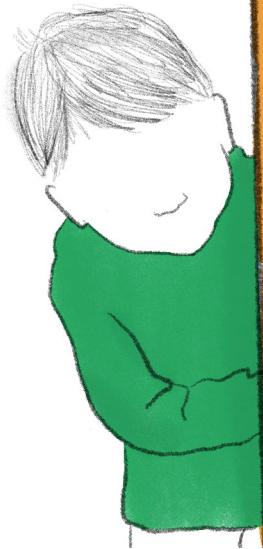


Geronimo!

time out to play

2020
MASTRICK





GERONIMO! 2020

Time out to play...

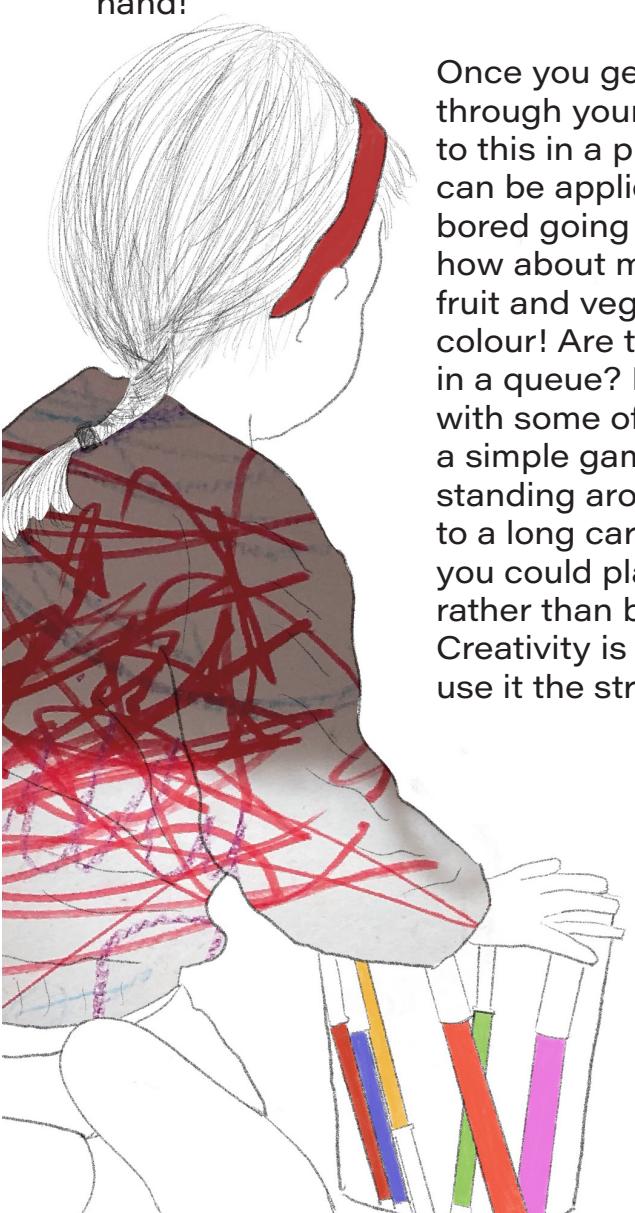
Geronimo is a project for parents and their early year's children, including babies, to be creative and playful together.

- The skills children gain through playing, being creative and taking risks will have multiple advantages in their future
- Geronimo encourages us to see the world through a child's eyes and follow their lead
- Working together builds positive relationships
- The arts can play a valuable role in child development
- Any space can be a creative play space and any object or everyday scenario can have creativity or a playful approach applied to it
- As well as play and creativity, it is important to allow for risk (not dangerous) this can cover everything from physically testing the limits to not knowing the outcome of something; allowing for risk enables children to learn valuable insights into themselves which stay with them for life

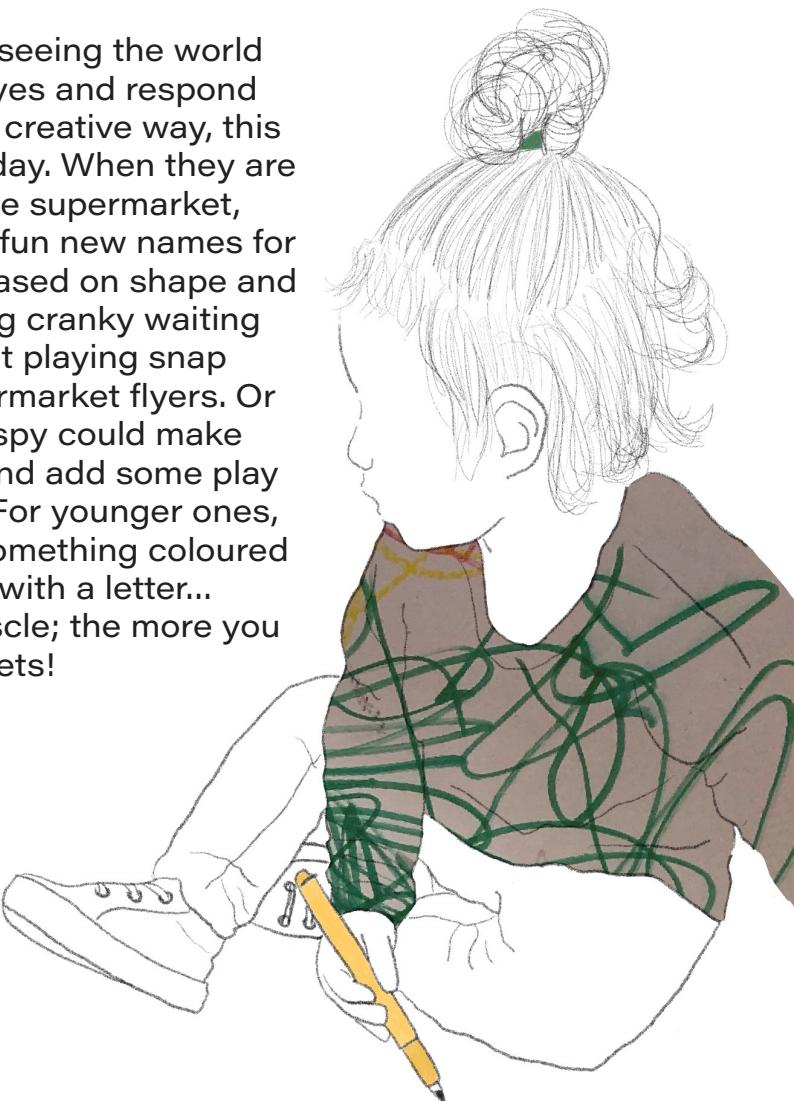
'What will happen if I do this?...'

