

Babysitter's Training

I have:

Learned to play the drums, made the soccer team, and trained hard to be the best babysitter on the block.

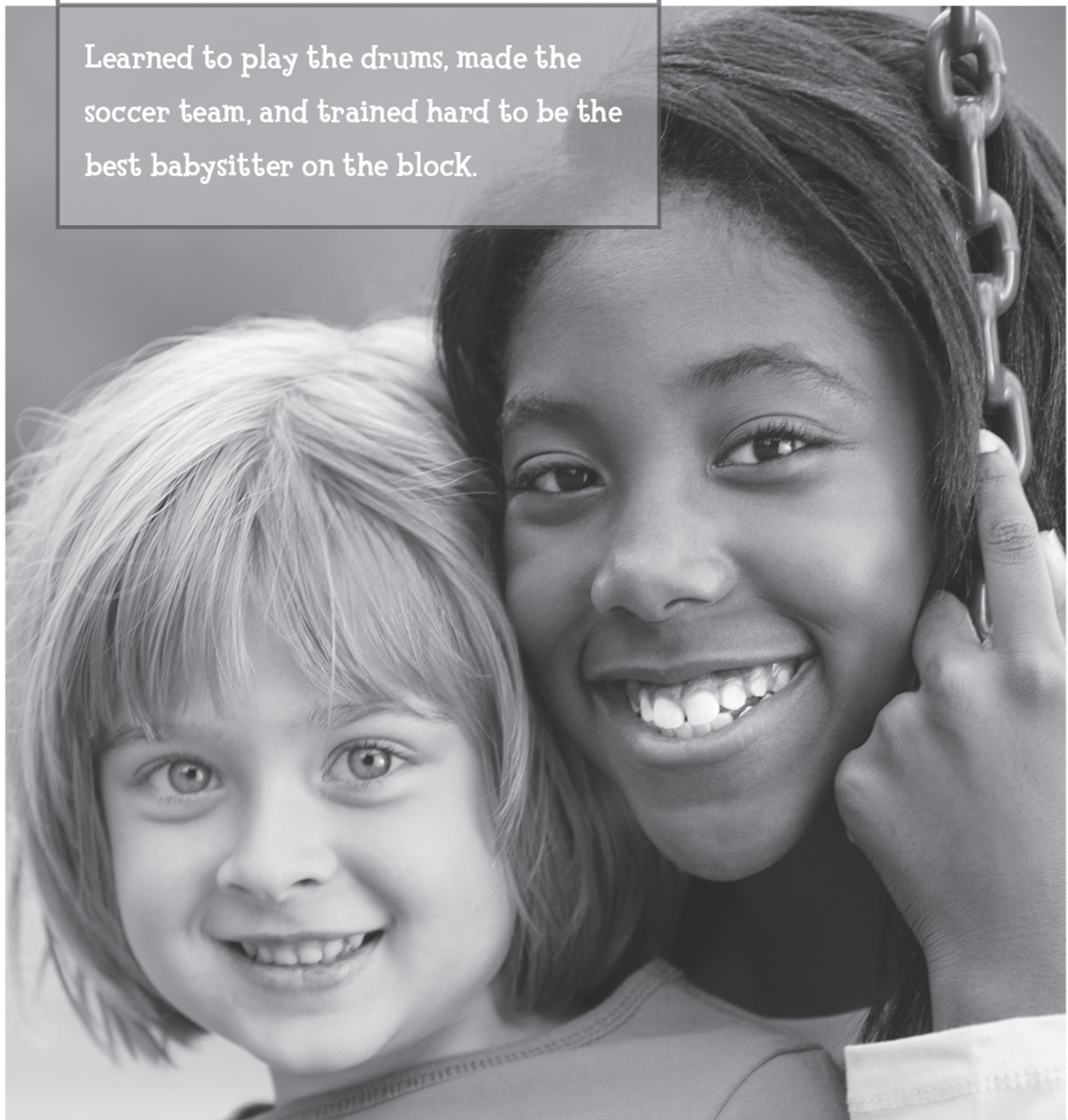


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ACTIVITIES

Read Books

Appropriate for: Children of all ages with age-appropriate variations

What You Need:

- **Age-appropriate books, including board books, rhyme books, books with educational concepts and story books**

What You Do: Read to younger children. You can have older children read to you. For very young children, rather than read the story, you could look at the pictures and imitate the sound of the objects you see. Encourage the child to repeat the sounds with you. For example, the cat goes “meow” and the pig goes “oink, oink.”

