Learning at home without the computer


‘Me and my sister. She’s bigger than me’


’She’s got sticky up hair’

Create pictures with what you can find in the garden or the park. Take a photo and talk about or write down what your child tells you about the picture they made. You can also encourage pattern making through this activity too.

Make a den together. Spend some time inside it together reading or telling stories. Put teddies inside and tuck them up in bed or have a pretend campfire (sing a song or two) or

have a picnic. Make it dark inside and use a torch to make shadows and interesting shapes on the roof of your den. Decorate with twinkling lights or home made paper decorations.

Make an Easter card, practise your cutting and sticking. Lots of ideas on the internet. Write a message inside together and post it to a friend or relative. Your child could practice writing their name inside.

Hide Easter eggs (or other objects) around the house. Give your child clues about where they are hidden ‘it's high up’, it's behind a chair’ ‘it's near something that makes you warm’. This will develop their understanding of language and give you some fun! Your child could then hide objects and give you clues as you search.

Collect safe ingredients and mix magic potions. Write down your recipe and decide what the potion is for: ‘my potion makes teddies laugh’. Make the mixture in a bottle and add a homemade label.

Collect items from your garden or the park and sort them into groups in different ways. Colour/texture/smell and so on.

Write words on lolly-stick (or pieces of paper), choose a work, say it, placing the lolly stick on the sheet, spell it with plastic letters and have a go at writing it.

Cover a tray in shaving foam, practice writing numerals, letters and words. You can do the same with sprinkles/salt/flour/sand or fine soil. You may need to show your child first or hold their hand while they have a go.

Use your favourite biscuit recipe, weigh and mix together. Use smarties to make number patterns on different size and shape biscuits. Count and talk. Then eat them!

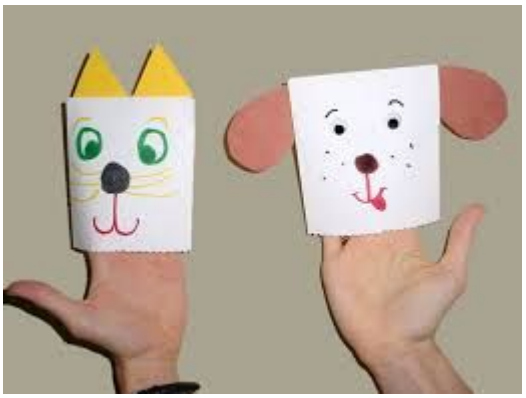
Collect your own pebbles in the garden or park. Take them home and wash them together. Then using a permanent marker write the numbers or dots on the pebbles. Have fun putting

them in order, matching dots to numerals and playing ‘guess which one I hid’, ‘which one is missing?’.

Match the cups to the dots.

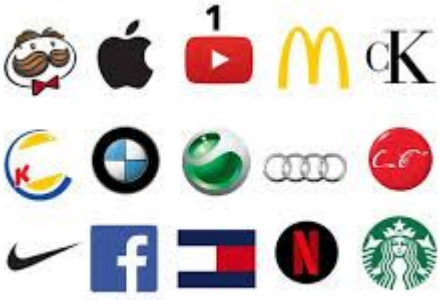
Make your own board game and play it. Practice counting and taking turns.

Make shakers using household objects. Use these to play rhythmically to a favourite piece of music or a Nursery Rhyme.



Make puppets from envelopes to retell a favourite story, describe how each character looks as you make them

Make a frame for your favourite photo using an old cereal box and decorate. Measure how long each side needs to be.



Collect labels from packaging and create a logo game where children have to guess the product from the logo.

Make Ice cream in a bag. Full instructions can be found here
https://www.sciencebuddies.org/stem-activities/ice-cream-bag#instructions

Make sensory bags, using freezer bags and materials found in the home such as water, jelly, shampoo and add other objects such as buttons and pom poms. Encourage children to feel them and manipulate the materials within them. Look at how the materials move. This develops hand strength and finger movement. You can also place 2 sets of coloured buttons in the bag and draw two circles on the outside labelling them with the colours, e.g. purple and green, then the child should move the buttons through the shampoo into the circles.
This can be done with animals, shapes, numbers.

In a large bowl or the bath, add a teaspoon of sugar to some washing up liquid. Use different tools to make bubbles, potato masher, whisk, slotted spoon, normal spoon.