'I don't know, why don't we see?'

Arts and creativity are for everyone; it's not about specialist skills – we all have them! And it is not about costly materials and kit – everything you need to be creative is at hand!



Once you get used to seeing the world through your child's eyes and respond to this in a playful and creative way, this can be applied every day. When they are bored going around the supermarket, how about making up fun new names for fruit and vegetables based on shape and colour! Are they feeling cranky waiting in a queue? How about playing snap with some of the supermarket flyers. Or a simple game of eye spy could make standing around fun and add some play to a long car journey. For younger ones, you could play I see something coloured rather than beginning with a letter... Creativity is like a muscle; the more you use it the stronger it gets!



DRAWING BIG!

Creativity is all about trying things out, using your imagination and 'just doing it' – what better way to get those creative juices flowing than with a big empty canvas! You will need space (preferably a hard floor) – plenty of room to get messy and have fun! Little ones might miss the paper sometimes, so it might be a good idea to protect it with a plastic dust sheet before covering it with paper. If you have any leftover wallpaper, tape it pattern-down and use it – you can often find unused or single rolls for cheap too! These will go a long way and cover a lot of the floor - simply secure it with tape.

If your little ones are used to drawing in sketchbooks, notepads or repurposed printer paper – imagine how exciting it will be to draw on a **HUGE** version of this! So many possibilities! However big the ideas of your little one, encourage their ideas and make as much space as possible for their imagination to run wild!

An ideal way to start could be to draw around each other! This can offer a very lovely bonding opportunity and is a lot of fun. Why not draw the entire family?!

You can use:

- Crayons, washable felt tip pens, coloured pencils...
- Poster paint with a variety of brushes including home-made & big decorating brushes
- Sponges, cut potatoes, stamps, leaves etc for printing
- Old trays or plastic packaging to squeeze enough paint into to stand in for lovely footprints!
- Empty clean spray bottles with a watery mix of poster paint. This can create some lovely spray paint effects and is ideal used with stencil shapes and masking tape which applies and removes easily. These can also be stored until the next time.

If you want, you could use your hands and feet to paint! Make sure and cover up in old clothes (or strip down to their nappy and vest!) and get the paints out!

Other ideas...

- A big piece of paper could also become a road for toy cars to drive on... A backdrop for another world for their teddies, dolls or puppets to explore...
- Leave to dry and their giant masterpiece can become lots of mini masterpieces by cutting up! These can be drawn on further or even made into other things on a different day!



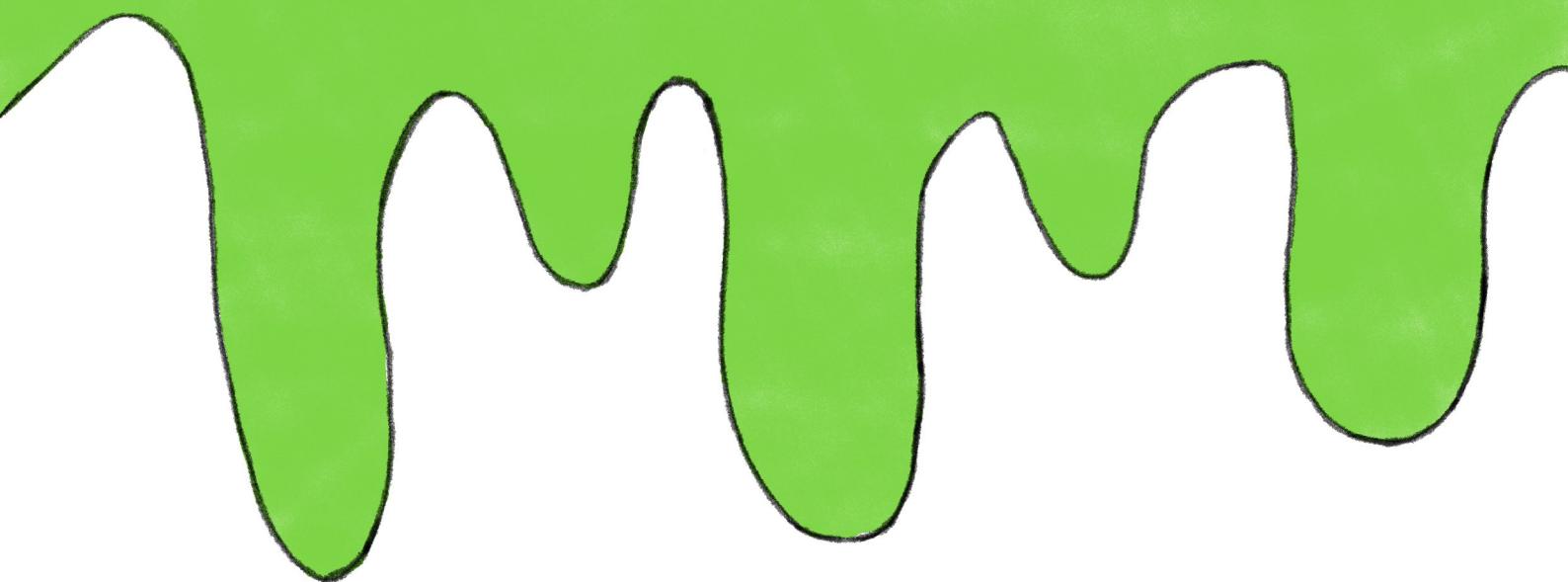
Tips

Leave the children to decide what they want to do on the paper, they will see what they have to play with and with open ended questions you can help support their ideas to become a reality!