Roll the Ball

Appropriate for: Toddlers

What You Need:

- **Soft round ball**

What You Do: Sit on the floor with the child. Roll the ball to within the child’s reach. Tell the child to “catch the ball.” Then tell the child to “roll the ball” back to you. Once the child gets the hang of this, you can roll the ball beyond his or her reach. You can then encourage the child to “get the ball” and roll it back to you.

In and Out

Appropriate for: Toddlers

What You Need:

- **Medium-sized objects, such as toys or balls**
- **Medium-sized box or laundry basket**

What You Do: Place the objects into the box or basket. Then one by one, take the objects out. Keep talking to the child as you do it, perhaps saying what the object is and talking about what color it is or what it does. Then hand the objects to the child and encourage him or her to place the objects in the box or basket.

Bye, Bye Toys!

Appropriate for: Toddlers

What You Need:

- **Two large containers**
- **Basket or small bucket with handle**
- **Small toys**

What You Do: Fill one large container with small toys. Place the empty container some distance away from the full one. Show the child how to fill the basket with toys from the full container. Carry the basket across the room and dump the toys into the empty container. It may take more than one trip to empty the first container, or the child might decide to take them back to the first container right away. Whenever a container is empty, say, “Bye, bye toys!”

Safety Note: The toys should be small enough so that many items can fit in the container, but not so small that they are choking hazards.

Have a Tea Party

Appropriate for: Toddlers and up

What You Need:

- **Blanket**
- **Small cups and saucers**
- **Stuffed animals**

What You Do: Lay the blanket on the floor. Set the “table” with small cups and saucers. Place the stuffed animals at the place settings. Pretend to drink tea and talk with the animals.

Play Music

Appropriate for: Toddlers and up

What You Need:

- **Items to create instruments, such as oatmeal boxes, sauce pans, wooden spoons and plastic bottles with hard items, such as dried beans or buttons**
- **Rattles**
- **Whistles**

What You Do: Be creative! Sing songs and play accompanying music or march around to a beat.

Safety Note: For younger children, be especially careful of choking hazards. Use larger objects and objects that cannot come apart and spill small items.

Play with Play Dough

Appropriate for: Toddlers and up

What You Need:

- **Play Dough (See Craft Recipes for homemade play dough recipes.)**
- **Flat, clean surface area, such as a table**

What You Do: Children can create anything their imaginations can come up with from simple balls or noodles to shapes of animals.

Blow Soap Bubbles

Appropriate for: Toddlers and up

What You Need:

- **Bubbles (See Craft Recipes for homemade bubble recipes.)**

You can use lots of household objects to make a bubble wand including paper clips, wire hangers or straws.

What You Do: Form a wand. Dip your “wand” and wave it gently.

Safety Note: For younger children, be especially careful when using paper clips. They can be choking hazards. Also, be careful of the sharp ends of the metal clothes hangers. Watch that children do not poke each other or themselves.

Play Board Games

Appropriate for: Preschool children and up with age-appropriate products

What You Need:

- **Age-appropriate board games, such as Candyland, Sorry and Clue, Jr.**

What You Do: Follow the instructions provided.

Role-Play

Appropriate for: Preschool children and up

What You Need:

- **Your imagination**
- **Dress up clothes and props if available**

What You Do: With input from the children, assign roles and act out what they might do. For example, the children could act as chefs and you could act as a customer for whom they are preparing a meal.

Imagine

Appropriate for: School-age children

What You Need:

- **Your imagination**

What You Do: Ask the children to take turns pretending to be different characters in different situations. Give them some examples like: “You are king or queen of a country and you have lots of power—how would you use that power?” Or, “You are stranded on a desert island and can eat only one kind of food for the rest of your life—what would it be?” Or, “You are the best on your block at something—what would it be?” Then let the children use their imaginations to come up with other characters and settings.

Cross the River

Appropriate for: Toddlers and up

What You Need:

- **Thin cardboard or heavy paper**
- **Scissors**
- **Masking tape**

What You Do: Cut out several 8- to 10-inch circles and tape them to the floor in a straight line so that they are close enough for children to move from one to the other in a step. Have the children pretend that the circles are stepping stones across a river. Take turns crossing over the whole line. You could vary the game by placing the circles in a gentle curve or by having the children stop and go to music.