Explore floating and sinking in the sink or at bath time. Allow children to physically sort their predictions or findings as shown in the picture.

Go on a bird watch, minibeast watch or animal watch. Listen for the animals and talk about them. You could even make a minibeast hotel, using sticks, logs and leaves from the garden.

Make a map of either a story, a journey or trip you have taken or place in the world. Photos can be taken and sequenced.

Try to work out which type of chocolate melts the fastest, or place a piece of chocolate in different places to work out where it melts. The same can be done with ice cubes or jelly.

Cut the top off a carrot, place in a saucer of water, what happens. Try with a parsnip, celery and other vegetables. Look and measure every day.

Here is a simple cold water playdough recipe. This encourages both counting and number recognition if following the recipe. Kneading the dough also develops physical development.The dough can be used for:

- Making models, rolling and cutting out shapes with a cutter, imprinting textures from shells, buttons etc.
- Make words, letters, shapes and numbers using the dough.
- Make sausages and snakes of different lengths or set lengths to measure.
- Make the biscuit shapes and cut in half, quarters etc.
- Cut it or make marks in it with different tools (pizza cutter, knives, forks, chopsticks, garlic press, potato masher)

2 cups of flour
1 cup of salt
1 cup of water
A splash of oil.
Add the water gradually to the dry ingredients as this will ensure the dough is not too wet.

To make this a more sensory experience, try adding one or more of the following to the dough and explore what happens, how it smells or feels:

- Vinegar
- Marmalade
- Mustard
- Conditioner
- Jelly crystals
- Fruit tea (twinings partic mango and cinnamon)
- Toothpaste (own brands) try adding fresh mint
- Bubble bath – no opaque ones
- Rocksalt
- Dried lavender or herbs
- Stuffing
- Shampoo
- Cup a soup
- Coffee
- Cocoa powder
- Jam
- Broken cinnamon sticks or cinnamon and the sticks out

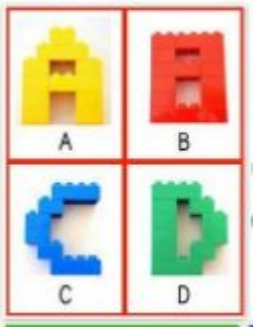
- Cooking chocolate and warm water.
- Rice
- Sawdust
- Try bubble baths etc with and without water
- Lentils and lentil puree
- Glitter
- Lemonade and raisins

You could also try to make Homemade paint (add water to change consistency)

1 cup flour, 1 cup water, 1 cup washing up liquid, Food colouring

For practicing number recognition - roll a dice and collect the correct lego piece to match. What can they make from all the pieces collected?

Measurement- choose some household objects. Ask the child how many bricks they think they need to match the item's length. Then line up the lego pieces against the object to test their guesses.



Spell your name with lego pieces.

Each child (or a child and a grown up) has the same lego pieces or similar building equipment or objects. Place a barrier between them so they can't see what each other are doing. One child gives instructions to describe what to build and they build together. At the end, lift the barrier and see if you have managed to build the same thing. Did the instructor give clear instructions? Did the listener listen well?

Collect a set of paired objects from around your house. Can your child match them?

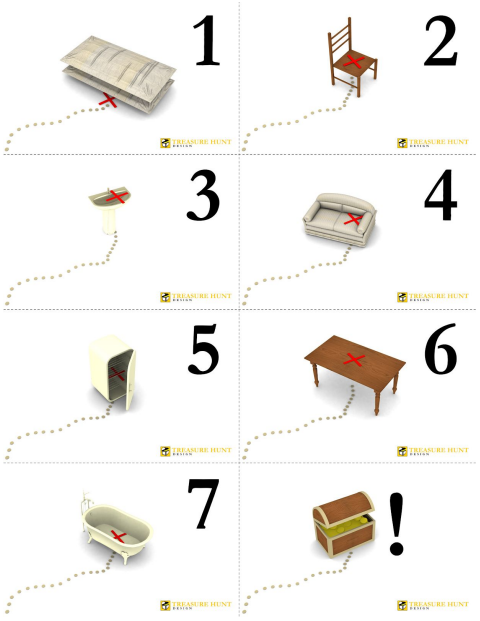
Make a small set of objects and ask your child to ‘find me the one that you can cuddle/read/wear’ etc.