Try not to show that mess is bothersome (even when it is!) - children will pick up on any reluctance to get messy and this could hold them back! Encourage them to try things out and praise their efforts even if it doesn't look how they imagined in the end. It doesn't need become something - it is just as fun to 'make' soggy paper and a bit of a mess as it is to make a masterpiece!

Poster paint and a whole range of other art materials can be bought cheaply from The Works, Poundland and B&M Stores





HOMEMADE DOUGH AND SLIME!

Most little ones adore the chance to get messy with the tactile experience it offers! Even those children who dislike feeling sticky and icky will find lovely soft dough which won't leave a trace on their hands! Don't worry too much about measuring guesstimate amounts until the right consistency is found. Half of the fun is to be making these together, and the little ones will feel very proud - thank them for all help and hard work! Making it together offers opportunities for play and learning what the flour feels like, mixing the ingredients up and adding colour – a tiny bit of it a pale pastel colour, does adding more make the colour stronger? Messy play!

- Boost child development: Not only will all this working out how to play grow brain, it'll also provide them with lots of opportunities to refine fine motor skills.
- Language skills: Because how can they know what the word "slimy" really means if they can't feel the sensation for themselves?
- Imagination: Whilst most toys can only be played with in one way, a tub of creates infinite possibilities...

These are recipes we tried at Geronimo - we found them online with a search on google! Some of these recipes are messy, and can stain, so don't wear any clothes you don't want damaged with dye!



CLOUD FLUFF This super-soft dough smells amazing and feels even better.

- 175ml baby hair conditioner
- 250g cornflour

Put the two ingredients into a bowl and mix – the dough will take a minute to come together. Knead for a further minute until smooth.

RAINBOW FOAM DOUGH Foam dough has two ingredients in a roughly one to one ratio

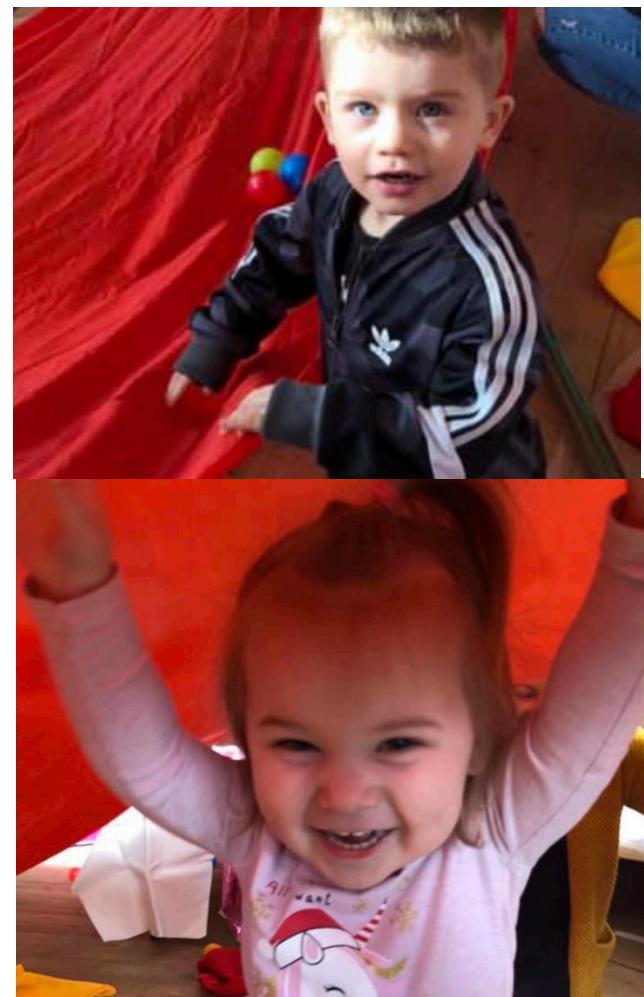
- Cornflour
- Shaving foam
- Food colouring / natural colouring / liquid paint

Start by colouring the shaving foam until you get the colour you like - multiple colours in multiple cups! Slowly add the cornflour to each cup and stir until it starts looking ever so slightly doughy. If you keep the dough on the wet side it is much fluffier. More cornflour means a drier dough - it may lose some of the amazing foamy-puffy texture. Slightly more shaving foam to cornflour seems best. The different colours can be combined to make rainbow foam dough!

HOMEMADE SLIME*** This is the slimiest slime that ever there was. It drips and drags from fingertips, oozes and squeezes from fists.

- 75g Cornflour
- 120ml baby shampoo
- Green food colouring (food colouring CAN stain hands but it won't last long!)

Mix together the ingredients until smooth then add the food colouring and mix again.



EVERY CHILD LOVES A BOX!

An empty box holds limitless potential to a child. Is it a house? Do a few of them make a town? Can it be fashioned into a costume? A car?

With a little imagination boxes can become lots of things...

Towers | Dens | Houses | Drums / Instruments | Kitchen/Games Arcade/Shops | Costumes | Mazes

Why not cosy their new space up with cushions, a blanket or a sheet. You can snuggle together and read a book in their new den once the play has finished.

