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## Early Learning and Child Development Fun and Interactive Activities

Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve recognizes and affirms that culture and language are the fundamental part of a child's development and reflect the uniqueness of our First Nations communities as we take into account the emotional, social, spiritual, physical and intellectual needs of its children. Our six key components include: (1) culture and language, (2) education, (3) health promotion, (4) nutrition, (5) parent and family involvement, and (6) social support.

*Please consider safely using the following activities with adult supervision. Depending upon the age group, you may want to consider how you use the following examples and what materials are safe and hazardous free. For example: avoid small material items that could cause choking; avoid the use of items which are sharp, unclean and/ or unsanitary.*

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### Active Play

Consider how physical activity can be incorporated into your child's daily activities. Climbing stairs, hopping, skipping, jumping, running, throwing and catching a ball are great ways to get physical! Include balancing on one foot, locomotion (moving from one place to another), and coordination (hand-eye or foot-eye co-ordination). Consider ways to make it fun like a sports day, make ribbons or map out the activities.

### Build a Fort

Use blankets, sheets etc. to build a fort. Some children like to add items to the fort such as flashlights, teddy bears, pillows, music etc. To add to the fun you could have a picnic or share snacks in the fort.

### Going on a Bear Hunt

This is a fun game to play with children. You can call out the following and children will follow your lead. "Let's go on a bear hunt, are you ready, here we go" you can slap your hands on your lap as you add to the story. For example " Oh Look! I see a forest, We can't go around it, we can't go under it ,Let's go through it!" Use your feet to show how you walk through the forest.



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You can then add items such as going over a mountain, through a stream, a swamp or over/under the bridge.

The highlight is “Going into the Cave...the dark, cold cave....” This is when children get really excited. “Better use my flashlight, oh no its not working!” “Oh what’s that, its big, its furry.....It’s a Bear!!!” Then repeat all the things you did as you go all the way back home.

You can add feeling to the walk such as going through the forest. “ Brrrr.....its cold” as you use your hands on your arms to show the cold air. Some children may say we forgot our coat or boots- show how you will put on your coat or boots, zip zippers etc. Add soft foot steps to show how we walk softly amongst the forest ground.

Children enjoy drawing pictures after their experience on a Bear Hunt.

We're Going on a Bear Hunt | A Cosmic Kids Yoga Adventure!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAT5NiWHFIU>

### I Spy

A player will find an object, item or identify letters from a-z for the other player to guess. Take turns to guess items and say “ I spy with my little eye.....something that is the color Red.” The player will guess what items are the color red and once find it they take the next turn. Make it fun for the player such as “Brown Bear, Brown Bear what do you see?”

### Puzzles

Exercise those creative, cognitive and problem-solving muscles with a good puzzle. Have your child draw a picture on a cardboard or paper. Then use a felt or pencil to outline puzzle pieces directly on their drawing. Cut out the pieces with a pair of scissors, mix them up and get solving!

<https://www.diyncrafts.com/42896/home/parenting/15-easy-diy-kids-puzzles-that-are-funto-make-and-play-with>



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*Photo Credits- online images of Kids Yoga Animal Pose*

### Hide and Seek

One person covers his or her eyes and counts aloud while the other players hide. When the person is finished counting- he or she begins looking for the hiders. The last hider to be found is then next to count.

### Treasure Hunts

Draw some clues on some pieces of paper — have fun with this and get creative. Put the first clue somewhere easy to find. Then leave as many clues as you like, making a trail to the final clue. Instead of a prize, the treasure hunt can lead to something special such as a hug, high five or special time together.

### Simon Says

Choose one player to play the role of “Simon”. The rest of the players will gather in a circle or line in front of Simon as she/he calls out actions starting with the phrase “Simon says”: “Simon says...touch your toes.” The players then have to copy Simon’s action, touching their toes. If Simon calls out an action without uttering the phrase “Simon says,” the players must not do the action. If a child touches his toes when Simon didn’t say..., he or she is out of the game.

### What’s inside the Box?

Use an empty box or a container that you can place items into. You could cover it with a towel or with colored paper to make it challenging for others to guess. Have one player place items

### Freeze Game

Have players freeze in specific poses: animals, shapes, letters or Fun Yoga Poses such as Frog, cow or turtle.

Then you could guess what the pose is or have them try another one.

Sun Salutations & Yoga with Animals -Yoga for kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8oGR5xucItI>



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such fabric, nature items, toy etc. for other to guess. To make it fun you can place a blind hold over a players eyes so they cannot see what is in the box. Allow the player to feel the item as they try to guess what's inside the box.