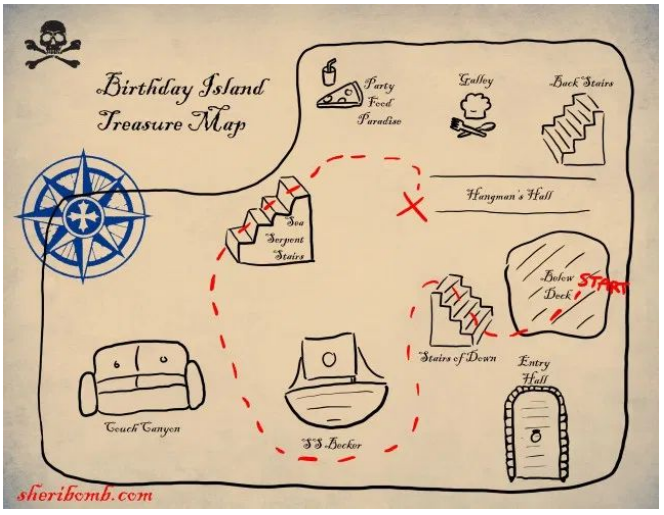
Make a miniature garden using an old pot and plants from the garden.

Make repeating patterns using natural objects. Can they describe what the pattern is?

Can they put it right if it is incorrect?

Using kitchen weighing scales- weigh an everyday item. Discuss the weight. See what you can find around the house which may weigh more/less than the first item. Can you predict what it might weigh?





A HOUSEBOUND TREASURE HUNT

Create a map of your home and hide small items around it. Mark each piece of hidden treasure on the map. Explain the map to the child and offer your support for the hunting game in case they need it.

You can use word cards describing a place where you have hidden an item. For example: “I am cold and make a ‘bing bing’ noise if left open”. The answer is the fridge.

Even once they’ve found all the treasure, why not get them to organise their own hunt? They can draw their own map or come up with their own cryptic questions to send you on a great search.

If you have a collection of different jars, bottles etc you can ask how many (of the second bottle for example) do you need to fill the first jar?

Use old socks and scraps of fabric to make sock puppets and tell a story. Give your puppets names and interview them to find out about what they like to eat, or do, or where they went on holiday for instance. You could even get your child to teach them maths/spellings or read them a story. If you have enough puppets and hands the puppets could have a party and chat to each other.

Turn your kitchen into a shop...take out some packets, tins, bottles etc and add prices to them. Provide some coins and invite the child to buy some items (good for coin recognition). Can they give you the correct coins? Alternatively, they could be the shopkeeper.

Go on a shape hunt. What shapes can you find around the house/garden? Can you describe any properties of these shapes?

Make a sock caterpillar and take it on an adventure around the house or garden. Make it a habitat or house from cardboard boxes.

Make pompoms with card and wool. Pompoms can then be made into creatures.

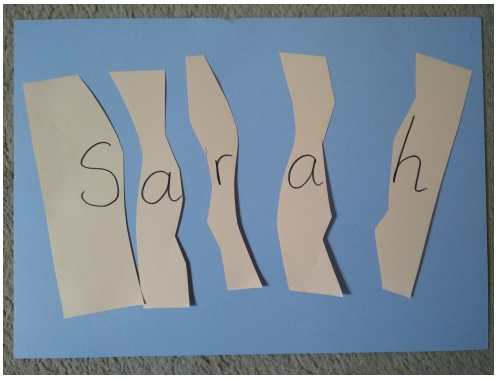
Collect lots of cardboard containers and boxes, use them to make, castles, ships, robots and maybe even a whole town!

Make pretend ice cream with coloured cotton wool or tissue paper and cones made of paper or card. Write a price list. Using real coins, pretend to buy the ice cream using shop ‘language’.

Go on a word/letter hunt around your house. Look for words and letters you know on items found around the house (cereal boxes, books, other products) or collect objects beginning with a phonics sound of your choice.

Look through your favorite picture book and retell the story using the pictures as clues. Tell your stuffed animals, toys or siblings the story. Record yourself telling the story using a recording application.

Write your child's name in outline and ask them to decorate it.



Turn your child's name into a jigsaw puzzle. Muddle it up and see if they can make it right.

Make your own alphabet book using pictures from magazines or comics.

