

# Activities for children under 4



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# Activities for under 4 year olds

## Blowing bubbles

You just need one part washing-up liquid to six parts water, Try making a big bubble mixture in a washing-up bowl – then you can use bigger items, like colanders and slotted spoons, to make bubbles in the garden.



## Hide-and-seek stuffed animals

A fun twist on an old favorite is a hide-and-seek game using stuffed animals. Collect a bunch of your child's favorite stuffed animals and count how many you have before you start. Have your child close their eyes while you hide all of the stuffed animals. Once hidden, your child can start searching for the stuffed animals until all are found.

## Build a castle

Constructing a castle out of empty paper boxes is a great way for your child to design a towering structure of their own. Help your child stack paper boxes in any shape or size that they like and stabilize the boxes with masking tape. This works both indoors and out, so long as the ground isn't wet. Then, children can use chalk or markers to decorate the walls.



## Arts and crafts

Finger painting, cotton bud printing, collages, or crayon and marker drawings are all good options.

## Keep the Balloon Up

Outdoor on a calm, windless day, or inside, have your child use their hands to keep a balloon afloat. How long can they keep the balloon off the ground?



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### Avoid the Shark

Cover your living room floor (the shark-filled ocean) with towels and have your child jump from one to the next without getting nabbed by a shark.



### Egg and Spoon

For this ultimate hand-eye coordination and balance game, give you're a child a spoon and have them balance a hard-boiled or plastic egg from one point to another either indoors or out. How quickly can they go? Can they dance as they move?

### Pillow Walk

Set up a line of couch, throw, or bed pillows on your floor, and have your child walk from one end to the other. It may sound easy but their balance will be challenged!

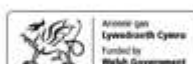


### Pasta play

You will need Dried spaghetti, and a Colendar. Posting spaghetti through a colendar is brilliant for toddlers fine motor and concentration skills, they will spend ages trying to post the spaghetti through the hole. If you also have cherrios they can practice threading the cherrios onto the pasta.

### Colour hunt

Using a tray, box or large bowl, create a colour hunt by placing one item of a certain colour into your tray/box/bowl e.g. playdough, sock, book or piece of lego, then walk through your house with your child collecting coloured things that match your chosen colour.



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### Puddle Jumping

Preferably outside throw on your child's' most waterproof gear and let them jump in, out, and over puddles, If it hasn't been raining puddles can be created by throwing water in areas where water gathers.



### Colour Run

On a patio or concreted area, colour four areas (draw circles or squares) with different colours of chalk. If you don't have chalk, you could use 4 different coloured clothes or socks and place them in different areas (if using clothes this activity could be done inside) Call out a colour and have your child run to that coloured area. Continue to call out different colours in varying order.

### Simon/Simone Says

While the rules are simple, the options for movement are endless. Simon/Simone can have children jumping like a kangaroo, standing as tall as a house, making funny faces, standing on one foot, or waving their hands over their heads

### Ball Kicks

Balls are a staple for so many games and activities. Using different types and sizes of balls if you have them, if not 1 will be sufficient, have your child see how far they can kick, or play goalie in front of a wall or fence and see if your child can kick the ball past you.



### **Create an indoor den or outdoor den in the garden**

Resources: Laundry Clothes rack , blankets, single bed sheets and scarves, pegs. Upturned or upright kitchen chairs, if available.

Cover the clothes rack with scarves and sheets or any blankets you might have and secure with pegs. This can be used as a screen to create a den. Cover the (upturned) chairs with blankets and sheets. A row of chairs with blankets creates a tunnel to play under.



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## Sharks and Pirates Game

Resources: Pillows and blankets. A non slippery floor, ie a carpeted space.

Create islands by placing pillows and blankets on a non-slippery floor, such as a carpet. Tell the children these are islands (pillows and blankets) in the sea (the floor). One person is the shark and the others are the pirates. The shark chases the pirates across the room. An island is a safe place, as long as the pirates stand on it with both feet and they're not touching the 'sea' around them. As soon as a pirate puts one foot or hand in the 'sea', the shark can catch them by tagging. Pirates who are tagged become a shark as well. The game ends when all pirates have been turned into sharks.

Variation: To make it harder for the shark, create a prison on a sofa or bed. The shark has to take caught pirates by the hand and put them in prison before continuing to chase and tag others. Pirates in prison can try and escape by running across to the safety of an island, without being tagged!



### Salt Pictures:

Resources: Table salt, A4 paper, Glue. Optional: Food Colouring/ Coloured Chalks, sticky tape.

Hold an A4 piece of paper by one corner and roll tightly into a funnel shape, with a small hole at the bottom. Secure with sticky tape, if available or glue and leave to dry before using.

Children cover paper with pva glue or glue from a glue stick.

Pour salt into the funnel and children can create patterns on the paper with the salt or try to write their name with it!

Variation 1: Adult-led: Colour salt with food colouring. Leave to dry before using.

