

Things to do

How to Whistle on Grass

1. Look around outside for a thick piece of grass. It should be at least a quarter of an inch wide. This type of grass is often taller than the rest and has a seam running down the middle of it.
2. Pick the grass as close to the ground as possible.
3. Smooth out the blade of grass and press it between your thumbs. Make sure the grass lies flat against your thumbs.
4. Adjust the grass so that the thickest portion is between your thumbs.
5. Press your thumbs together so that the backs of them are facing you.
6. Notice that there is a little space between your thumbs underneath your knuckles and above where your thumbs meet your hands.
7. Place that space against your lips.
8. Blow through the hole. If you do not hear a whistle, adjust the grass so that it runs through the centre of that space between your thumbs.

How to Plan a Dinosaur Dig

1. Fill a sandbox or a large plastic container with sand, layering in small plastic dinosaurs.
2. Add water to the sand and pack it down hard. Place a weight on top of the sand.
3. Allow the sand to dry overnight.
4. Give the child(ren) plastic spoons or plastic shovels and have them dig for dinosaurs.
5. Provide them with small paint brushes so they can brush the sand off their finds.

How to Skim Stones

'Skimming' a stone involves throwing it into the sea, a river or lake in such a way that it bounces across the surface several times before sinking. The aim of the game is to see how many times the stone bounces on the surface of the water. The stone needs to be around the size of the palm of your hand. It should be heavy enough to cut through a breeze, but light enough that you can throw it accurately

and without difficulty. The pebble should also be as smooth as possible and a circular shape, rather than jagged.

You will need to throw the stone so that it hits the water at the flattest possible angle. Therefore you will need to throw the stone from a little above ankle height, directly away from your body. To do this you lean towards your throwing arm to allow a sweeping, sidearm throwing motion. Making a slight horizontal spin to the pebble will improve the effect, and this is possible with a flick of the wrist at the moment of release. It is important that the stone leaves your hand with the front side slightly higher than the rear. What was your record?



Watching Clouds

Simple as it says. Just lie back and see what shapes you can make out of the clouds. You can even make a story from them as you go along.



Searching for Satellites and Shooting Stars

This works best when you are away from un-natural light from street lamps. On a clear dark night go and lie outside or watch from a window for shooting stars. Now and again you will find that they are actually satellites orbiting the Earth.

Building a House of Cards

1. You need a deck of cards.
2. You take two cards and lean them against each other to make a triangle shape.
3. Do that again for the base as many times as you like by lining them up so that the bases of the cards touch.
4. Place a card lying down to connect the "tops". Then you can continue the building process on top of the first layer.



Make a Bird Table

Bird tables are a great way of attracting birds to your garden and are particularly useful in the winter when food is hard to find. A simple flat bird table is effective and easy to make. Take a wooden pole about 1.5 metres high, and nail a wooden board to the top. Add a strip of wood about 2cm high around the edge of the board, leaving a small gap for rainwater to drain away. This will help to stop the food being blown away. Anchor the central pole firmly into the ground. Think carefully about where to position the table. It needs to be fairly close to dense bushes to provide refuge for birds avoiding sparrow hawks, but not so close as to provide cover for predatory cats.

Shadow Puppets

1. You need a wall, a torch and a darkened room.
2. Make shapes with your hands in front of the torch.
3. See what shapes you can make with your hands, maybe even tell a story!



Balloon Keepie Uppie

Just hit a balloon to each other without letting it hit the ground.

Thumb Wrestling

1. The players each extend their right hands (or left hands) and do the "sixties" style handshake where you make a "c" shape with your hands and lay your thumbs along the flat top of the fists.
2. Then you slowly move the thumbs back and forth and say "1,2,3,4, we will have a thumb war; 5,6,7,8, try to keep your thumb straight."
3. Players try to pin down their opponent's thumb with their own while keeping their hands clasped.



What's Different?

1. Stand in front of your child and tell them to study you.
2. Leave the room and change something about your appearance. For example, you might turn a baseball cap backward or remove a sweatshirt.
3. Return to your child and challenge them to tell what's different about you.

Feely Box

Things you need: Large cloth bag or pillowcase (made of heavy material so that you can't see inside it) assortment of toy animals or familiar objects, rubber band.

1. Without your child watching, choose three or four toys or objects that belong to them (for example, a hairbrush, teddy bear, shoe, or toy car).
2. Place one object in the bag and tie the open end with the rubber band.
3. Ask your child to guess what the object is by feeling the outside of the bag.
4. Remove the object when the guess is successful and continue until there are no objects left.
5. Have your child search the house for objects while you close your eyes and then take a turn to feel and guess.

Alphabet Book

You may have had a book like this when you were very young, a book where each letter of the alphabet had an object beginning with that letter beside it. As an activity, why not produce one based on a theme - drawing something that relates to each letter of the alphabet. Categories need to be quite broad, such as a country, nature, water, etc. or it'll be too hard to come up with something for every letter. Before starting this activity it might be useful to brainstorm ideas.

Junk Music

Get a pile of scrap material, cardboard, paper, plastic, rubber bands, wood, glue, peas, etc. and make various musical instruments. You can make a song together.

Bubbles

What you need: Bottle of bubbles, air in your lungs!

1. See what shapes you can create (use wire frames to help)
2. Can you put one bubble inside another?
3. Create the largest bubble
4. Or just have fun popping them!

