

## HENLEY PARISH PLAYGROUP

Times are tough at the moment and children can react to stress in many different ways. Some things to look out for may include tantrums or having a sore tummy. Try to respond to these in a calm and loving way. Check back with them about how they are feeling when they are calm and provide them with extra care, comfort and love.

I am sure you are all missing playgroup as much as we are missing you so we thought it would be nice to stay connected through sharing some ideas, songs our playdough recipe and some great website links.

### Be creative about new activities and include some exercise every day!

Adding fun activities into your daily routine, like doing a puzzle or having family game time each afternoon gives everyone something to look forward to. It is a great way to introduce new skills and helps to build structure and ensure that everyone in the family has a chance to share with other family members their favourite activity.

Think of activities you did before screen time became such a large part of our lives. Maybe have a family brainstorming over dinner and write a list of simple activities, such as imaginary games, singing and dancing, art and craft ideas, board games, household projects. Once you start writing your list you may be surprised how creative you can be.

Here are some ideas to get you started - what my family did when our children were little ....aka...(in the olden days).

#### Art and Craft activities:

Just remember **Less is Best**. I think it is a good idea to have a "special container" that comes out only when it is family Art and Craft time.

*Paper, scissors, pencils or texta's, glue, wool, beads, paints, playdough, lots of odds and sods like buttons, cotton balls, bottle tops, recycle all containers like yogurt, chip packets, boxes, shoe laces and a hole punch.*

Then you don't spend too much time sourcing what you need for an activity and everyone can look forward to the time in the day when the "special container" comes out of the cupboard.

#### Fine Motor Activities:

Activities that will strengthen the smaller muscles in hands and fingers will help children to complete tasks such as writing, drawing, and buttoning as they grow. Some fun activities are; threading, colouring, building blocks, opening and closing containers.



Check out this website:

<https://theimaginationtree.com/40-fine-motor-skills-activities-for-kids/>

#### Imaginary games:

Playing shops, using things from the pantry, or everyday items from around the house is a great way to build conversation and add to literacy development. Dress up clothes remember the focus is on imagination not authenticity – Horsy rides around the lounge room (who needs the gym) all you need is a tail (Scarfe).

#### Musical activities:

Singing nursery rhymes together is a great way to have fun and get some physical activity at the same time. It is great if you can sing with and without music (just remember it is great if everyone joins in). Dancing learn some new moves from each other or even use some scarves to change it up (great workout).



#### Gardening:

Getting out in the garden, pulling up weeds or planting some simple seeds in a cup. Watering the plant and watching its growth can be something exciting to look forward to each day.



#### Board games:

Maybe think about having teams to include younger children, they can help with rolling the dice, counting, turn taking. Waiting for their team's turn helps to build stamina and aids with brain development and language.

[shorturl.at/hpvDG](http://shorturl.at/hpvDG)

### Outdoor games:

Build in activities that help everyone get some exercise. Especially while the sun is shining. Take a daily family walk or bike ride or do yoga — great ways to let kids burn off energy and make sure everyone is staying active.

### Cooking:

Maybe think about having a bake off, again having teams is a really great way to involve our little ones. Decorate a menu or work your way through a favourite dessert cookbook together. We will be all looking to social distance from the refrigerator if we are not careful to balance the input and the output...

## PLAYDOUGH RECIPE



### What you will need:

- 2 cups plain flour
- 1 cup salt
- 2 tablespoons cream of tartar
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1.5 cups boiling water
- food colouring
- large metal bowl
- measuring cup
- table spoon
- jug for boiling water

### Method:

- Mix the flour, salt and cream of tartar in the large mixing bowl. (Remember the kids are great at measuring and stirring so playdough is a great thing to make together).
  - Pour oil and food colouring into a jug, then add boiling water to jug.
  - Pour the wet ingredients from the jug into the dry ingredients.
  - Stir continuously until it becomes a sticky, combined dough.
  - Allow it to cool a little and then scrap it out of the bowl onto a floured surface for kneading. Knead the dough vigorously for a couple of minutes until all of the stickiness has gone. (Fold and push) adding extra flour as required.
- \* This is the most important part of the process, so keep at it until it's the perfect consistency! \*

### Time to play – What will you make?



## LET'S STAY CONNECTED:

If you would like to take photos to share with your friends or if you have some exciting things you have been doing during our break from playgroup that you would like to share in our newsletter, please send to:-

[bconlon@star.catholic.edu.au](mailto:bconlon@star.catholic.edu.au)

### I will leave you with a couple of thoughts...

- Stick with normal routines as much as possible.
- Ensure kids get up and go to bed at the same time each day.
- Consistency and structure are very calming during times of stress.

### But above all, remember ....

Be kind to yourself, if you are trying to balance working from home and caring for children at the same time. It is ok to relax the boundaries a bit during this time if that's what you need to do to get through.

Boundaries can be re-instituted again once life returns to normal.

Spend time playing with your children. Mental health is really important right now and children can feel safe and secure by the normality of play. Play outside, bake cakes, play board games, paint, make slime, dress up, act out role plays or put on a show, create a mud kitchen, make a blanket cubby house or pillow fort.

**Memories of this time will stay with you children forever - make it joy filled.**