Make your own bowling alley with plastic bottles and either sand or water as a weight. Using a ball see how many you can knock down. Make a score card and use this as an opportunity to do some maths!

Make a ramp with card and books. Collect a variety of wheeled toys, or rollable objects. Roll them down the ramp and measure and record how far they go. Raise the ramp...what happens now? Which toys rolls the furthest?



Make boats out of a variety of materials. Test their floating ability. Try adding coins to see how much weight makes each boat sink. Which boat is best?


Make a bug or pet rock. Hide it outside. Give someone a clue to see if they can find it. If you are painting your rock, add PVA glue to the paint so that it sticks.

Tape together pieces of paper and lay down in a sunny spot. Arrange toys along the edge and trace around their outlines on the paper.

Bubble wrap stomp painting- try this outside or on a washable hard floor-have plenty of towels ready!

Cornflour painting play. Another one for the kitchen or outside: mix cornflour with a little water and food colouring...add a few washable small toys and enjoy!


Pots and pans band. Use wooden spoons as drumsticks. Put your ear plugs in and make a lot of noise together, sing or use the radio or a favourite track to accompany you!

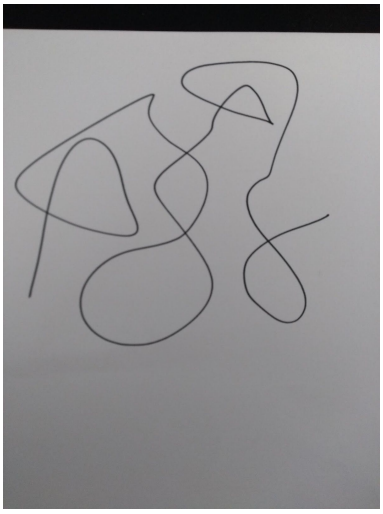

Build an indoor obstacle course. Time how long a circuit takes you, try and set a record. Add instruction cards at each activity or arrows made of tape to follow or draw a plan or map. Then design a new one with different physical challenges. Practice using verbs like climb, jump, balance, crawl, hop…or positional vocabulary: over, under, though, around, between...


You will need straws, cotton wool balls or scrunched up paper balls, something to be a goal (make out of blocks, cereal packets). Simply blow your ball into your opponent's goal. Alternatively make an obstacle course and blow your ball around it.

Make holes in a cardboard box, or use plastic cups or build similar from lego or building blocks. Make a ‘golf club’ from rolled newspaper and tap in a ping pong or light plastic ball. You may like to give each target a score and add your score up as you go.

Blow up a balloon. You can play this either with everyone positioned as in the photo above or seated on the floor or on chairs. See how many times you can pass the balloon without it touching the ground.

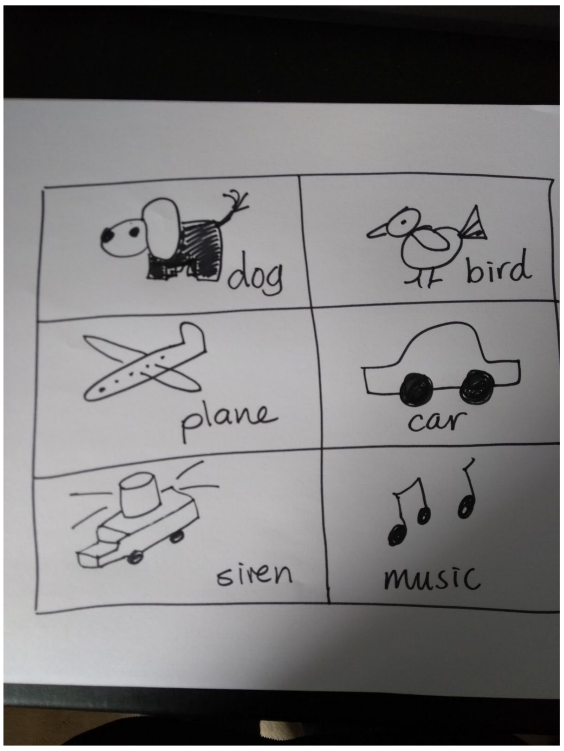
Fill a bucket or washing up bowl with lots of foam/bubble bath. Hide washable toys in the foam and explore. Add food colouring if you wish.




One person makes a doodle, then challenges the next person to make something within the doodle.

Paint with water outside on the patio or driveway.


