

# Creative Activities

1. Spray paint art: You'll need a canvas, black spray paint, white spray paint and some leafy plants (you can sometimes find silk plants at Goodwill or Salvation Army locations!). Spray the canvas black and let dry. Help your kids lay the leafy plants on the canvas. Spray the white paint lightly over the canvas and the faux plants. Spray heavier around the leaves, then leave it to dry for a bit. Help your kids pick up the faux plants by the stem and remove from the canvas. You should have a beautiful shadow of the plants left on the canvas. Hang it in their room!
2. Paper and paints (let their imagination run wild!)
3. Finger painting (tactile and creative!)
4. Put together a puzzle (sometimes you can get them at the library or join a puzzle club and exchange with others!)
5. Plant a small garden together. Read to your kids about how to take care of the plants. When the plants are big enough, have everyone help harvest and use them in a meal.
6. Plant a flower and take care of it together.
7. Make cards for grandparents or other family members to have on hand for special days.
8. Camp out in your living room – plan an evening watching movies, make popcorn, tell stories, make a big nest of blankets, or everyone gets a sleeping bag. Don't forget a flashlight or two!
9. In the summer freeze toys in a block of ice. Take it outside and let your kids chip at it (with toy hammers!) until they get to the toys. Hours of creative play for littles and it feels nice on a hot day!
10. Build a fort in your house by covering a table or other furniture with blankets and sheets. Let them play in the fort or consider letting them sleep overnight in it! If you have old white sheets, let your kiddos color on them with markers and then build the fort with their decorated sheets!
11. Make industrial strength bubbles by mixing 6 cups of water with one cup of corn syrup and 2 cups Joy dish soap. Use a wire coat hanger and fashion a large circle with it then dip it in the mixture and let them run!
12. If you live in an area that gets below 32 degrees, go outside and blow bubbles. They instantly freeze!
13. Make a tornado in a jar. Take any round glass jar and fill with water leaving about an inch of space at the top of the jar. Put one squeeze of dish soap in and two drops of food coloring. For the absolute best tornados, add one teaspoon of vinegar. Put the lid on tightly. Now start swirling the jar in a circle. As you do, you'll start to see a tornado form inside the jar! You can add small beads to the jar and watch them get sucked up into the vortex. Great for talking to your kids about tornados and tornado safety if you live in an area where they are common. If not it's still cool!
14. Make an easy sugar cookie recipe and cut them into simple shapes like circles, squares and triangles or use cookie cutters you have on hand. Bake as directed and let cool. Buy or prepare some simple frosting and color them with food coloring. Cover your table with plastic and give each child a place with a spreading knife, some cookies and maybe even some sprinkle decorations. Let them decorate to their heart's content! Let the cookies dry and have one for dessert after dinner!

15. If you bake bread, give your kids a small amount of dough for them to knead and then bake it in a cupcake tin or small loaf pan. (You can find small metal loaf pans online. They're just right for kid-size loaves!) Who knows? You might have a budding baker in your family!
16. You can do the same thing with tortillas. When you're making yours, give your child some dough of their own. Help them experiment with making designs like snowmen in the winter or bunnies in the spring, for example. Then help them cook them. Use the time to talk to them about safety in the kitchen!
17. Maybe your family has a traditional recipe that you fix often or on special occasions. Let your child help you prepare it with you. Give them age-appropriate tasks. While you're cooking, talk to them about your family and your traditions. Why do you do the things you do? Why do you eat this special treat? Tell them about your parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins.
18. If your family never had any traditions, start some of your own!
19. Start making something special that you only eat at Thanksgiving or Christmas or another special holiday to you.
20. Each year, put out a special decoration that means something to you.
21. On birthday mornings, always wake them up by singing Happy Birthday.
22. Fix them a special breakfast on their birthday.
23. The birthday person gets to choose what they do on their special day!
24. Attend a summer event every year and start a tradition
25. Make a bedtime tradition. When you put your kids to bed each night, ask them two questions...1. What was the highlight of your day? 2. What is one thing you'd like to do better tomorrow? Listen closely and offer to help with their goals.
26. At special meals like Thanksgiving, ask each person at the table to tell one thing they're thankful for.
27. Starting November 1, make a tree from construction paper and hang it on a wall. Cut out leaves in fall colors and each day have everyone put one thing they're thankful for on a leaf and put it on the tree. By the time Thanksgiving Day rolls around, your tree should be full of leaves! (You can also make a turkey and cut out feathers to put on it!)
28. Make handprint gifts: Buy plain white pillowcases. Place a piece of cardboard inside the pillowcase so the paint doesn't bleed through. Using fabric paint, have your kids put their hands in the paint and then place them on the pillowcase in a straight line or a pattern. Use your finger to write something to a grandparent or another special person. Example: "DeeDee loves Grandma B!" Allow it to dry, then launder according to the label. Give as gifts to VERY grateful grands. You can also do this with inexpensive aprons. Follow the same directions. Great for family chefs, barbecuers, and even crafters to keep their clothes clean!
29. Go for a walk and try to find as many plants, bugs, animals, etc. as you can. Take pictures of each discovery on your phone. Have your kids recreate the pictures and make a book of their creations to remember the walk. Or, find an inexpensive site online and have a book made. Write about each discovery and include your child's name in the book. Name it something fun and give it to them to remember the walk!
30. Watch for tickets to an age-appropriate play or musical in your area. Take your child on a date and teach them etiquette such as how to open doors for people, saying excuse me when making their way

