COOK

Buy pizza bases (or make your own), lay out ingredients for the toppings and let your kids decorate them. When they are ready, just pop them in the oven. Or you can involve your child in making fairy cakes or muffins!

## WEB WONDER

There are some great children's websites: [www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies](http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies) is a good place to start as it's packed with games, downloads and activities. Another favourite is [www.kidsites.com](http://www.kidsites.com).

## FUN READS

Visit your local library and borrow books that appeal to your child's special interests.

Check if your library is taking part in Team Reads.

## RECYCLING ART

Gather cardboard boxes, packaging, containers... and encourage your little one to create a work of art. You can give them safe scissors, glue and paint and set them a theme (robots, spaceships, castles, pirate ships, etc) or let their imagination run wild. Catalogues and magazines are fantastic for making collages.



## CARDBOARD HOUSE

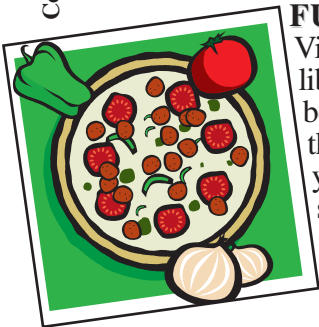
A couple of big cardboard boxes (one for the building, one for the roof) is all you need to build a play house. Give them paint, pens, glitter and crayons to decorate it.

## HANDMADE CARDS

Make cards for birthdays and other special occasions. Children can create their designs or decorate them with finger/potato printing.

## MARVELLOUS MOBILES

Set card, tissue paper, glitter and stickers out on a table and help your child create their own mobile. Use wire to hang it in



# bored!

their room once it's finished. Old CDs decorated with feathers and ribbons make fab dreamcatchers.

## **BUILD A TENT**

Stand four chairs together and use a sheet or blankets to make the tent. If you have space, you could use coffee tables and stools to create sections inside.

## **TREASURE HUNT**

Depending on your children's ages, place five to ten clues in the house, each with activities lasting a few minutes (like doing a drawing, solving a puzzle...) Once the hunt is over, each child can win a small prize.

## **PLAY DOUGH**

Play dough is a soft, squidgy material that can keep children occupied for considerable lengths of time. Making your own is easy and cheap. Mix 1 cup of plain flour, half a cup of salt and 2 tablespoons of cream of tartar. Add 1 cup of water and mix until smooth. Add a dash of food colouring and 2 tablespoons of oil then cook on a medium heat,



stirring constantly until the dough forms a ball. Allow to cool before use. The process can be repeated

several times, changing the food colouring. If the dough gets trodden into the carpet, don't worry, warm soapy water will clean up the mess. Dough will dry out if left exposed to the air for too long. Keep it in a sealed plastic bag, or box and put it in the fridge when not in use. As well as kneading it, your



child can use cookie cutters to create shapes. If you bake her creation in the oven at 180°C, she can then paint and varnish it.

## **SORT OUT THE TOY BOX**

Get your child to go through his toys. He will probably rediscover toys he hasn't played with for a

while and unwanted ones in good condition can be donated to charity or sold at an nct sale.

### **TAPE IT!**

Get out the tape recorder and try recording sounds around the house, such as water running in the bath, opening and closing a door, or even flushing the toilet! Or you can record yourself reading a story or singing nursery rhymes (babies will love hearing the sound of your voice).

### **MAKE A SCRAP BOOK**

Give your child a cheap notebook and various materials to create their own scrap book. Postcards,

photos, catalogues, magazines, ribbons, wrapping paper and many other inexpensive items will keep them occupied for hours!

### **DANCING AROUND**

Whether it's nursery rhymes or The Tweenies, children love to dance around. You could even teach them new moves.

### **Wonderful web**

[HTTP://FAMILYCRAFTS.ABOUT.COM](http://familycrafts.about.com)

Crafty blogs with tons of ideas!

[WWW.HANSELMAN.COM/BABYSMASH](http://www.hanselman.com/babysmash)

Free software that turns your PC into a toy for toddlers without interfering with your stored files.

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