Hide and Seek

Appropriate for: Toddlers and up with increasing difficulty for older children

What You Need:

- **Medium-sized object, such as a toy, stuffed animal, bean bag or ball**

What You Do: Have the child close his or her eyes while you hide the object within a defined area. When the child finds the object, it is his or her turn to hide it while you close your eyes.

Follow the Leader

Appropriate for: Toddlers and up with increasing difficulty for older children

What You Need:

- **Your imagination**
- **Adequate space to move around safely**

What You Do: Have the child follow your lead as you travel. Every 30 seconds or so, change the activity. You could also let the child lead and you follow.

Suggestions for types of activities:

- **Walk with giant steps and big swinging arms.**
- **Jump up and down in place.**
- **Hop like a bunny.**
- **Squat and walk like a duck.**
- **Twirl around in circles.**
- **Touch your toes.**

GAMES

Mother May I?

Appropriate for: Preschool children and up

What You Need:

- **Your imagination**
- **Adequate space to travel safely**

What You Do: One child acts as “mother.” The child stands with his or her back to a line of children. Mother chooses a child (at random or in order) and announces an action for the child to follow, such as “Keiko, please take four giant steps forward.” Keiko should then

ask, “Mother may I?” Mother has the choice of saying “Yes, you may” or “No, you may not.” If Keiko remembers to ask and mother says, “Yes, you may,” Keiko takes four giant steps forward. If Keiko steps forward without asking, she must return to the starting line. If mother says “No, you may not,” Keiko must stay put. The first child to touch mother wins and becomes the mother for the next round.

Suggestions for types of steps include the following:

- **Giant steps**
- **Baby steps**
- **Bunny hops**
- **Kangaroo jumps**
- **Scissor jumps (crossing legs with one jump; uncrossing legs on next jump)**
- **Sliding steps**
- **Ballet steps**

Red Light, Green Light

Appropriate for: Preschool children and up

What You Need:

- **Adequate space to travel safely**

What You Do: One player is designated as “It” and stands on an imaginary line, which is the finish line. The rest of the players stand in a straight line about three body lengths away. The commands are “red light” and “green light.” “It” turns his or her back to the players and yells “green light!” On this command, all the players hurry toward the finish line. “It” then yells “red light!” and spins around to face the other players. On this command, they all must freeze. Anyone “It” catches still moving must return to the starting line. Continue the cycle of “It” shouting “green light” and “red light.” The first player to cross the finish line wins and becomes “It” for the next game.

Simon Says

Appropriate for: Preschool children and up

What You Need:

- **Your imagination**

What You Do: One child is chosen to be “Simon” and the others stand in a straight line. Simon then calls out an action for the children to follow. It can be anything, such as touch your toes or jump up and down 10 times on one foot. The rule, however, is that the children should only do the action if Simon first says, “Simon says.” For example, “Simon says, touch your toes.” Any child who does an action when Simon does not say “Simon says” is out and must sit down. The last child standing wins and becomes Simon for the next round.

Suggestions for types of actions:

- **Touch your ears (or any body part).**
- **Twirl around three times.**
- **Do five jumping jacks.**
- **Sing a song.**

I Spy

Appropriate for: Preschool children and up

What You Need:

- **A creative mind and knowledge of colors**

What You Do: One person chooses a nearby object. Next he or she says to the other players, “I spy something that is [state the color of the object].” The other players will then try to guess the object in the room. If nobody guesses correctly, the person gives another clue about the object. The game continues with the person giving clues and the other players guessing until someone guesses correctly. The person who guesses correctly gets to pick the next object.