past others to their seat, etc. Talk to them about the play or musical and have them watch for scenery changes, costume changes, or twists in the story. On the way home, talk about what they saw. Would they like to go again? Why or why not? Did they like the story? What was their favorite character? Why?

31. Make moon sand by mixing 8 cups of flour with one cup of baby oil in a large tub. Give them measuring cups and spoons, plastic cups, and other safe kitchen utensils to make sandcastles and other creations.
32. Have a snowball fight in the summer! Take a large (cheap) bottle of hair conditioner and mix with a box of baking soda until the mixture sticks together in balls. Now throw them at each other!
33. Fill three bags with slips of paper. In the first bag, put down an assignment such as "Draw a picture." In the second bag put the subject of the assignment such as "of your parents." In the third bag put the scene of the assignment such as "getting married," "riding a dinosaur," etc. Each child should draw a slip of paper from bags 1, 2, and 3 and do their assignment. No redraws! Have them show their work at dinner.
34. Get a book of jokes and take turns reading them!
35. Make Sparkly Play Dough by mixing  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup hair conditioner and 1 cup cornstarch. Add glitter to make it sparkle!
36. Parents often have to clean up their walls when kids draw on them. What if you made drawing on the wall a fun activity? Buy butcher paper and low-stick tape (blue tape). Tear off a large piece of the paper and attach to the wall at child level. Give them the rules. Only drawing on the paper when parents are around, no drawing on the actual wall! Give them colors and let them go crazy!
37. Find a piece of cardboard or use butcher paper (it's coated with wax on one side). On the non-waxed side, trace your child's hand along the edges of the paper. Take an ice cube tray or other tray with sections and put a little paint in each of them. Now give your kids some brushes and let them play nail salon. They can paint the nails of their fingers any color or pattern they choose.
38. Carve pumpkins with your kids at Halloween.
39. Have you ever made salt dough? It's a great dough that dries super hard. You can make ornaments, earrings, necklaces, handprint crafts for grandparents, or anything else you can think of! Here's how:  
  
Mix 1 cup of flour,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup salt, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water. You may need to add more flour or water to get it to rolling consistency. Use a rolling pin and roll out the dough. Use cookie cutters, biscuit cutters, or cut your own shapes. Make indentions on the dough if you'd like before you put it in the oven. If you're doing handprints, roll out dough large enough for your child's hand. Press hand into dough firmly. Place parchment paper on baking sheets and bake in a 200 degree oven for 2-3 hours. Let cool and decorate using paints, or leave white!
40. If you make pancakes a lot, experiment with different shapes. Ask your child for ideas. Use bacon, strawberries (or other berries), bananas, etc. to decorate.
41. Buy a canvas and use blue tape to tape off sections of it. Now give your child paint and let them paint to their heart's content. Once dry, remove the blue tape and see the beautiful artwork they've created.