For babies and toddlers boxes can be great for:

Peekaboo | Hiding in | Hiding things in | Drawing / Mark Making | Drumming | Rattling

Materials:

- Boxes of any shape or size
- Fixings; any kind of tape, masking tape is good for drawing and painting over, split pins – for moving parts, looping and tying with string
- Large scissors and a Stanley knife can be used separately by parents to cut more tricky shapes, whilst children may manage the easier cutting jobs with supervision
- Poster paint, pens and crayons or gluing on paper / photographs / photocopies to decorate

Tips:

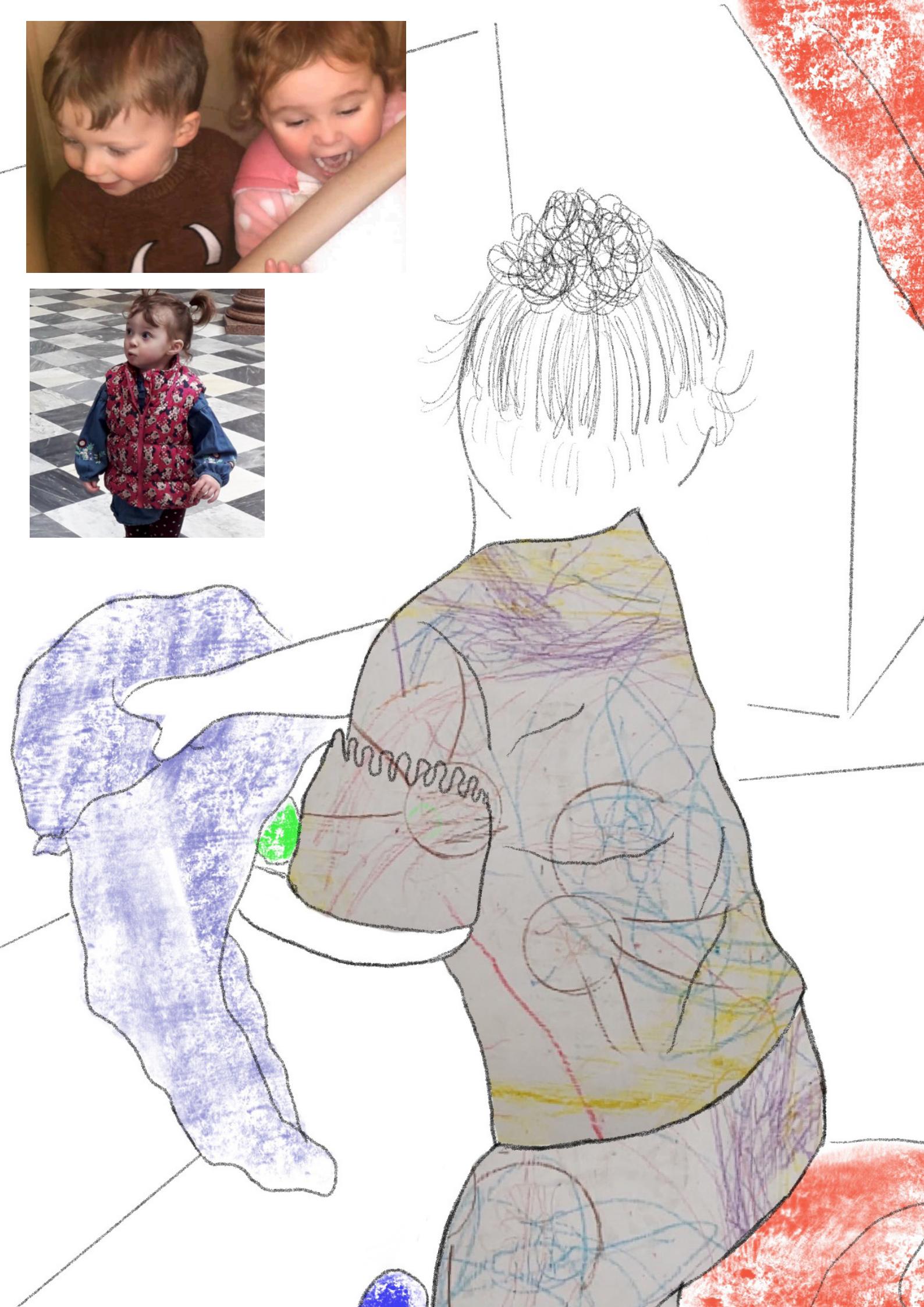
- Allow space for them to work with their box / boxes
- Allow for the children to imagine the materials into whatever way they would like
- Ask open ended questions; What could this become? How will we do that? What job would you like me to do?
- Once the creation is complete so begins the play! This is the ideal time to model some great ideas and role play!

Boxes can be obtained free from any shop! Try asking at DIY Stores, Bike shops and Supermarkets. This might be an opportunity for your wee ones to ask for them – encourage them to explain all the things they plan to do with the boxes once they get them!

Most boxes will store flat in between play sessions and can be easily reconstructed many times over

Links: www.cainesarcade.com, www.theimaginationtree.com (search "cardboard box") www.uk.pinterest.com (search "cardboard box ideas for kids")