Hop Scotch

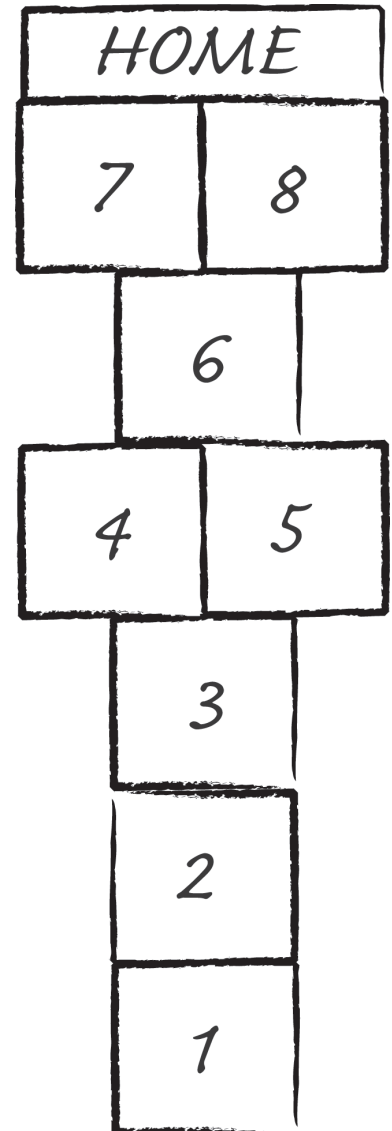
Appropriate for: Preschool children and up

What You Need:

- Bare patch of ground outdoors, sidewalk or floor indoors
- Chalk or masking tape
- Markers, such as a stone, bean bag or button

What You Do:

1. Use chalk to draw a hopscotch pattern on the ground or sidewalk or use masking tape on a floor. Create a diagram with eight squares and number them. You can create any diagram you like, but a common one is 1, 2 and 3 in a line, 4 and 5 are side-by-side, 6 lines up with 1, 2 and 3, and 7 and 8 are side-by-side. Each player has a marker, such as a stone, beanbag or shell.
2. The first player stands behind the starting line to toss the marker in square 1. Player 1 hops over square 1 to square 2 and then continues hopping to square 8, turns around and hops back again. Player 1 pauses in square 2 and picks up the marker in square 1, then hops in square 1 and out of the diagram. If player 1 successfully moves through the whole diagram, she continues by tossing the marker in square 2.
3. All hopping is done on one foot unless the hopscotch design is such that two squares are side-by-side. Then two feet can be placed down with one in each square. A player must always hop over any square in which a marker lands.
4. A player is out and his or her turn is over if—
 - The marker does not land in the proper square.
 - He or she steps on a line.



- He or she loses balance when bending over to pick up the marker and puts a second hand or foot down.
 - He or she lands into a square where a marker is.
 - He or she puts two feet down in a single square.
5. If a player is out, he or she puts the marker in the square where he or she will resume playing on his or her next turn. The next player begins.
 6. When a player makes it through square 8 successfully, he or she repeats at the top of the set, starting at 8 and working his or her way back down.
 7. The first player to go through squares 1 through 8 and back down to 1 is the winner.

Roll the Dice

Appropriate for: School-age children

What You Need:

- **Die, paper and pencil**

What You Do: Players take turns rolling the die and racking up points. They can roll as many times as they want, but if they roll an 8, they lose all their points for that turn. When they elect to stop, they write down their scores and pass the die to the next player. The first player to reach 100 wins.

HORSE

Appropriate for: School-age children and up

What You Need:

- **Basketball**
- **Basketball hoop**

What You Do: Choose the order in which the players will shoot at the basket. The player who shoots first is the leader; the others must copy the

type of shot he or she makes and the place from which he or she shoots. If the leader fails to make the shot, he or she loses his or her position as the leader and the next player in line becomes the leader. If, however, the leader does make the shot, everyone else has one chance to try to make the same shot. Any subsequent player who fails to do so gets an H (as in HORSE, the name of the game).

The next round starts with the next player in turn becoming the leader and shooting from a different place. All the same rules apply, except that a player who already has an H and misses a shot now gets an O. (The next time he would get an R, and so on.)

The leader is always free to choose whatever type of shot he wants, from whatever location he wishes, including both basic and trick shots. A player who has all five letters of the word HORSE is out of the game. The last person left is the winner.

PROJECTS

Sponge Painting

Appropriate for: Toddlers, preschool and younger school-age children

What You Need:

- **Sponge**
- **Nontoxic chalk**
- **Water**
- **Paper**

What You Do: Have children soak a sponge in water and squeeze it to let out the excess. Then have the children draw on their sponges with chalk. Next, have them press the wet sponge onto a piece of white or colored construction paper to create a print. Use a variety of chalk color and sponge sizes.

