

Rainy day activities

The below comments are taken from Club members suggestions following a request for newsletter content during Winter 2013 (still relevant).

Lots of play dates at home and out. If you have a good friend you can spend the morning at their house and the afternoon at yours. That often works a treat and shares the cleaning up duty.

Also I've found it vital to have soft play membership. DJ's jungle adventure is good as they do one membership and the other half price for twins. We often go there for the morning, go home for lunch and then go back for the afternoon. As the adult you will get a hot drink per child membership and a cup of squash too. Even if you go twice in one day and that really saves money.

Make bath time more fun, freeze coloured water into blocks and then get them to chase them round the bath. As they melt they will leave a trail of water in the bath.

Any broken bits of wax crayon can be added to a silicon ice cube tray and popped into a low temperature oven until melted and merged into one block. Great fun for the little ones colouring with as it creates odd colours and patterns.

If your little ones are being frightened by "Monsters" at night then make a bottle of "Anti Monster" spray. Download pictures of monsters off the internet, cut out and then stick to a clean water spray and then add the special liquid (commonly known as Tap Water). Not only will they have fun making it but also if they wake up scared you can give it a quick spray and ward off any monsters.

Not the best of dinners but cut up cold hotdog sausages and then push sticks of spaghetti through them. Cook as per spaghetti instructions and when they come out then they look like spiders!

Good old shadow puppets with a couple of old torches although my two just love a dark room and then messing around with the torches making the light move all over the walls..

Lots of puzzles and games are a good idea plus arts and crafts stuff is a great way to pass the time.

If you don't have one already - invest in a wipeable table cloth (you can get them really cheap in St. Albans market). Plus get some cheap Arts and Crafts stuff from Wilkos. Then the children can draw, glue, cut, stick, play with playdoh etc. and you don't wreck your table!

As they get older - Hama Beads are a great way to amuse them on a rainy day.

Get kitted out with clothes for all weather – “There's no such thing as bad weather - only bad clothes". Even in horrible weather - if you are all wrapped up / in waterproofs / warm gear etc - you can still have loads of fun.

If you buy waterproofs etc. a size up - they'll last you a few years (you can just roll the legs up if too long initially). Or you might pick up some winter clothing bargains at NCT sales or

from fellow St Albans Mums through Facebook. Cheap snow boots are fab for snow and bad weather alike with better grip than wellies and padded and warm.

We love the RAF museum in Hendon, the Natural History Museum in Tring, Swimming and Soft Play places (DJ Jungles / Big Space etc).

For little ones set up an indoor obstacle/exercise course with mini trampoline, bean bags/cushions, little hoola hoops , skipping rope on floor as wiggly snake to jump over, mini bean bags to throw in a bucket.

Exercise with your children: As we all know, it is important to bring children up to understand the importance of exercise to a healthy lifestyle. If you can feel your children starting to climb the walls, why not put on an exercise or yoga DVD and do a workout together! Not only will it burn off some of their pent up energy, you'll also be burning off some calories at the same time – so you can treat yourself to that bar of chocolate without feeling guilty!

Baking is a great way to pass the time, mine love rolling out and cutting out shapes, gingerbread recipes works well, different shape cutters can be bought cheaply along with little rolling pins – Ebay is good! Biscuits can then be decorated with icing or icing pens and lots of different sparkles etc. available from supermarkets. I also make basic fairy /cup cakes which mine decorate with icing and any sweets, or dried fruit etc. (You can buy basic plain fairy cakes from super market to use if you do not want to bake!)

Have an indoor picnic: Who says picnics are just for the summer? Most children love a picnic so why not put a picnic rug down and have an indoor picnic lunch or tea with your children.

We make the use of our local library, they always have story time and rhyme time each week (regardless of school holidays) then borrow books and audio books. DVD 's can be rented for a week, and they have lots of children's films and popular tv shows.

Do some themed arts and crafts: Get prepared and order some arts and crafts materials from sites like Hobbycraft, Yellow Moon or Baker Ross and spend time creating things with your children. Alternatively, go to www.activityvillage.co.uk and print off some free colouring pages, and get ideas for themed arts and crafts to make at home. If neither of these take your fancy then you could always roll out an old roll of wallpaper, get your child to lie down on it and draw round them, then get them to colour it in or make a life-size collage of themselves!

Have an indoor scavenger hunt: Children love searching and exploring, so a scavenger hunt is a fun idea to keep them amused when you're stuck in the house. Write a list of the things your children have to find around the house and set them off. If you have time you can take pictures of things around the house and print them onto a sheet for the children to find. With the promise of prizes for completing the scavenger hunt, the children are sure to find this exciting!