



cwlwm



Play Activities in and Around the Home

Play is of the utmost importance at the moment for children of any age. The message from children that, "Play is what I do when no one is telling me what to do" is important and we need to be encouraging free, unstructured play within the home during this unusual time. It is also important for settings to still be engaging with families and their children, to know that they are being thought about. So below are some suggestions of activities that settings could use to keep in touch with families and ultimately the children and young people.

Moving Monday

Hide and Seek. You can't go wrong with hide and seek; whether inside or outside, hide and seek can provide hours of fun. You can even hide teddies or figures to find. Why not get them to share with you their best hiding spot?



Timed Tuesday

Scavenger Hunt. Children and young people love a scavenger hunt or a challenge. Why not post a list of items that they need to collect in a set amount of time? You could even try and do this via a live Facebook video so that they can do it at the same time, where they have a set amount of time to find a certain object or item.



Wild Wednesday

Wild Bingo. What can children and young people find on their walks? Create a mini bingo card that they can recreate and take with them when they go out for their daily exercise. Get them to share with you what objects or items they found.



Thinking Thursday

Superhero. Provide children and young people with a sentence such as, "I am a superhero because"and let them fill in the rest. Encourage them to become the best version of themselves. Can they make a costume? Can they draw themselves as a superhero? Or even create a comic book strip? What superhero poses can they make? Get them to share them with you.



Fun Friday

Mallet painting. Using cotton wool pads or balls, (whichever you have available in the house), paint and a mallet or hammer, great for relieving any stress or anxiety that children may be feeling and also quite simply fun. Preferable to do this outside. First lay out a large piece of paper, or paper stuck together. Put paint between two cotton pads and lay them on the paper. Then hit with the mallet. Great splat pictures, but who got the messiest or stayed the cleanest?



Alternatively, what other days can you come up with, what about Mucky Monday, Folding Friday, Wet Wednesdays? Equally, play can happen anywhere and at anytime, so we have created a whole range of activities to spark and encourage lots of fun during lockdown and beyond.

Create pictures with water



Anyone who has watched the rain would have seen how water changes the colour of the pavement, and fences change colour. Water painting can be a great way for children to be creative whilst also being able to observe how water and sun changes their creations. Fill water bottles with water and the children can pour and squirt the water across pavements and walls to create their designs.



Drawing pictures using ice lollies

Another fun painting activity can be created with ice lollies. Use ice lolly moulds and fill them with either juice, squash or water with food colouring; freeze and they are ready to use. The handles from the lolly sticks can keep hands from getting too cold, but children may also like to explore the sensory experience of exploring the temperature and texture of the ice. This is also a great way to introduce colours in Welsh.



Create shapes with tape

A fun way to encourage children's awareness of shapes in Welsh and English. Use tape to create shapes together and then the children can find craft equipment or things from nature to decorate. The tape is a great base that will keep the children's designs in place



Find different letters

Whilst you are out for a walk why not see what letters you can find. Create cards with letters and see how many you can match on your way. You could try and find the alphabet, a specific letter a day or just a random selection of letters.

The praise tree

You can use a tree in the garden to hang children's comments or you could collect large twigs and make a tree inside. Encourage children to record their friends' names, who's been kind, what they've done today. This is an excellent opportunity to introduce the Welsh language and encourage kindness and well-being. Younger children could draw pictures instead of writing.





Keeping in contact with children

Under these challenging situations many childcare providers are using innovative ways of keeping in touch with children who were in their care. There have been creative ways of doing this shared through Facetime and WhatsApp. Some childcare providers have produced videos of them telling stories for parents of children in their care to share. Take a look at childminder Reanne Brown telling the story [‘We’re going on a bear hunt’](#). She shared this with children who are not currently with her due to lockdown to help them remember her! Be inspired! Create your own video and share on the Cwlwm Facebook page.



Reusing and recycling

Due to the necessity of online shopping at present, many of us have lots of cardboard boxes and packaging. These can be excellent sources of fun and play for children. There are some wonderful ideas to support reusing and recycling online including in the PACEY blogs [Treasuring the trash](#) and [Reuse and Recycle](#). These blogs show how almost everything can be used to enhance your setting. It also helps you to teach children about the value of recycling – and protecting the environment at the same time.



Digital books

Digital books are another option and a number of quality, engaging resources have emerged in the last few weeks. A number of these specifically address supporting children's well-being in these challenging times in a fun way. Take a look at the brilliant book written by Lauren Cooper titled the [Stinky, Sticky Virus](#) available for free digitally in both English and Welsh. For older children [Coronavirus - a book for children](#) explains some of the key facts that may help in discussions with children. Also the wonderful illustrations produced by [Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler](#) depicting their famous characters adjusting to social distancing and the current crisis.

