

FUN IDEAS FOR A RAINY DAY

keep your kids occupied when playing outside isn't an option.

LET THEM BUILD A PLAY HOUSE.

Save or get a large appliance box. Stash it in the garage or basement, and when the time comes, drag it out and hand the kids scissors, markers, non-toxic paint, and glue. You can add construction paper for shingles and roof tiles, shoe boxes for window flower planters, and a host of other odds and ends to let them make a creative playhouse of their own.

MAKE A HOME MOVIE

Decide which story scene the family will enact. Or better yet, take turns writing your own little skit. Then find costumes from the box of old clothes or salvage store finds that everyone can dress up in. Designate someone as the camera person who will use the video camera to record the family drama. For backdrops, rearrange part of one room with easy to move furniture so that it resembles a stage or at least provides room for actors to move as they say their lines.

HAVE A KARAOKE SESSION.

Make your own "microphone" and simply have someone play the piano, trumpet, or whatever instruments are available in accompaniment to others' singing. Another option is to record the group harmonizing a favorite tune, holiday or otherwise. Show it to extended family members when they come to visit.

WRITE A STORY.

Take turns writing out a paragraph to a story that begins with an introductory statement, such as "Once upon a time..." or "It began one dark and stormy night many long years ago..." As each person finishes writing the paragraph, pass it to the next person. Older siblings can write a few sentences for the younger ones who can't write yet but are old enough to voice their ideas for the story.

SET UP A RACE TRACK.

Keep a cardboard box of empty oat cartons, tea boxes, and other cardboard containers that can be used for making vehicles. Use Popsicle sticks, cotton swabs, or sucker sticks for wheel axles. You can buy small plastic wheels at a craft store, or have the kids experiment with making their own from cardboard paper or baby food jar lids. Use a dissected cardboard box, sides taken apart and taped together for a flat surface, to make a race track surface.

COOK A COLLECTIVE MEAL.

Have each person make a recipe for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Younger children can make colored placemats or choose the music that will play while everyone is dining. If there are several family members, pair them in two's for a recipe to avoid cooking too much. If possible, select a theme, such as Caribbean, African, or Middle Eastern that will guide the choice of menu's, music, and decorations.