Variation 2: Pour salt onto A4 paper. Children roll coloured chalk through the salt to colour it before using.

Leave to dry and celebrate their art work by displaying with blue tack, hanging it on a washing line, or pinning onto a pin board, or with magnets on the fridge.



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### **Dressing up:**

Gather together some interesting clothes and shoes, i.e. hats, empty bags, scarves, chunky bead bracelets, old sunglasses, dresses, jumpers, colourful socks and put in a box/basket. Children will love dressing up in them.



### **Percussion, making a shaker:**

Resources: Any dried pulses. A Pringles can or plastic storage box with lid. Sticky tape or parcel tape, if available.

Make sure the lid of the can or box closes securely so it cannot be opened by little hands or mouths.

Pour some dried pulses into an empty Pringles can and put the lid on top, secure the lid to the can with sticky tape. Alternatively, pour some dried pulses into a food container with lid which can be closed/locked securely.

Put on some music and shake along to the beat with your shaker – or pretend to make the sound of rain by slowly pouring the pulses through the can from side to side- hours of fun!



### **Making necklaces and counting:**

Resources: Dried Pasta (Penne). Shoelace or piece of string of similar thickness. Optional: food colouring. (Colour pasta with food colouring and leave to dry prior to using).

Tie a knot at the end of a piece of string or a shoelace. Thread pasta onto the string. Tie together into a necklace. Count up to ten and or back from ten to zero whilst threading. Can also be used as counting beads.



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### **Outdoor patterns and mark making:**

Recources: Water, watering can, bucket or old pan, paintbrushes large and small. Wellies and waterproof clothing to keep little ones warm and dry, unless it is a very hot day; in that case don't forget sunhats and suncream!

Optional: Chalks, preferably chunky.

Children can make patterns by pouring water from a watering can onto a patio or they can make marks with chalks on a patio or stone surface outdoors. Children can make marks by painting water on wooden fences or stone surfaces with a (chunky) brush and water. Or they can pretend they are painting the fence! Pour water in a bucket or old pan, whatever you have to hand, so they can dip the brush in and carry the water around the garden.



### **Pretend Cooking/Mud kitchen.**

Resources: Any old pans with a light lid, sieves, wooden spoons, metal or plastic bowls, plastic cups, clean empty food containers with or without lid. Sticks, Leaves, Mud.

Optional: Large dried beans or alrge dried pasta shapes. Playsand, water.

Good for hand-eye coordination.

Indoors:

Children under 4 will enjoy pretending to cook with some old pans and clean food containers, wooden spoons, plastic cups. They can stir the pan with a spoon. They can put the lid on the pan and take it off, try and fit lids onto food containers. Turn the pan upside down and turn it into a drum; listen to the sound it makes when hitting the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon.

Children over 3 (due to small parts) can pour beans or pasta from cup to pan or vice versa to add ingredients. Listen to the sound it makes.

Outdoors: Take resources outside, but do not include dried beans or pasta. Give the children some water and playsand, if you have some. If not, children can collect sticks and leaves (make sure children can NOT access poisonous or thorny plants in the garden) and grass and mud to cook with in their pans and tubs.



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## Five Little Speckled Frogs

Resources: (optional): Cut Lily Leaves from cardboard for children to 'squat' on. Cut large numbers 1-9 out of paper or cardboard. Empty Bag

Ideas:

- Find numbers that are hiding in the nature garden
- Play number stations; Children run to the number that comes out of a bag.
- Five little speckled frogs

Children squat on the floor like a frog or on a lily leaf. Sing the Nursery Rhyme.

**Five Little Speckled Frogs (*Hold up five fingers*)**

**Sat on a speckled log**

**Eating the most delicious bugs. Yum! Yum! (*rub tummy*)**

**One jumped into the pool (*Tap a child on the back, this means he/she can jump/leap frog into the pool*)**

**Where it was nice and cool**

**Now there are only Four frogs. Grub! Grub! (*Hold up four fingers*)**

Repeat the actions above, until there are no frogs left. This can be placed with one child continuously being the frog or match the song to the amount of children present, so children can visually see the number of frogs going down. ie if there are five children, five children take turns jumping into the pool. If there are 2, start with 2, etc.

**Four Little Speckled Frogs**

**Sat on a speckled log**

**Eating the most delicious bugs. Yum! Yum!**

**One jumped into the pool**

**Where it was nice and cool**

**Now there are only Three frogs. Grub! Grub!**

**Three little speckled frogs**

**Sat on a speckled log**

**Eating the most delicious bugs. Yum! Yum!**

**One jumped into the pool**

**Where it was nice and cool**

**Now there are only Two frogs. Grub! Grub!**

**Two little speckled frogs**

**Sat on a speckled...**



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## Minibeast Hunt - What's my name?

Can you find some of these Mini-Beasts in your garden?

What's my name?

What sound does my name start with?



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