Create a time capsule

Given these unprecedented times consider creating a time capsule to be buried and dug up on an agreed date in the future. [Ysgol Gynradd Calon Y Cymoedd](#) has shared a template (available in English and Welsh) for this which could easily be adapted for use by younger children too. This also gives opportunities to discuss well-being with children and provides information to share with families.

Go outside!

Using the outdoor environment in your setting supports children's development not just physically but emotionally as well. There are some great ideas on the www.growveg.co.uk website that encourage use of the outdoors with children, these can easily be adapted for use in settings for all ages of children. Activities include making a bird feeder, cutting branches, and sowing seeds. Maybe consider having a sunflower growing competition in your setting; children not attending the setting currently could also participate by growing a sunflower at home and sharing photos to support keeping in touch.



Den Building

Creating a den is a great way of encouraging physical development and can be made with almost anything. Not only is it great for health and fitness but also for general wellbeing. It can provide hours of fun and a special space for your child to escape to in these strange times. Den building also supports movement through the collection of materials, improving gross and fine motor skills through lifting, carrying, placing, gripping and grasping whilst having lots of fun and developing imagination. Let your child personalise their den by decorating it with paints, crayons, chalk, ribbon, leaves, flowers etc.



Milk Carton Fun

All you need is a clean dry milk carton. Fill with it with pasta to give it some weight. You can also use sand to make the activity more difficult depending on skill level. Using string tie one end to the handle or the carton and another to a stick. Encourage your child to hold onto the stick standing with two feet apart to balance. Holding the stick with both hands wind the string around the stick so that the carton begins moving towards them. Once the string is all the way in encourage the child to try and swing the carton backwards and forwards between their legs. You could make two cartons and race against each other to see who can wind the string around the stick the fastest!





Kites

Make your own kites by cutting the bottom of a clean and dry water carton. Punch holes in the bottom and choose ribbons or fabric to hang. Encourage your child to hold the kite up in the air and run around to make the ribbons fly.

Bug House

Use the bottom half of a milk carton to make a bug house. Roll up newspaper into tubes and fill the carton. Then place by plants and wait to see the bugs that come to visit.



Make your own bubbles

Mix one part washing up liquid and 6 parts water to create your bubble solution. You can then use paperclips, straws, a colander or fly swatter as your bubble wand.

In addition to all these play opportunities you could also create a family band by making home made instruments. These can be decorated and changed for children to make the instruments look and sound how they like.

Homemade beat sticks

Use large sticks, or a broom handle cut into smaller parts. Use paint, or glitter and glue to decorate these. Once the paint has dried the children can hit them together to make the beats and rhythm of their choosing.



Homemade rain makers

Rain makers are fun to make and create a relaxing sound. Draw around the cardboard tube on a piece of card. Cut this circle shape into a spiral making it as long as possible. Stick the outside to the top of the inside of the tube and stretch inside the tube as far as possible and secure. Seal one end of the tube with a piece of card. Fill the tube with lentils or rice and then seal the top. Decorate and allow to dry before tipping upside down and listen to the lentils or rice fall.



Water music

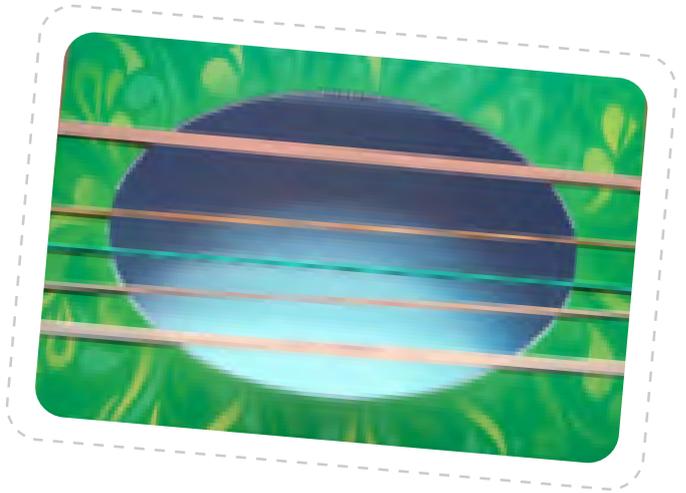
Collect jars to create a colourful and musical toy. Add different amounts of water to each vessel and add some food colouring to make it more inviting. Ask the children what sounds they make; can they put them in order of pitch?