### My Masterpiece-Collage

Children enjoy creating their very own masterpiece! You can have them create this on an old plate, cookie sheet or piece of cardboard. Items in the home that are no longer of use are a great way for them to use their imagination and creativity skills. Items such as old shoe box, gift wrap, gift box, old tins, cotton, fabrics, berry baskets, yarn, buttons, craft paper, felts, crayons etc. You could add items from outside such as bark, sticks, and rocks. If you

This is a great opportunity to share weaving/crafting skills

### Create a puppet



Take a clean gently used sock to create a puppet. This is a great way to share a story, have a puppet show, play a guessing game and have fun with. Use felts to create eyes and a mouth, if you have old buttons or yarn, you could attach to create eyes, or hair for your puppet.

*Photo Credits- online images sock puppet*

### Make Playdough -Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup salt
- 4 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 2 cups lukewarm water
- 2 Tablespoons of vegetable oil (coconut oil works too)
- Food coloring, optional
- Quart sized bag

Stir together the flour, salt and cream of tartar in a large pot. Next add the water and oil. If you're only making one color, add in the color now as well. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly. Continue stirring until the dough has thickened and begins to form into a ball.



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Remove from heat and then place inside a gallon sized bag or onto wax paper. Allow to cool slightly and then knead until smooth. If you're adding colors after, divide the dough into balls (for how many colors you want) and then add the dough into the quart sized bags. Start with about 5 drops of color and add more to brighten it. Knead the dough, while inside the bag so it doesn't stain your hands. Once it's all mixed together you're ready to PLAY. Store the play dough inside the bags once done to keep soft. Keeps for up to 3 months. Use safe house hold items such as butter knives, cookie cutters and other fun items to create and explore with.

*\*How to playdough without Cream of Tartar and absolutely no cooking! Follow the below link for step by step instructions.*

Ingredients:

4 cups of flour

1 1/2 cups salt

2 tbsp oil

1 cup warm water

food coloring

How to Make Playdough WITHOUT Cream of Tartar and No Cook!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2ytbSa3mPg>

### Balancing Game

Need a small object such as a pencil, eraser — or similar object to place on head. Play music as each child walks around balancing the object on their head. If the object falls off the child is frozen until another comes and places the object back on the head. Everyone stops and resets their object when the music stops. Game starts over when the music again starts.

### Memory Game

Hide up to five items under a small dish cloth. Lift up the cloth and allow the children to remember what is there. After a few moments cover the items with the cloth and slowly hide/take away one item. Then lift the cloth up and have them guess what was taken away. This is a great way to guess colors, objects and/or names.

## Importance of Balance, Structure and Routines

Children thrive with structure, it's imperative that we continue a daily routine. Roles and responsibilities guide children in understanding how to follow basic instruction and sense of organization, stability, and comfort. This also assists them in developing healthy, positive



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behavior and a sense of personal control. Routines not only have emotional benefits but health benefits as well!

CBC News. As many schools and workplaces shut down, families, individuals and communities are heading out to the land to put cultural teachings into practice and as a way to keep each other safe through social distancing. For some, this has meant taking time to teach younger generations and community members how to harvest medicines, emphasizing the importance of passing on intergenerational knowledge at a time when there's heightened concern for the health and well-being of elders.

### COVID-19 concerns, closures have families and communities heading out on the land

#### Meal Time

Sharing a family meal together. Have children assist you in setting the table, the preparation of the meal and clean up time. Children love to be helpers and enjoy taking on the role during this time. Take turns speaking about what you were grateful for on this day, what made you laugh or what you learnt in the day.

#### Prayer and time for Honoring

Consider early morning and/or sunset prayers with your children.

“Creator we thank you for this day, for our loved ones, the land, the water, and the animals. “

#### Bed Time

Practice a regular routine for bedtime. Perhaps having a bath, brushing your teeth, washing your hands and face or reading a book together will assist children in resting well for the night.

#### Other Helpful links

Build up your language skills and check out the games on the First Voices website.

First Voices- <https://www.firstvoices.com/>

50 Ways to Keep Kids Engaged at Home during the Coronavirus Shutdown.

<https://www.amightygirl.com/blog?p=29196>

How to talk to your children about Coronavirus. <https://www.unicef.org.au/blog/news-andinsights/march-2020/how-to-talk-to-your-children-about-coronavirus>