Draw with chalk on the ground outside. Put yourself in the picture and take a photo!

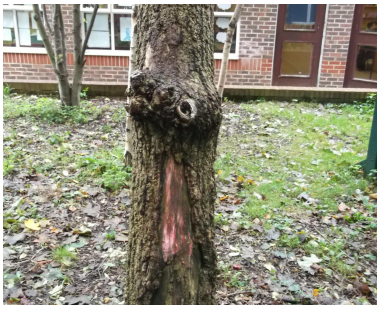


Make a sound bingo board. Sit still and listen. Put a counter on the picture when you hear the sound.

Build something with all those boxes coming with your household deliveries. Or just tape the boxes shut and use them as giant building bricks.

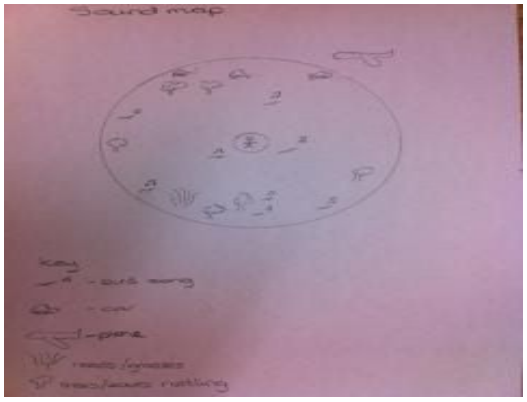
Create a class of stuffed toys and play schools. Write a register, read them a story, teach them maths…

Children collect a handful of sticks and make capital letters (can also be done inside with lolly sticks or straws/cutlery). Children can also make letters out of other natural resources such as stones, leaves. Ask your child to collect items/ take photographs/write & draw objects from the outside beginning with their letters. Put the items in alphabetical order. Share what has been found and discuss which is manmade or natural.



Children to look at trees for natural features that can be used to create faces. Then use chalk to bring out the features. Once they are happy with their character they can describe it. You can then take photos and children can write up their descriptions.

Ask children to select a number of leaves from the ground. Children to then place them in order from greenest to brownest/lightest to darkest. Discuss with the children why they put them in that order/does everyone agree?



Using an image of a blank CD on a piece of paper, children are to sit in an area and mark sounds using symbols thinking about the distance and direction from their position.

Use leaves to make multiplication fun. Children to find leaves (compound leaves seem to work best) and make up multiplication sums. For example: ones like a horse chestnut leaf. These have lovely “hand-shaped” leaves each with 5 leaflets. So 1 leaf has 5 leaflets, 2 leaves have 10 leaflets, 3 leaves have 15 leaflets.

Using thin paper and crayons (or aluminium foil and your fingers to gently run and press) make rubbings of different textures around the house or in the garden. You can then cut these out and make pictures.

Collect natural objects and use them to make a mobile.

Cut the potato into a design (supervise use of knives!) You can also use small sponges to cut into designs.
Place a little water based paint into a shallow container. PRINT!
Once your printing design is dry you can draw on the top with felt pens or crayons.

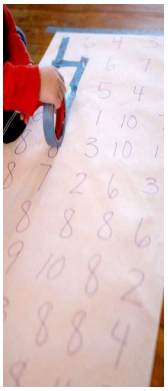
Try printing with other vegetables, leaves or other washable or disposable objects. Try to predict what the print will look like.

Use egg boxes to make cute creatures.

Make a lego marble maze.

Make a marble run out of toilet roll.

Fill each glass with fresh water from the tap. Put 2-5 drops of food coloring into it, one color each. You can
also mix the colors (e.g. blue + yellow = green) to get all the rainbow colors. Trim at least half an inch of
stem off the flowers before putting each into the glass and each time you change the water.



Make a number maze by writing a grid of numbers on a big sheet of paper. You can do this smaller on just a sheet of regular paper too. First, write the number 8 (can be any number though) from thectop to the bottom, going back and forth, making sure it

is connected like a maze. Then fill in with other random number to 10. Set out a roll of tape and a scissors or highlighter pen for your kid to follow the number 8 from the start to the finish. After they connect the first number 8 to the next one and cut off the tape. Then again, connecting that 8 to the next one. And so on.

They may observe that tape lines look like numbers too – at first it looked like a 4 and then towards the end it looked like a 5.