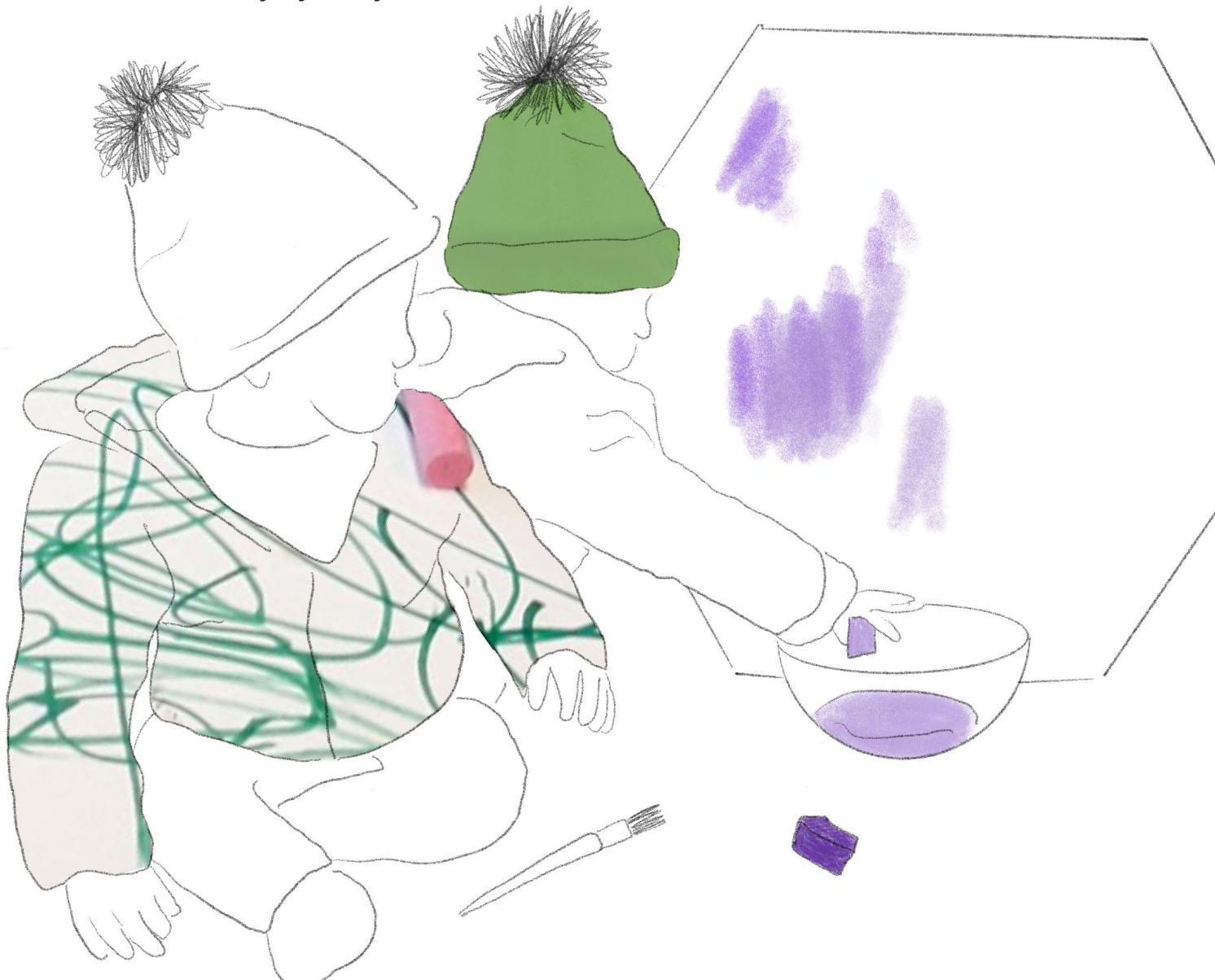


GETTING OUTSIDE

It's great to get outside of the house to play, not just on sunny days but in all weathers, provided you're dressed for it or have a place you want to go visit! Waterproof trousers or a puddle suit and wellies are ideal to get a bit muddy in whilst keeping little ones warm and dry.

Rainy days... An excuse to splash in puddles! Jump, run, gallop, hop or skip through them! | Catch raindrops on your tongue, hands or feet | Look for worms as they move to the surface of the earth | Go for a walk in your neighbourhood and ask your little one to tell you about how the rain makes things look different | Shelter from the rain under a big tree, listen to the sound the rain makes all around you! | Take some washable paint (poster paint) and paper outside and let the rain make a masterpiece | Ground chalks and chalk paint is lovely to use when wet as the colour is even brighter!

Windy days... Kites were invented for such days! They can be easily made at home! Ensure there is plenty of space and no overhead wires or power lines. You will soon both learn the principles of what helps it to fly | Make windsocks from socks or pillowcases | Experiment with streamers | Windmills - Google and Pinterest are great for making ideas... | Cloud watching; good in any weather, watch them move in the wind, on sunny days look for cloud shadows on the ground | In Autumn try to catch falling leaves, experiment with scattering seeds; dandelion clocks, spinning sycamore helicopters | Run with the wind and against the wind | Blow bubbles on a windy day and see how far they fly away, can the wind blow a bubble?!





Sunny days... Ground chalks, brushing water on top of the chalk gives a beautiful paint effect | Experiment with shadows and drawing around them – or each other, or trees or the built environment. For anything static, watch the shadow move as the sun gradually moves. Draw around it again, you'll create a beautiful repeat pattern! | Paint with big decorating brushes and water

- If you are walking to your local green space; the journey there can be as fun as the destination, use it as an opportunity to play a kind of eye spy game looking at colours and shapes.
- Songs can be sung about the weather or the season
- Treasure bags: a simple paper bag to collect forest, beach, or countryside treasures in
- Make ground art from leaves, stones and sticks gathered by the children
- Treasure bracelets can be made very simply from a loop of gaffer tape and whatever autumn leaves, petals or seed pods are found can be stuck easily to it! Treasure crowns can be made similarly.
- Before leaving the space, stop for an observation / meditation; what can you see? What can you hear? What can you smell? What can you feel?

PAINTING

Painting doesn't always have to mean mess! Your little ones can play with paint in a number of ways to include mixing, squishing and even tasting paint in new ways!

Non-messy paint play

You don't even need a paintbrush! Lay a plastic zip-lock bag flat and squirt blobs of different coloured paint in the bag. Lock it shut and let your wee one mix the paint without getting their hands dirty. This is a sensory experience as much as it is about painting! How does it feel? What colour will their colours make? Why not add some glitter? Once mixed, you can cut a hole in the corner of the bag and use it as a painting tool!



