

We're in the "dog days of summer" and everyone may be feeling a little bored, apathetic, and ready for a change. It's time to shake things up and inject some new fun ideas into each day. The good news? Little effort & big results!

Sensory Tub Ideas ***Fluffy Stuff in the Sensory Tub:** 2 boxes cornstarch 1 can shaving cream

***Wash the baby dolls:** baby dolls, washcloths, soapy water, toothbrushes ***Sponges and water** ***Homemade Moon Sand:** 8 cups flour mixed with one cup baby oil (It is awesome!) ***Assorted Dry Pasta Shapes and Pipe Cleaners**

Spiderman Says or Cinderella Says - Much more fun and motivating than Simon! Favorite childhood games like these do more than just pass the time. They actually help children develop self-regulation skills. **Red Light, Green Light - and Yellow Light and Purple Light!** Red means stop, green means go, yellow means go backward, and purple means hop!

Roll a Six and Splash! – A small group of kids sit on the ground around a shallow pan of water and take turns rolling a large foam die. (Use a Sharpie marker to write the correct numerals right on top of the dots.) Everyone identifies the numbers as they are rolled, but when a child rolls a six, she gets to smack her hand in the shallow pan of water and splash her friends!

Balloon Bad Guys Target Practice – Buy a dozen helium filled balloons (plain not Mylar) and attach something to each string to weigh them down to the floor. Draw mean faces or bandit masks on them. Give children *dry* water bomb balls or rolled socks to throw at them. Remind the kids to use both hands for throwing – not just their "favorite" hand.

Yarn "Lasers" – Use red or orange yarn and masking tape to string "lasers" high and low across the hallway for kids to navigate over and under. For extra fun leave it up during parent pick up time!

Go Fish, Crazy Eights, Old Maid, War and Slap Jack – Even 2's can play simplified versions of these card games!

Bubbles That Don't Pop! - 1 C distilled water, 1 Tablespoon dish soap, 1 teaspoon of glycerin (drug store or drug area of store), bubble blowing wand or straw or whatever you want to blow bubbles with, clean socks: Choose a few kids at a time to put a sock on their hand and catch the bubbles while others watch, then switch! (The sock keeps the bubble from popping as the kids "catch" the bubbles by letting them land on their sock covered hands.)

Play Dough – Add one or more of these to create texture: rice, rock salt, dry split peas, dry couscous, poppy seeds, lentils, cumin, rosemary, sawdust, sand **Easiest Recipe:** Mix 2 cups flour with one cup salt. Then add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (more if too dry) colored water and mix and knead well. Color the water with a squirt of tempera paint. You can also make a batch of plain white and wrap colored balls of dough in a layer of white for a color surprise!

Card Sharks - a blend between a memory card game and a relay race. Players in teams run between two hula hoops, set at opposite ends of the playing area, and turn over cards inside the hula hoops. When they have a match, they collect that pair of cards and it's the next teammate's turn.

Australia Art - Tape butcher paper to the underside of the table. Children take turns lying on their backs under the table and use crayons in both hands to add their drawing to the mural.

Magic Pictures - white crayons and white paper. Teacher draws a picture or writes letters and the children paint with watercolors to make them appear. Or the children draw pictures and letters for each other.

Free Art - Save your art project leftovers and odds and ends and then bring them out once a week for the children to use any way they want to create anything they want. Don't forget the scotch tape, masking tape, glue and empty toilet paper rolls! (This center is open in my classroom every day of the year and the kids never get tired of it!)

Tortoise & the Hare Ball - 2 Rubber playground balls about 8-inches in diameter, 4 Cones or other place markers
Mark a starting point and place one pair of cones, then identify a turn-around point and place the second pair of cones. These points should be about 15 feet apart. Have each kid assume a character to be at the start, either the Tortoise or the Hare. Both Players place a ball between their feet or knees. On "GO!" the Hare will hop with a ball between his feet or knees to the turn-around point, while the Tortoise will crawl to the turn-around point with a ball between her feet or knees. Once they reach the turn-around, the two Players will switch characters and, placing their ball between his or her feet or knees, either hop or crawl back to start. (Hint: Crawling can be on either hands and knees, or hands and feet.)

Footloose Derby - 1 Base hula hoop, plus a hula hoop per player, a bunch of fun classroom items (ex. plastic bottles, balls of all shapes and sizes, pool toys, cotton balls, Duplo blocks, stuffed animals, etc.)

The only rule in this game is no hands! Set up one hoop in the center of the play area as the base and set up the other hula hoops ten feet or more away from and around the base - one for each Player. These hoops are the Players' goals. Put the classroom items in the center base hoop. Each kid stands in his own goal. On "GO!" all players race to bring back items from the base to their goal. Creative kids can kick items back to their hoop, or hop with them between their feet, or grab them with their forearms - imagination is the only limit! If kids get caught using hands, they return the item to the center hoop. Everyone wins when the center hoop is empty!