

Keeping Young Ones Happy and Occupied During School Time: Ideas for Home Schooling Families

By: Malia Russell

- **ACTIVITY TOTES OR SHOEBOXES:**

Place a complete activity in a tote bag or shoe box. Do not spend a fortune on these, just pull out the ones you have lurking in the closets or garage and use each one for a different purpose.

- A few pieces of paper and scissors, glue stick if they can handle it alone
- String and Ruler, or tailor's measuring tape.
- Crayons and coloring book
- Lacing cards: Cardboard shapes (use empty cereal boxes) with holes punched all around. Attach yarn, wrap tape around the end.

If they are older, let them make their own lacing cards, or cards for siblings.

- Chalk and dark colored construction paper
- Unopened junk mail, free stickers, used stamps, mailing labels
- Stencils and colored pencils
- Paper Punch and paper
- Store some great big bed sheets and let them use them for a fort. You can even use your unwashed sheets on wash day. Let them play with them for awhile until you are ready for that load to go in the wash.
- Nuts and bolts, same or different sizes.
- Make a necklace or snack chain with yarn

(masking tape on end) and any cereal with holes: Froot Loops, Cheerios, etc.

- Magnet and paperclips, washers, a nail, etc.
- Button box: variety of old buttons to sort or string.
- An empty shoe box with a cord tied through a hole poked in one end, to use as a wagon to pull a stuffed animal all around the house.
- Put a card in the bag telling them what to put in the bag. Example: All blue things, all square things, all things starting with the letter A
- Doll box: a small doll with clothes, a bottle, pacifiers, bibs, a baby spoon, a baby dish, etc.

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- RUBBERMADE ACTIVITIES:

These are a little messier, so keep these on a shelf until you want them used.

- White rice and some measuring cups, spoons with and without slots, cars, dump trucks
- Shallow water bucket on the porch with cups, spoons, eye droppers, boats. You can also do this in the big bathtub. Put them in their suits and let them have the bucket in there with them. Clearly, stick nearby, but you can do math drills anywhere, right?

- Bucket of water and a paintbrush-for outside painting. Works best on wood or concrete.
- Beanbags or rolled socks and a bucket.
- Actually fill it with sand and small cheap sand toys that can be found at the dollar store.

- ACTIVITY CLOSET:

These are things requiring lots of supervision or many small parts. Keep them in a special place like a closet where only you can access them.

- Playdoh with plastic utensils and a paper plate
- Water Paint books (only requires water on the paint brush)
- Food coloring in water with a Q-tip

- Plastic (or cardboard) coins and a piggy bank - bought or home-made (Pringles can, slit cut in top).
- Writing practice (Put salt, rice, or cornmeal in the bottom of a shallow box or cookie sheet to practice writing the letters with their fingers.
- Scrap wood, hammer, nails.
- Math manipulatives, simple to complex puzzles, peg boards, pattern blocks
- Sandpaper letters and numbers cut from sandpaper and glued onto 3 X 5 cards. Trace the letters with a finger while the letter is said out loud.