

Ten tips to do at home...

Lyndsey and Stephanie wanted to share with you a few inspirational play recipes from The Curiosity Approach Crib, which is a great online resource for Early Years childcare settings, childminders and parents.

Here are just a few of the great activities you can try at home with you child:



1 Bird bedding

Birds are looking for lots of nesting materials this time of year to create snuggly warm homes to hatch their eggs and keep their chicks warm. This super simple but effective idea is a way to help provide some nesting materials that they may use and need. By offering a variety of safe nesting materials in your garden, you can attract a variety of birds who are looking for nesting materials.

Recipe

- Wool cut into little 10cm pieces max
- Dog hair
- Moss
- Dry grass
- Small twigs
- Dry leaves
- Whisks or suet cages

Simply push a selection of items through the whisk 'bars' until full and hang in a tree or near a hedgerow. We've used a large S hook bird feeder hangers, as these protect and do not damage the bark on the trees.

2 Seed bombs

This is the perfect experience to get those green fingers nice and muddy creating seed bombs. Seed bombs are simply soil balls mixed with seeds, once dried they can be thrown and scattered where you wish for the plants to grow, this method provides a natural planting scheme in your outdoor spaces and wildflower seeds work best for this, which provides a brilliant nectar source for wildlife as well as looking beautiful.

Recipe

- Soil, top soil works best
- Seeds of your choice
- Water
- Spoons and containers
- Egg cartons or ice cream cone

Mix some water with the soil to create a sticky muddy consistency. Mix in a tea spoon of seeds and stir into the muddy mixture.

Using your hands, squeeze and mould the seed mixture into ball shapes. Place in an egg carton and allow to dry. Once dried they can be thrown and scattered where you want the plants to germinate and grow.



These make
great eco friendly
gifts too!

3 Stacking stones

Here is a very simple open ended experience. All you need are stones that children can hunt or dig up in the garden. Stones come in all shapes sizes and textures, they provide a challenge for children whether choosing to stack the stones, or they can be arranged in anyway a child chooses. They're different weights, and children will have to think of ways and strategies that are best to handle them safely.

Simply provide stones and let the children do the rest.



4 Spring

As the colder months start to warm, new changes come with the turn of the season. We encourage you to go into the garden and look for signs of Spring. Wrap up warm, and enjoy the fresh cool air.

Recipe

- Listen to the birds singing away, looking for a new home to create a nest
- Buds appearing in the trees
- Bulbs starting to raise their heads from the ground
- Fresh new colours enter the gardens or parks and flowers start to bloom
- Daffodils dance in the breeze, crocuses emerge and rise up with their bright blooms from the dark soil and snowdrops peek out from under their winter covering of fallen Autumn leaves



What other signs of Spring can you find?

If you wrap up warm and get prepared, what about making a den outside? Take some blankets old cushions and some warm drinks and create a spot to watch nature go by.



5 Worms

Whilst enjoying the outdoors stop, look and listen to the wonders happening everyday in our beautiful natural world. There is a whole hive of activity going on everyday by our smaller creatures in our outdoor spaces. How often do we take the time to encourage children to look? To search and observe the smaller mini beasts?

6 The world around us

Wildflowers not only look beautiful but they provide a hive of life! Homes for mini beasts and small mammals, birds love them for their seed heads and nesting materials and they're a rich source of nectar for our pollinators. They are pretty easy to grow too, they like poor soil (not food rich compost) they self seed year after year and only need cutting back at the end of the Autumn months. Give it a go!

Recipe

- A sunny spot in the garden
- If you have no growing space, create one using large raised planters or containers
- Soil
- Wildflower seeds
- Leaving a grass area to grow long and wild helps start to create a meadow too full of life and interest for you children, give it a go!
- Magnifying glass, a great tool to always have outside for supporting children's discoveries



7 Squeezing fresh fruits

This is a great experience for children to learn how to use a juicer to create their own refreshing drinks. The whole process of learning where juice comes from and how to use the juicer is amazing to be part of their learning.

Recipe

- Fruits such as Oranges, Lemons and Limes available from any supermarket or left over in the fruit bowl
- Juicers
- Chopping board
- Knives, safety knives are available and supervision is required

Support the children to cut the fruits in half, note the beautiful zesty aromas that fill the air.

Encourage the children to practice using the juicers. Can they work out how to do it themselves or do they need an adult to model how to use it?