Chalk Paints

All you need is water and a paintbrush to have hours of fun! Put some chalks (any size and colour will do) in a bag and crush them into dust. Get your little one to crush them by putting the bag on the ground and get them to stamp on it. Pour the dust into a bowl and add water until it is the consistency of thick paint that can be used with a brush. This is perfect for playing outdoors.

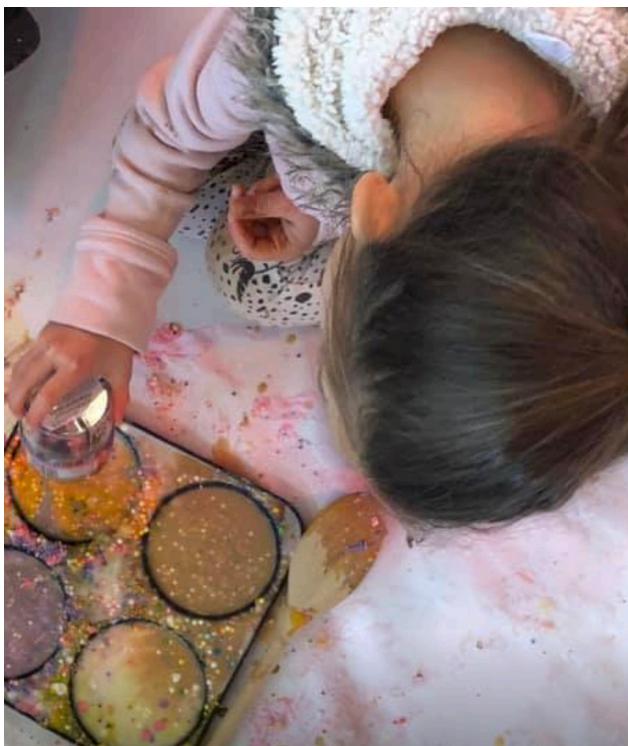
For an even quicker way of chalk painting, you can simply draw with chalk and use a brush to paint water over the top.

Edible Paints

Extra little ones can also join in the fun when putting time aside to paint. If your baby puts everything in their mouth, you can easily mix up some edible paint with things in your kitchen cupboard.

Basic edible paint recipe: mix 2-3 spoons of cornflour with 1-2 spoons of cold water. Add 4-5 spoons of boiling water and mix until the consistency of custard. Simply add other ingredients until you get the colour/consistency you like. These are for being creative with, not eating – so get creative with the edible (non-toxic!) things you have in your food cupboards regardless of the taste!

Why not add some cocoa powder/hot chocolate for brown? Paprika spice for orange? Turmeric powder for yellow? How about beetroot juice or raspberries for red/pink?



Tips

Make sure your little one has enough room to be creative – make space outdoors or roll out large pieces of paper/old wallpaper rolls on the floor. Encourage them to use their hands and feet to make shapes and pictures – and join in yourself! Encourage them to feel the paint, taste the edible paint and smell it too. Painting doesn't have to just be about picture-making – getting messy is fun too! Reward them with hugs for trying out new ways to mix, paint and play.

CALENDAR DAYS AND OCCASIONS...

Chinese New Year, Valentines Day, Pancake Day, Easter, Bonfire night, Hallowe'en, Christmas... and any other significant days in the calendar are ideal to use the opportunity to be playful and creative!

We had Pancake Day during our time together on Geronimo and had fun making pancakes together! There are things to do for every occasion and simply doing an online search for "Children's (e.g Easter) Crafts" will bring up a whole range of ideas!

EASY PANCAKE RECIPE

- 1 large egg
- 1 cup of plain flour
- 1 cup of milk
- Pinch of salt (optional)
- Blueberries / lemon juice / sugar / for toppings

Add all ingredients to a mixing bowl and whisk together until you have a smooth batter. A thicker batter (more flour) make smaller, thicker American-style pancakes (blueberries can be added to the batter of these). A thinner batter (more milk) will make thinner, bigger pancakes.

Your little one can get involved in all of the measuring and mixing and can watch as you do the "hot" job and can help you to stack them! Or they can practice tossing their own pretend pancake cut out from card in a spare pan!

Put a large frying pan on a medium heat and after a minute or so add 1/2 tablespoon of oil | Tilt the pan to spread the oil out evenly, add a ladle of batter to the pan | When bubbles start to appear on top of the pancake, it should be cooked on the underside and ready to flip over | Stack them on a plate, wrapping them in a clean tea towel will help to keep them hot | Add whatever toppings you like! Sweet or savoury!

Have fun making faces on the pancakes using different toppings! Then roll up and scoff!



Chinese New Year is great for making paper lanterns, look up ideas online! | Valentines cards for Valentines Day! Tell your little ones all the reasons you love them! | Firework pictures by flicking poster paint and glitter onto black paper | Stained glass window pictures by cutting shapes from black paper leaving a "frame", glue coloured tissue onto the back and see it light up when you hold it up to the window! | Paper plate Angels for Christmas – use paper doilies for their wings and cover them in glitter | Cut out snowflakes to decorate windows at Christmas by simply folding and snipping shapes out of a sheet of paper.

Try making Easter chicks and bunnies at Easter! How about making a puppet? A simple marionette can be made easily and children will enjoy learning how to animate their creature and make it walk or dance. An upside down paper cup is the body. Pierce a hole in the centre base of this (top of the puppet) and thread string through here, knotting it inside the cup. Tie the other end onto the centre of a small stick or pencil. Add your arms / wings and legs and a length of thread leading from each end of the stick to the feet. A simple rocking movement of the stick will bring the puppet to life.

Any hinged type of packaging such as an egg box or plastic packaging is a ready-made mouth! These come to life with very little needing added. Stories can be told to animate the puppets, encourage your little one to give them a name and a personality.

