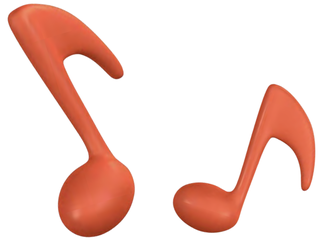

DREAMWORKS
DOOZIE'S DOGHOUSE
A little idea, a big adventure:
20 low pressure ideas for play





Dr Helen Dodd
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Sometimes the best adventures come from the simplest ideas. Parents can feel under pressure to keep their children busy and to organise structured activities, but children are amazing at creating their own fun when they are given the chance.

Together with Dr Helen Dodd, DreamWorks Animation and Doozie's Doghouse have put together a list of ideas to get children exploring, experimenting and imagining. These are invitations to play - there is no right or wrong way to approach them! No finished product to achieve and no need to turn play into another thing on your parenting to-do list. Sometimes the best thing a parent can do is make a little space, offer a few ideas, and then step back and let children lead.

These aren't activities that need to be organised; they simply give children a starting point to spark creativity. Leave room for them to develop what happens next, to change the rules, to experiment, take risks and follow their own interests. Give them space to play alone, or with friends or siblings, and give yourself a break.

In play, the process is more important than the outcome. It's not about creating something specific or beautiful, but about children exploring, experimenting and following their own ideas and interests.

We hope these ideas inspire some adventures!



1 A box could be anything

A cardboard box (or several!) can become almost anything. A spaceship, a secret hideaway, a shop, a submarine, a pet hotel or something nobody has thought of yet. Add some other recycling materials, such as cardboard tubes, cartons and packaging, and see what happens. You can cut, decorate, join things together and reinvent your creation as your play evolves. There are no rules about what it should become!



2 What can you build?

Cushions, sheets, duvets, pillows and chairs can become the building blocks for all sorts of adventures. A home, a castle, a mountain, a maze or something entirely different? It's up to you. Experiment, try things out, make mistakes and work out how to make your ideas happen. You might be surprised by what you come up with!

3 Open a shop

What kind of shop would you create? What would it sell? Anything is possible! Perhaps it's a toy shop, a shop selling things you've made, or something a little more unusual. What does your shop need? Signs, shelves, a till, special offers or its own currency? You get to decide what the shop sells, what things cost and how it all works.



4 Create a secret base

Everyone needs somewhere special to escape to! Find a place to make a secret base. It might be under a table, behind a bush, in a corner of the garden or somewhere unexpected. What happens inside? Who is allowed in? Does it have a secret password, special rules or a secret mission?

5 Torch adventure

Once it gets dark, grab a torch and explore the house in this new way. What can you see? What looks different in the dark? Can you find hidden corners, make enormous shadows or create shadowy creatures on the walls? Familiar places can feel like completely new worlds when you explore them by torchlight.

6 Make a magic potion

What goes into a magic potion? What should it look like, smell like or do? Explore mixing water with safe household ingredients and natural finds to create all sorts of interesting concoctions. Give your potion a name and invent a story about its magical properties. Mix, pour, experiment and see what happens. It might get a bit messy, but that's part of the fun! Just make sure you use safe ingredients and keep them away from mouths and eyes.

7 Make a wonderfully messy picture

What would you create if the aim wasn't a pretty picture but a messy one? What would you use to make it? Paint, crayons, old magazines, cardboard, glue or anything else you can find? Forget about making something neat or recognisable. Experiment with colours, textures and materials, and see where your imagination takes you. Ask an adult to set up a messy zone for you, maybe on the floor with a plastic mat or some bin bags down so you don't end up decorating the house!



8 Make some music

What different sounds can you make with things you find around the house? Pots, pans, wooden spoons, containers and cardboard tubes can all become musical instruments. Experiment with different sounds, rhythms and ways of playing. Can you combine them to make an orchestra? Play along to your favourite music? Or create a completely new kind of music? Have a go and see what you discover!



9 Create your own café

What would your café be called? What would be on the menu? Perhaps it's a café for teddy bears, a restaurant for grown-ups or somewhere that serves completely imaginary food. You can decide what to serve, create menus, set the tables and work out how your café operates. You could even have a special dish that nobody else can make!

10 Shadow drawing

Find a sunny spot or use a torch and see what shadows you can make. Place different objects in the light and watch their shadows appear. Can you draw around them? What happens when you move things closer or further away? Can you combine different shadows to create a new picture, creature or character? There are all sorts of things to discover when you start playing with light and shadows.

11 Water play

Water can provide hours of exploration. Find some containers, funnels, spoons and tubes and see what you can make water do. Can you move it from one place to another? Create a waterfall, build a waterway or invent a water-powered machine? What happens when you use different containers or change the way water flow? There's plenty to experiment with. Just choose a suitable place to play and make sure an adult keeps an eye on you around water.

12 Nature collection

Next time you're out for a walk, see what interesting things you can find in nature. Leaves, sticks, stones, feathers, seeds and all sorts of treasures might catch your eye. What makes them interesting? What colours can you find? What could you create with your collection when you get home?



13 Make & race your own cars

Can you make a car from things you find around the house? Cardboard boxes, tubes, bottle tops and other recycling materials might come in handy, or maybe you have some building blocks you could use. What will your car look like? How will it move? Once you've made your vehicles, where will they travel? Create your own racetrack, invent some obstacles or see whose car can travel the furthest. You might discover that your car needs a few changes along the way!



14 Put on a show

What kind of show would you like to put on? A puppet show, a dance, a comedy act, a magic show or something completely different? Make up characters, invent a story, create costumes or use toys as your performers. You don't even have to perform it; making up the show can be just as much fun!

15 Make your own board game

What would your ideal board game look like? Where would the players start and what might happen along the way? You could draw a board, make your own playing pieces, invent cards or create new rules. Are there unexpected challenges, shortcuts or surprises? You get to decide how the game works, and you can change the rules whenever you like!

16 Open an animal hospital

All the toys and stuffed animals need looking after! Who is poorly? What happened? What treatment do they need? Create your own animal hospital, complete with doctors, nurses, waiting rooms and whatever medical equipment you can invent. You could make patient records, give each animal a diagnosis or come up with some unusual treatments. It's up to you how the hospital works!

17 Make your own obstacle course

Can you create an obstacle course around the house or in the garden? Use cushions, chairs, tunnels, toys or whatever you can find to create a course that you can climb, crawl, jump or weave your way through. How many ways can you get from one end to the other? Can you make it trickier, invent new challenges or change the course completely? You decide how it works and how adventurous to make it. Keep obstacles stable and avoid anything that could lead to a fall from height.



18 Dress up & become someone new

Who would you like to be today? A pirate, an explorer, a superhero, a famous singer or someone who doesn't exist yet? What can you find around your house to try on or use as a costume? It can be as silly as you like! Can you make up a story about the person you become? Who are they? Where are they? What's happened to them?



19 Stories in the sky, stories in your home

Where can you find ideas for stories? Maybe look up at the sky and see what you can spot in the clouds. Can you see animals, faces, monsters or strange shapes? Or look around your house and see what you can find to inspire your next story – does that broom belong to a witch? Has that teddy been around the world? Is that pan a soldier's helmet? Invent stories about what you see - there are no wrong answers!

20 Create something yummy to eat

What would you most like to eat? Perhaps it's a delicious cake, an unusual sandwich, a colourful fruit creation or your dream ice cream sundae. Draw what it would look like, write your own recipe, or have a go at making it for real. Experiment with different combinations and invent something entirely new. The choice is yours! An adult can help with knives, cooking and any ingredients that need preparing.