Enjoy the delicious juices!



This great spring or summertime activity is full of joy and wonder.

8 Bubbles

Bubble mixture making is a fantastic scientific experiment for the children, sometimes the mixture works, sometimes it doesn't. It provides lots of opportunities for language and problem solving through the experimentation process. Have you ever created bubbles so big that they surround a child?



Recipe

- 6 cups water
- ½ cup washing up liquid
- ½ cup corn flour
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- 1 tbsp glycerin
- Tuff tray
(available from Amazon or an old paddling pool – or in the shower tray)
- Hula hoops
- A towel or wear wellies

Firstly, mix all the ingredients for your bubble concoction together and pour slowly into a tuff tray. This can be mixed in a bucket or straight in the tray or paddling pool. No need to blow up the sides, all you need is a container to hold the bubbles. Find a hula hoop and place inside the tray, swish the mixture gently from side to side to ensure its thoroughly mixed together.

Ask children to remove their socks and shoes and stand in the centre of the tray and the hoop (keep your wellington boots on if you prefer).

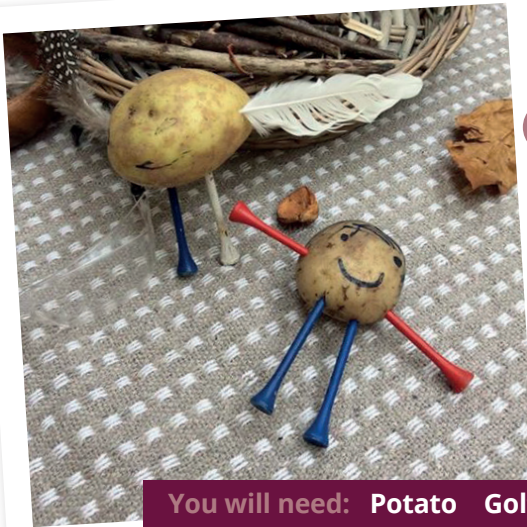
Now it's time for the children to stand very still, keeping their hands by their sides. Any movement may pop the growing bubble. Now holding the hula hoop hold it in two hands and with a steady gentle movement, raise the hoop above the child's head. As you lift the hoop a bubble should start to form. This is where the trial and error comes in! Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't! It is so much fun trying. When it does work a bubble, tube will surround the child.

The child will be encased in a mirage of colours, a rainbow of a bubble. It's a magical and wondrous opportunity and it's so much fun when the bubble rises and even better when the bubble pops!

9 Shapes and swirls

We often receive a parcel of goodies wrapped in amazing recyclable brown parcel paper or a large box that can be opened out flat, instead of recycling it what about using it for a great play activity?

Boxes and paper are an ideal resource for creativity and imagination. They can be used to draw on a larger scale. Build and make dens or just have fun climbing and clambering over. Boxes can be used for a wide range of things. Let the children's imagination be your guide.



10 Potato heads

If you have ever read the book about the 'superhero potato', you could then encourage the children to create their own amazing little figure. This will allow them to extend their creativity, thinking and story telling. First you will need find some potatoes in the kitchen and some golf tees, sticks, feathers or boggily eyes. If you haven't got any golf tees, don't worry, sticks from the garden will do or even some drawing pins?

You will need: Potato Golf tee Sticks Sticky boggily eyes or pens A hammer (optional)

This is a great opportunity for imagination, investigation and fine motor skills. the children can handle and manipulated the small pieces and figured out how to push or hammer them into the potato. Please supervise children if using a hammer to knock the golf tees into the potato. Give guidance and direction, but remember children are quite capable if given the responsibility and praise.

About Steph & Lyndsey Co-Founders of The Curiosity Approach®

Lyndsey Hellyn and Stephanie Bennett were both born in Sutton Coldfield in the West Midlands, UK. Lyndsey still resides here, with Stephanie now living in Leicester.

They are the co-founders of The Curiosity Approach which is a modern-day pedagogy for Early years. A beautiful recipe book taking inspiration from Steiner, Reggio Emilia, Montessori and the curriculum of New Zealand Te Whariki.

Stephanie and Lyndsey have featured on the BBC as "The Nursery without Toys" and in numerous Early Childhood magazines. Together they are utterly passionate about Early Childhood and have a large global following of like-minded educators wanting to make change for our children of today, the adults of tomorrow.

For further information see their website www.thecuriosityapproach.com