Finger Print Art

Appropriate for: Toddlers and up

What You Need:

- Ink pad with washable ink
- Paper
- Pen or fine-line markers

What You Do: Press the child's thumbs and/or fingers onto the ink pad. Have the child press his or her inked thumbs and fingers onto a piece of paper. Then have the child use a pen or marker to add other things to his or her prints to create pictures. For example, he or she could add legs, tails, ears, eyes and noses to create animals.

Collage

Appropriate for: Preschool and younger school-age children

What You Need:

- Sheets of cardboard
- Assorted buttons
- Pieces of ribbon or yarn
- Pasta of different sizes and colors
- Colored paper
- Aluminum foil
- Nontoxic glue

What You Do: Give each child a sheet of cardboard and have children glue a variety of objects onto their sheets.

Safety Note: You must closely supervise this project. Do not do this project if the child is at the stage when he or she puts objects in his or her mouth.

3-D Number Board

Appropriate for: Preschool and younger school-age children

What You Need:

- Marker
- Ruler
- Piece of paper
- Multiples of miscellaneous items, such as beads, buttons, paper clips, dry cereal

What You Do: First, use a marker, ruler and piece of paper to draw a chart with twelve rows. In the top row, write a title like “Lindsay’s Numbers.” Along the left edge, number the remaining rows 0 through 10. Next, collect small objects in groups of 1 to 10. Try to find beads, buttons, paper clips, dry cereal and more. Help the child glue each group of objects onto the appropriate row.

Safety Note: You must closely supervise this project. Do not do this project if the child is at the stage when he or she puts objects in his or her mouth.

Homemade Puzzles

Appropriate for: Preschool and younger school-age children

What You Need:

- Magazine
- Cardboard or file folders
- Nontoxic glue or paste
- Pencil
- Crayons
- Scissors

What You Do: Have the child cut out pictures that he or she likes from a magazine and then paste the picture on cardboard or a file folder.

Or, let the child draw and color a picture directly on the cardboard or file folder. Next, have the child draw the design for cut lines on the back of the cardboard. To make it easier, limit the number of cuts to just a few. With your close supervision, have the child cut on the lines to make a puzzle.

Make a Maraca

Appropriate for: Preschool and younger school-age children

What You Need:

- Toilet paper or paper towel roll
- Wax paper
- Rubber bands
- Dried beans, uncooked rice or buttons

What You Do: Cut two pieces of wax paper to cover the end of a toilet paper or paper towel roll with about 2 inches of overhang. Cover one end of a roll with the wax paper and secure it tightly with a rubber band. Fill the roll about $\frac{1}{3}$ full with beans, rice or buttons. Cover open end with remaining wax paper and secure it tightly with a rubber band. Now shake it to make some music!

Safety Note: You must closely supervise this project. Do not do this project if the child is at the stage when he or she puts objects in his or her mouth.

Patchwork Art

Appropriate for: School-age children

What You Need:

- Colored paper
- Ruler
- Nontoxic glue
- Markers or paints

What You Do: Have children tear sheets of colored paper into different shapes by holding down a ruler and slowly pulling the paper so it rips against the edge. Have them tear other pieces of paper into bunches of large and small squares. Then have them choose a full sheet of paper for the background. Next, have children make pictures out of the pieces of paper by gluing them on the background paper. They can use markers, paints or other materials to decorate the designs.

Paper-Bag Puppets

Appropriate for: School-age children

What You Need:

- **Paper lunch bags**
- **Scissors**
- **Construction paper**
- **Nontoxic glue**
- **Yarn (optional)**

What You Do: To create their puppets, have children decorate the paper lunch sacks using construction paper, scissors and glue. If you have yarn, macaroni or old shredded cleaning rags available, the children can use them for hair. Simply cut and glue. Have the children use the folded over, flat part of the bag for the mouth or snout. They can cut out eyes and other features, or create them with their materials. To work the puppets, the children simply put their hands into the open end of the bag and slide their fingers over the fold.

Safety Note: Closely supervise younger children while they are using safety scissors.

Sand Casting

Appropriate for: School-age children

What You Need:

- Shells, stones, sticks, hands, feet and other items to make imprints with
- Wet sand
- Plaster of Paris
- Plastic mixing bowl
- Stirrer

What You Do: Make an imprint in wet sand using any items that will make an interesting mold, such as shells, stones or sticks. Children can even use their hands or feet. Mix the plaster of Paris according to the directions on the packaging. Pour plaster of Paris into the imprint. Remove the plaster of Paris from the sand when it is hard.