Look online for ideas; Pinterest, Wikihow.

*Black paper / tissue paper / poster paint can be obtained from Amazon, The Works, Poundland



OUT & ABOUT

There are lots of places in Aberdeen you can visit if you want out of the house and need to avoid the weather! And a lot of them don't cost any money to go and explore!

- **Aberdeen Art Gallery** is free, and open 7 days a week. There are lots of interactive displays, and plenty of room for you and your little one to have fun. How about playing eye spy? See how many red things you can spot in the gallery? Let your little one pick their favourite artwork and ask them what they like best about it. How does it make them feel?

Monday-Saturday 10am - 5pm, Sunday 11am - 4pm

- **Aberdeen Maritime Museum** is another free attraction you can take your wee ones too. They offer free activity sheets that you can fill out as you explore the museum, dress up boxes and interactive learning. A fishing and sea theme means there are lots of opportunities for getting imaginative in the space. What would it feel like to be on a boat on a stormy day? Move like a fish in the sea, or slowly like a submarine.

Monday - Saturday 10am-5pm, Sunday 12noon - 3pm

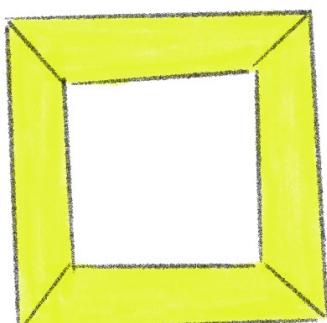
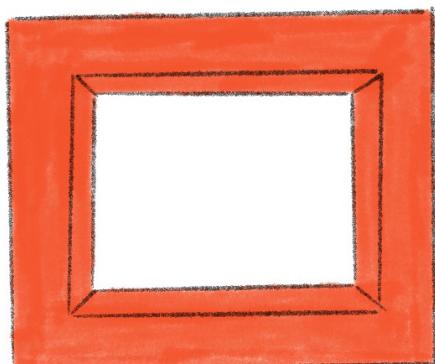
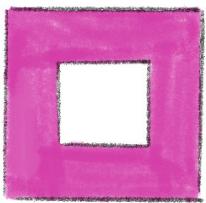
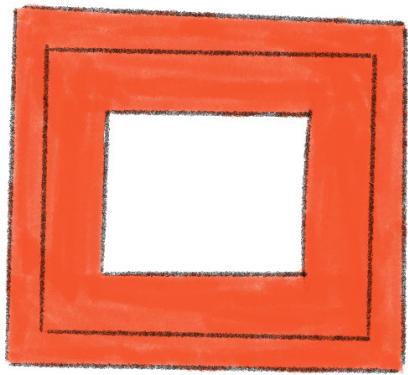
- **Duthie Park Winter Gardens** is always a great place to visit no matter the season. The cactus room houses Spike, a talking cactus which has captured the imagination of children in the city for years. There are tropical rooms, desert rooms, sensory rooms with colour and smell, a wishing pond, and lots of fishes and turtles to look at. You can find the Japanese Garden outside, as well as the huge expanse of Duthie Park to play in too!



- **Aberdeen University Zoology Museum and the Cruikshank Botanical Gardens.** The zoology building is a hidden gem in Tillydrone. Housing some amazing artifacts – birds, mammals, fish and eggs – it is packed with curiosities for your wee ones to explore. Bring some paper and pencils and draw the huge skeletal whale hanging from the roof. Imagine how big it was when it was still in the ocean. What would you do if the stuffed animals were real? What would they sound like? Exit the building at the back and find yourself in Cruikshank Gardens. With over 2,500 plants, there is plenty to explore, smell and touch as you walk around!

Monday – Friday 9am-5pm

If you are able to travel across the city, why not head to Doonies Farm? Hazlehead Park? Or even just head down the Beach Boulevard, or Footdee for the day? Learning more about your city together can be a great bonding experience.



DEN BUILDING AND STORYTELLING!

Every kid loves a den! They can be built from whatever is to hand in your home or garden and your little one will soon show you what can be done with so very little! Here's a few....

In the home...

- Table with tablecloth hanging down
- Dining chairs rowed up to make a tunnel to crawl through
- Clothes airer with a sheet or blanket hanging over it
- Deconstruct your sofa! If the cushions are removable they could make a space big enough to crawl into!
- Curtains! If they are long enough they can form a canopy by weighing them down onto a piece of nearby furniture?!
- A piece of rope or washing line strung across your room with a sheet draped over
- Cardboard boxes! (of course!) If you ever get a large item delivered that box will offer hours of play!

