**1. Build a bug hotel**

Encourage [insects](https://www.theschoolrun.com/homework-help/insects) to your garden by building them their very own residence using planks of wood or old pallets or crates piled up with bricks between the layers.

Your child can fill the gaps between the layers with things to make their visitors at home, such as cardboard tubes, shredded paper, feathers and pebbles, and keep checking every day to see who has moved in.

**2. The Duplication Game**

To play this variation on the classic Kim’s Game, go out and gather a small collection of items from the local environment, like feathers, pine cones, pebbles and leaves.

Your child’s challenge is to search the area for the same objects, and then come back to see how many they’ve managed to collect.

This game will help them develop their [memory](https://www.theschoolrun.com/sats-advice-memory-skills) and observation skills.

**3. Create a cairn**

Cairns are man-made towers of natural stones, usually built as a landmark or a memorial, and making them is a great activity for kids.

All they need to do is gather a range of flat rocks and pebbles in different sizes, and then stack them in order, with the largest at the bottom and the smallest at the top.

**Can they make changes to the structure of their cairn, such as using a foundation of lots of smaller stones, and see if it still stands?**

This improves gross and fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination and concentration as they experiment with finding the stones’ balancing points to see how tall they can make their cairn.

**4. Potato peeler whittling**

Whittling sticks is a great outdoor activity that can be almost meditative, and providing a potato peeler rather than a knife makes it much safer.

Your child can use the peeler to whittle the bark off a stick, and then use felt tip pens to decorate it.

Stick a feather to the end, and it becomes a magic wand.

Whittling helps hand-eye coordination, and decorating the whittled sticks promotes [creativity](https://www.theschoolrun.com/nurturing-creativity-in-children) and imagination.

**5. Flower crowns**

This is a lovely activity for creative kids, and gives them opportunities to role-play being fairies, woodland nymphs or royalty.

Go for a walk and collect flowers, leaves and grasses along the way, which your child can then weave into a nature-inspired crown. They could make a classic daisy chain garland or knot grasses to create a wreath.

As an add-on learning activity, buy a flower identification guidebook or borrow one from the [library](https://www.theschoolrun.com/things-to-do-in-the-library) so your child can identify the blooms and blossom they’ve gathered.

**6. Clay play**

Clay is a great natural modelling material, and can be combined with things that your child finds outdoors to make fascinating creations.

Playing with the tactile material is good for fine motor control and developing the muscles needed for handwriting, and has the same satisfying sensation as making mud pies.

One fun idea is to get your child to make a hedgehog body out of clay, and then stick pine needles in to make its spines.

They can also combine clay with pebbles, pine cones, feathers and more to create their own realistic or abstract masterpieces.

**7. Build a den**

Building a den is a brilliant back-to-nature challenge that will awaken your child’s inner caveman, and it’s a great project to get stuck into with a friend or sibling.

Find some thick, long sticks and challenge your child to create their own shelter, either by leaning them up against a tree, or by lashing them together with string at the top for a tipi-style den.

You could take an old sheet out with you to give their den-building more scope.

This is a good test of problem-solving skills that involves your child working out how to balance the sticks and make them stay standing, as well as providing an opportunity to be physically active.

**8. Woodland dragons**

Your child may well have played with chalks on pavements, but giant chalks are also good for drawing on trees.

The textured bark is really satisfying to draw on, helping children develop fine motor skills, pencil grip and mark-making, as well as creativity.

Try looking for knots in trees that look like dragons’ eyes, and using the chalks to draw on the surrounding area: the bumpy bark makes brilliant dragon skin.

**9. Giant bubbles**

This hands-on science activity is much more fun than blowing bubbles from a tiny pot.

Combine six cups of water, one cup of washing-up liquid, and half a tablespoon of glycerine (the magic ingredient, available from chemists).

Tie a piece of string of any length into a circle, dip it into the bubble mix and waft it around to make giant bubbles.

Your child can experiment with how much to mix the solution to make the best bubbles, and see which [weather](https://www.theschoolrun.com/homework-help/weather) conditions are the best for bubble-blowing.

**10. Construct a labyrinth**

Using sticks, your child can create a maze of any size on the ground for parents, friends and siblings to find their way around by following the paths they’ve laid.

**11. Campfire cooking**

Cooking on a campfire is a thrilling experience for children, as long as you follow basic safety rules: make sure they’re closely supervised, don’t light fires under overhanging branches or near tree roots, and always have water on hand.

Using a fire pit, brazier or basket will help to keep the fire contained.

Your child can whittle a stick to a point using their potato peeler, spear a marshmallow, toast it over the fire and then sandwich it between two chocolate biscuits to make smores.

Or stick a lolly stick into an apple, melt chocolate in a bowl over a pan of boiling water on the fire, then dip the apple in and cover it with sprinkles: a lovely autumn activity that’ll help your child think about where their food comes from.