

**ACTIVITIES & LINKS TO KEEP  
YOUR 18 MONTHS - 3.5 YEARS OLD ACTIVE &  
HAVING FUN WHILE THEY ARE AT HOME.**



SmartKids' "Play-2-Learn" builds on 40+ years of experience demonstrating how learning through play is a powerful and effective approach to ensure children's healthy development, wellbeing, and learning.

Play can support the holistic development and resilience children need to thrive in a complex and constantly changing world.

Kind Regards, International Child Care & Learning Centres

## QUICK SET UP ACTIVITIES

### CIRCLE HUNT

How many circles can you find in your house? Start a challenge to find as many circles as you can and place them on something circular e.g. a tray or plate. What a beautiful collection! You can extend this activity by doing the same for other shapes.

### COLOUR POSTING ACTIVITY

You can make this posting activity out of an old box and envelopes. Find some clip art images with your child's current interests in different colours e.g. Cars, animals. Print out twice with one for the envelope and the other folded into a card. Encourage sorting the colours, matching the pictures, putting the cards in and out of the envelopes and posting them over and over. This is a fun activity that also develops vocabulary, fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, colour recognition and memory skills!

### SALT DOUGH KEEPSAKES

All you need is: Flour (2cups), salt (1 cup) and warm water. Mould into whatever shape your child would like to make or roll and use cookie cutters to create shapes then bake at 350 for 30-40mins. Alternatively, you can air dry it for 2-3 days.

If you would like to thread these and make a necklace or chain, then push a toothpick or skewer through the dough shape before you bake it.



### WATERCOLOUR STRAW PAINTING

All you need is a few little drops of liquid watercolour (water and food colouring mixed together) and a straw. Add a couple of drops of watercolour onto some paper or a canvas and blow through the straw to spread it out.



## TOILET TRAINING YOUR CHILD

At SmartKids we have a wide experience on children's toilet training so we are well equipped to help you and your child through this milestone and help your child develop positive self-esteem through the process. (ACECQA's dedicated parenting site) has wonderful tips for families in their toilet training journey. <https://www.startingblocks.gov.au/at-home/toilettraining-your-child/>

## ARE YOU STUCK IN HOW TO GET PLAY STARTED WITH YOUR CHILD?

Child-led play means following your child's lead in play. It means watching your child and responding to what she says or does to keep her attention focused a little bit longer. Following your child's lead is good because your child learns best when he's interested in an activity. When you follow your child's lead in play, you can take advantage of things that interest him to help him learn something new through play. <https://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/play-learning>

## RAISINGCHILDREN

Raisingchildren.net.au, provides free, reliable, up-to-date and independent information to help your family grow and thrive together. The organization is funded by the Australian Government, reviewed by experts and non-commercial.

Designed for busy families and full of tips and tricks for you to try, the content is easy to find and easy to digest. It offers answers to hundreds of parenting questions, where and when you need them.

The articles, videos and interactive resources are tailored to different ages and stages, taking you from nurturing a newborn to raising a confident, resilient teen – and helping you to look after yourself as a parent too.

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers>

## ACTIVITIES WITH MINIMAL RESOURCES



### BIG AND SMALL SORTING ACTIVITY

This activity is simple and easy to prepare and you can use any kind of toys that your child likes but the toys should visibly be different sizes. On a tray, place a large piece of paper with SMALL and BIG in words and in picture form on each half of the paper. This activity helps children develop spatial awareness, critical reasoning and problem-solving skills.



### LEAF THREADING

Collect leaves from your backyard or when you go walking with your child. You can make simple "needles" by tying a length of jute twine between two sticks (one at either end of the length of twine). Encourage your child to use both hands simultaneously to hold the leaf with one hand and push the stick with the other. Hand-eye co-ordination is strengthened and the fine motor muscles of the hands and arms are given a good work out.



### SAND DRAWING

Print out a sheet of Aboriginal symbols or animal tracks and head out into the sandpit to draw the symbols in the sand. Encourage children to copy the symbols or create their own. This activity is also wonderful for developing fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination which will prepare them for controlling a pencil when learning to write.

## PLAY IDEAS TO ENCOURAGE YOUNG CHILDREN'S EMOTIONS

Playing with you and with other children helps them to explore and understand their feelings. Here are some play tips for you and your child:

- Give your child opportunities for messy play, like playing with sand, mud or paints. This is a great way for children to express feelings like happiness or sadness.
- Look for imaginative and creative ways for your child to play. Your child could act out feelings with puppets or toys, or use old clothes for dress-up games and pretend play. For example, your preschooler could pretend to be kind and concerned like a teacher or a doctor.
- Take your child outside to play in a park or open area with space for running, tumbling and rolling. This can help your child let out emotions.
- Encourage your child to paint and draw as a way of expressing emotions. Painting and drawing can soothe and calm your child if they're frustrated or sad.
- Encourage your child to jump around and 'act out' music or make music with simple instruments.
- Give your child chances to play with children of all ages and abilities. By playing with other children, your child can learn how to understand and manage emotions.
- Read stories that feature characters who are experiencing similar situations and emotions to your child. This can help your child understand new emotions like grief about a pet's death or worry about starting school.
- Let your child lead play. Your child might find it easier to express feelings if they feel in charge.

## emotions