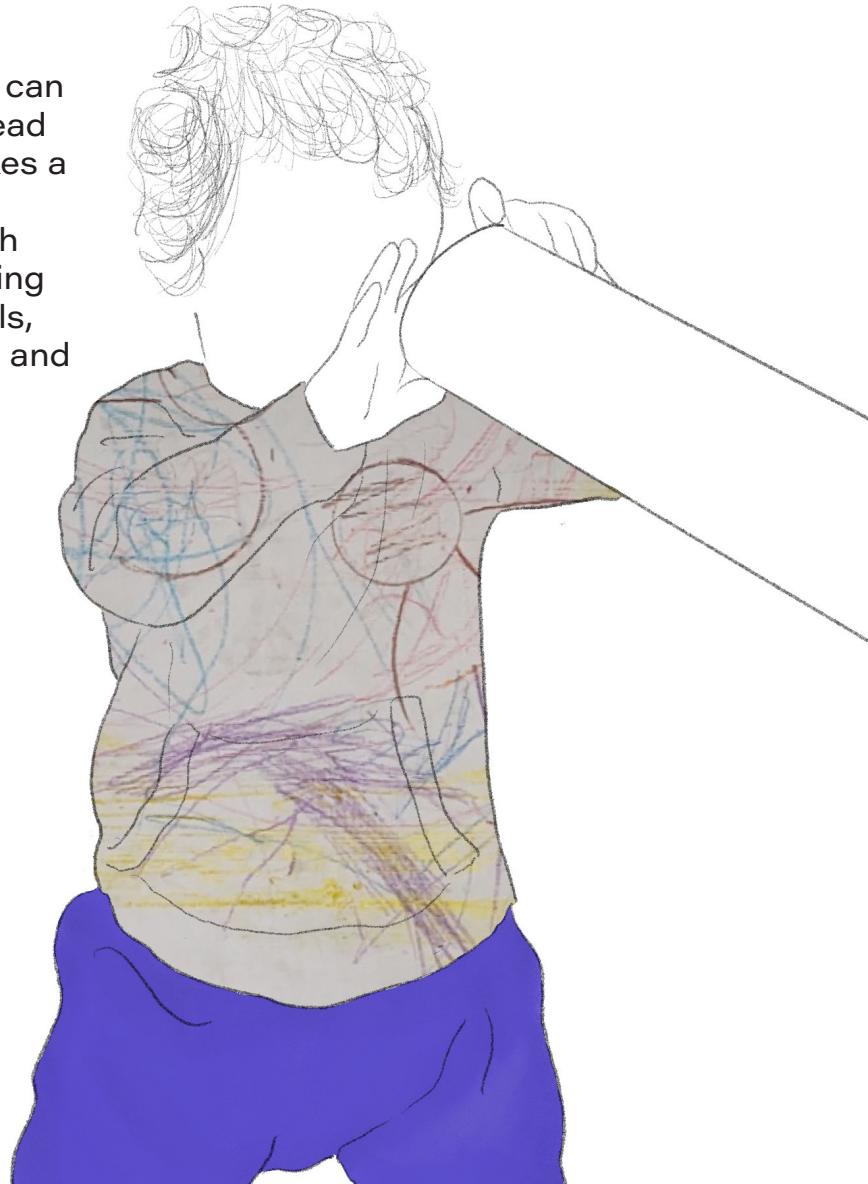
In the garden...

- Climbing frames / slides / trampolines with large sheet or tarpaulin over
- Washing line with a sheet / tarpaulin pegged over
- Bamboo canes from a garden centre which are bound at the top like a wigwam, sheet over the top
- Trees and shrubs which create a natural canopy

The sky truly is the limit for what a den can be made from! Follow your little ones lead – they will instinctively know what makes a good den!

Once it is made it can be cosied up with cushions and blankets, how about adding a toy telephone for those important calls, some pencils and paper to get creative and some books to read?!

This is the perfect space for a story together.





DRESS UP!

Do you remember dressing up when you were a child? Even just wearing your mum's or dad's clothes and becoming a grown up?!

These days there are so many ready-made costumes from the supermarket that they even appear regularly in charity shops for a few pounds now. But there is more fun and creativity to be found in making up your own! In the same way home-made playdough has very many more play possibilities than a ready-made toy which has only one play possibility. Making up your own costumes needn't involve a sewing machine but can just a bag of old clothes! Perhaps instead of passing unwanted items onto charity they can be put into a dress up box for rainy days and play dates?

Old handbags, belts, hats and accessories? Old tops and dresses that can easily be cut to fit? Goggles if you're going for a "swim"?! Work wear? A uniform? What's your job? You can both dress up and have a party! Decide who you are! What is the name of your character and what do they do?

This simple process can trigger so much discovery, chat and conversation, fun and laughter!

It's fun and very often freeing for a child to become a character, to become someone else! Their voice is that of the character, no longer their own, the same is true of talking through a puppet. Or perhaps their voice is their own but an older, grown up version of themselves? Lots of discoveries can be made through this process!

Remember to join in too – be a new character! Play a hero or a villain and chase them around. Become a monster, a princess – use your cardboard boxes to play and protect your castle or invade theirs. The more involved in the play you become, the more encouraging it is for your wee one to get lost in their stories!





LOOSE PARTS PLAY

Clear a space in the room and set out the following;

- Cardboard boxes
- Cardboard tubes
- Mazes from boxes and sheets of card
- Boxes filled with balls (ball pit balls can be bought from most supermarkets or why not make your own by scrunching up paper into tight ball shapes?)

Move the boxes around, some upright for throwing balls in, some laid on their side for rolling balls in – no end to the wonder of the cause and effect of rolling a ball down a tube and anticipating it appearing out of the other end! This activity in itself can keep many little ones very involved... There's lots of scope for rolling, throwing, catching and collecting the balls.

Parachute...

Gather around so each child can have a hold of the edge. You could use a bed sheet with the same effect!

- Whoosh it up high, stretching arms as high as they will go, then down low
- Children often love being on the underside of the parachute and being hidden then found!
- Throw balls onto the parachute / sheet and watch them get thrown into the air with every whoosh! This is good fun done with teddies and other toys too – look at them jump!

Loose Parts Play...

Aberdeen Play Forum run sessions using their "Loose parts kit". Loose parts are materials that do not have a specific play purpose such as den building materials (tarpaulins and rope), cardboard boxes, guttering, pipes, planks of wood, natural materials, chalk, balls, fabrics and more. The materials have the potential to be absolutely anything to the child which encourages them to be very imaginative and creative in their play with them.

Aberdeen Play Forum frequently run free loose parts play sessions in the parks around Aberdeen. They have a Facebook page which will keep you updated with their activities and their website is www.aberdeenplayforum.com which also lists their events.







WE HAVE HAD SUCH A BRILLIANT TIME
WITH GERONIMO IN MASTRICK AND WANT
TO THANK YOU ALL FOR MAKING IT SUCH A
GREAT EXPERIENCE!

'What will happen if I do this?...'
'it's over to you and your little ones to find out'

**Have fun and keep
Geronimo-ing!**