SNACK RECIPES

Notes to Babysitters:

- *Check with the children's parents before making and serving any of these recipes; children may be allergic to some of the ingredients.*
- *Always think about what is appropriate for the age of the children you are babysitting. Consider how you can change the recipe if any of these foods or the decorations presents a choking hazard.*

Frozen Yogurt Pops

What You Need:

- 1 8-ounce container of your favorite flavor of yogurt
- Small paper cups
- Wooden popsicle sticks (available at craft stores)
- Plastic wrap

What You Do:

1. Pour yogurt into paper cups. Fill them almost to the top.
2. Stretch a small piece of plastic wrap across the top of each cup.
3. Using the popsicle stick, poke a hole in the plastic wrap. Stand the stick straight up in the center of the cup.
4. Put the cups in the freezer until the yogurt is frozen solid.
5. Remove the plastic wrap, peel away the paper cup and eat your pop!

Juicy Yogurt Pops

What You Need:

- **2 cups plain yogurt**
- **½ cup canned crushed or diced fruit (packed in its own juice)**
- **1 can frozen juice concentrate, thawed**
- **Medium-size bowl**
- **Mixing spoon**
- **Small paper cups**
- **Plastic wrap**
- **Wooden popsicle sticks (available at craft stores)**
- **Measuring cups**

What You Do:

1. Drain the can of crushed or diced fruit so all the juice runs out.
2. Put all the ingredients in a medium-size bowl and mix them together.
3. Spoon the mixture into the paper cups. Fill them almost to the top.
4. Stretch a small piece of plastic wrap across the top of each cup.

5. Using a popsicle stick, poke a hole in the plastic wrap. Stand the stick straight up in the center of the cup.
6. Put the cups in the freezer until the mixture is frozen solid.
7. Remove the plastic wrap and peel away the paper cup.

Yogurt on the Go

What You Need:

- **$\frac{3}{4}$ cup light fruit-flavored yogurt**
- **1 tablespoon raisins**
- **1 tablespoon sunflower seeds**
- **$\frac{1}{3}$ cup sliced strawberries**
- **Measuring cup**
- **Measuring spoon**
- **Plastic cup**

What You Do: Mix all ingredients in a plastic cup.

Safety Note: If preparing this snack for toddlers, leave out the raisins and seeds.

Berry Good Popsicles

What You Need:

- **30 ounces light fruit-flavored yogurt**
- **1 cup strawberries**
- **Blender**
- **Measuring cup**
- **6 paper cups (8 ounces each)**
- **6 popsicle sticks**
- **Freezer**

What You Do:

1. Put strawberries in a blender and mix until berries are cut into small pieces.

2. Mix yogurt and berries together in a large bowl.
3. Divide yogurt mixture equally in 6 paper cups.
4. Place a popsicle stick in the middle of the yogurt.
5. Cover with plastic wrap.
6. Put in the freezer and freeze overnight.
7. Before eating, remove paper cup.

Peanut Butter and Banana Sandwich

What You Need:

- **2 slices whole wheat bread**
- **¼ banana, sliced**
- **2 tablespoons peanut butter**
- **2 tablespoons cereal (natural wheat and barley cereal flakes)**
- **Knife**
- **Measuring spoons**

What You Do:

1. Spread peanut butter one side of each slice of bread.
2. Spread banana pieces on top of the peanut butter on one slice of bread.
3. On the other slice of bread, sprinkle cereal so that it sticks to the peanut butter and covers the bread.
4. Place the slices together and serve.

***Safety Note:** Some children are allergic to peanut butter. Instead of peanut butter, you can use cheese spread, cream cheese, jam or honey.*

No-Bake Banana Cookies

What You Need:

- **Graham crackers**
- **Rolling pin**
- **Zipper plastic bag**
- **Banana or other fruit**

What You Do:

1. Place three graham crackers in a zipper plastic bag and crush them with a rolling pin.
2. Slice a banana or other fruit into small pieces.
3. Shake a few pieces at a time into the bag to completely coat the fruit.
4. Lay the pieces out on a plate and, if you like, provide a little fork for spearing.

