

Creative and curious

Some of the most creative activities are the simplest. Here are five fun, thought-provoking games that will help to nurture your child's inner creative. By **Emily Pettit-Coetzee**



When it comes to our children, we can't leave their growth and learning entirely in the hands of teachers. It is as much our responsibility to foster a love of learning and a hunger for creativity as it is their educators'.

BABY Club

DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Free play is a remarkably creative process that fosters...

- ✓ Emotional health
- ✓ Original thinking
- ✓ Critical thinking
- ✓ Imagination
- ✓ Problem-solving
- ✓ Self-regulation

You are their first teacher, and your encouragement to indulge in everything creative and curious is vital to their development.

'Every child is born creative, it's how that is nurtured that makes the difference.'

According to Chantelle Smedley, who has been a primary school educator for 20 years, one of the biggest hindrances to creativity in children today is the length of the school day, added extramurals and time spent doing homework. 'Some kids have an eight-hour day, six days a week. But it's not the organised activities that hinder creativity, it's the lack of downtime,' she says.

Here are five simple and fun games to unleash their inner creative.

#1 DRAWING GAME: THE COMBINATION MAN

Any child who is drawing people, so aged 3+, can join in. (Younger ones can play with a little guidance.) The first player draws the head and neck. This can be animal, human, alien or

robot. Fold the paper down so only the very bottom of the neck can be seen. The next person draws the arms and torso to the waist, and folds the paper over, and so on. Unfold the paper to reveal the hilarious combination creatures you've all drawn.

#2 DRESSING UP

Dig around in your wardrobe for some interesting combinations – a feather boa you once wore to a fancy-dress party, an oversized sun hat, even a wedding dress – and dress up along with your children. Doing so will allow them a glimpse into the creative, imaginative person you are, making fun, inventive memories that will last a lifetime.

#3 PETAL POTIONS

Making scented potions is an engaging, imaginative pursuit. Take a jar on a walk somewhere your children can forage – on the sand dunes, in the park or on a mountain trail. Here they can gather the ingredients they want for their potion. Add a little water, combine, mash, stir, shake and sniff

until you have just the right blend of perfume. There are plenty of ingredients and endless concoctions to be made.

#4 INVENT A SUPERHERO

Children love superheroes. Let them come up with their own – do they shoot ice out of their hands, or can they tidy their bedroom at the speed of light? Allow your child to be as creative as they like coming up with their supersuits, extraordinary abilities and a planet where they come from.

#5 FREE DRAWING

'One of the ways in which I encourage creativity in my classroom is by getting the children to draw on paper that's stuck under their tables. When they lie on their backs and free draw, it's amazing what creative things they produce,' says Chantelle. 'Every child is born creative, it's how that is nurtured that makes the difference.'

Play time is fun time!

Munchkin Caterpillar Spillers, R79.99