Ants on a Log

What You Need:

- **Celery stalks**
- **Small plastic knife or popsicle stick**
- **Peanut butter**
- **Raisins**

What You Do:

1. Wash and cut celery stalks into 3- or 4-inch sticks.
2. Give the child a small plastic knife or popsicle stick and show him or her how to spread peanut butter onto the celery.
3. Stick raisins in the peanut butter and eat.

***Safety Note:** Some children are allergic to peanut butter. Instead of peanut butter, you can use cheese spread, cream cheese, jam or honey.*

ACTIVITY RECIPES

Note to Babysitters: The activity recipes should be made ahead of time and brought with you to your babysitting job.

Modeling Clay

What You Need:

- **1 cup white nontoxic school glue**
- **$\frac{3}{4}$ cup liquid starch**

What You Do: Pour the glue into a plastic container and then add the starch. Stir the ingredients and knead the mixture with your hands. If it sticks to your hands, wipe a little starch on them. If the ingredients don't seem to be mixing well, you may need to heat them in the microwave (heat long enough for them to mix). Allow the mixture to set for a while and store it in a closed container in the refrigerator.

Basic Play Dough

What You Need:

- **1 cup flour**
- **1 cup water**
- **1 tablespoon oil**
- **1 tablespoon powdered alum**
- **$\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt**
- **2 tablespoons vanilla**
- **Food coloring for each color**

What You Do: Mix the dry ingredients, then add the oil and water. Cook over a medium heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture is the consistency of mashed potatoes. Remove the mixture from heat, and then add the vanilla and food coloring. Once dough is cool, divide it into balls. Work in the color by kneading the dough. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

Basic Play Dough–2

What You Need:

- **2 teaspoons cream of tartar**
- **1 cup flour**
- **½ cup salt**
- **1 tablespoon oil**
- **1 cup water**
- **Food coloring**

What You Do: Mix all ingredients to form a smooth paste. Put in a saucepan and cook slowly, until the dough comes away from the side of the pan and forms a ball. When it is cool enough, take the dough out of the pan. Add food coloring as desired and knead for 3 to 4 minutes. Soak the pan immediately. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

Bubbles

What You Need:

- **3 cups water**
- **2 cups dish soap**
- **½ cup light corn syrup**
- **Glycerin, if desired (available at drug stores)**

What You Do: Gently mix, trying to avoid making bubbles on the surface. The fewer bubbles on the surface, the stronger the bubbles will be.

SONGS AND RHYMES

These songs and rhymes are typically enjoyed by infants, toddlers and preschool children. The words to the songs and rhymes are in bold print. The actions follow and are in parentheses in lighter print.

This Little Piggy

**This little piggy went to market,
This little piggy stayed at home;
This little piggy had roast beef,
This little piggy had none.
And this little pig cried,
“Wee-wee-wee”
All the way home.**

(Wiggle each of the child’s toes in turn, starting with the big one, and on the last line run your fingers up the child’s leg and tickle the tummy.)

Pat-a-Cake

**Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker’s man,
Bake me a cake as fast as you can.
Roll it and pat it and mark it with a B,
And put it in the oven for baby and me.**

(Clap hands in rhythm. On the third line, pretend to prick the palm of the child’s hand and draw a B on it. On the fourth line, pretend to put a cake in the oven.)

Itzy Bitzy Spider

The Itzy Bitzy spider climbed up the water spout.

(Use your fingers to show the spider climbing upwards.)

Down came the rain and washed the spider out.

(Wiggle your fingers while lowering your hands to show rain.)

Out came the sun and dried up all the rain.

(Raise your hands above your head to show the sun coming out.)

And the Itzy Bitzy spider climbed up the spout again.

(Repeat the climbing action.)

I'm a Little Teapot

I'm a little teapot, short and stout.

Here is my handle,

(Put one hand on your hip.)

And here is my spout.

(Hold out your other arm, bent at the elbow and wrist.)

When I get the steam up, hear me shout,

"Tip me over and pour me out."

(Bend over to the side of the "spout," as though being poured.)

CREDITS

The American Red Cross would like to thank the following for permission to reprint their material:

- Kettman, Susan. 2004. *The 2000 Best Games and Activities*, Naperville, Illinois: Sourcebooks.
- <http://k2.kirtland.cc.mi.us/>
- http://www.gameskidsplay.net/games/mental_games/index.htm