Make a shaker

Use any old container such as a milk carton, decorate and support the children to put either lentils, rice, pasta, pebbles, seeds or gravel into the vessels; you may need a funnel if you are using plastic bottles. Try out different materials in the vessels such as gravel and lentils and talk about the sounds they make; are they deep, loud, quiet?

Homemade guitars

A simple activity which can be made follow the instructions or made more personal by decorating the box before construction. Use an old tissue box and string elastic bands across the vessel, try different thicknesses of bands. Pluck the bands, what sounds do they make?



Creating sounds, songs and rhymes

Children who are better at detecting rhymes tend to be more successful at learning to read. Encourage children to take an interest in creating sounds, songs and rhymes in this activity guide. Collect a range of boxes, tins, pots, and wooden spoons. Provide the children with the resources and encourage them to make sounds. Can they play quietly, loudly, slowly, quickly? Encourage the children to find different ways of playing the 'instruments'. You could even put some music on for them to play along to.



Calm cave

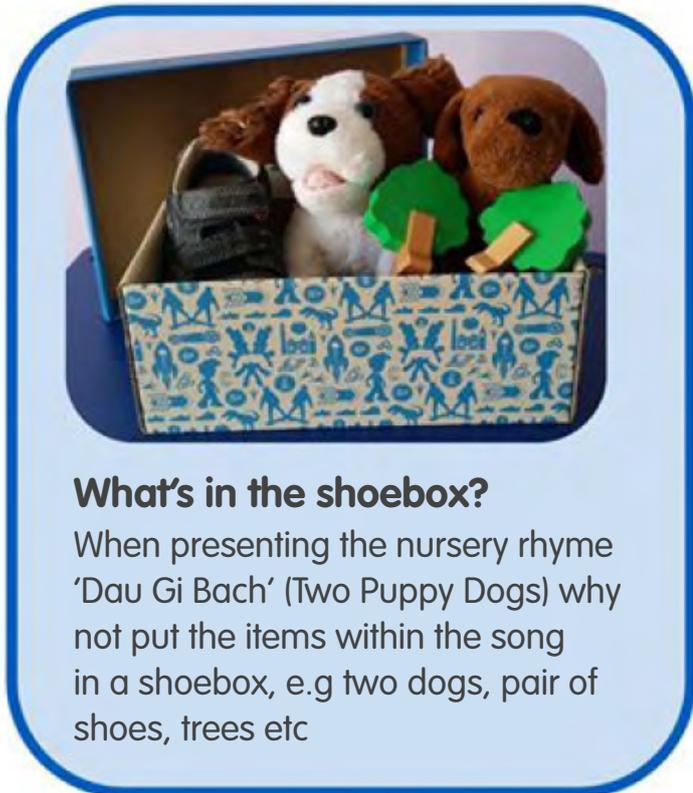
Create a calm cave to help children when they feel like they need some time out, away from the hustle and bustle of nursery life. Create your calm cave 'shell' with a large cardboard box, an old tent or even a den made out of blankets. You could add in a few battery powered fairy lights and put some cushions in so the children can get comfy. Why not also include quiet activities to help calm the children, this supports their self-regulation: books and a torch, sensory calming bottles, e.g. vegetable oil, water, glitter and colouring, sensory touch pad, e.g. velvet, wool, foil, carpet etc.

We hope that you enjoy all of these activities and they inspire you to think of new and exciting ways to engage in different play experiences. If you would like more ideas why not check out the Cwlwm Partners Facebook pages.



We also wanted to leave you with one additional play activity so we have included a worksheet for you to enjoy with your children.

Dau Gi Bach



What's in the shoebox?

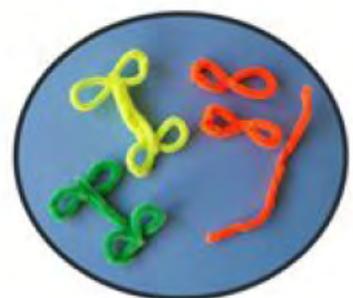
When presenting the nursery rhyme 'Dau Gi Bach' (Two Puppy Dogs) why not put the items within the song in a shoebox, e.g two dogs, pair of shoes, trees etc

Pennill Dau Gi Bach
Dau gi bach yn mynd i'r coed
Esgid newydd am bob troed
Dau gi bach yn dwad adre,
Wedi colli un o'i sgidie
Dau gi bach.

Here are some activities to accompany the nursery rhyme 'Dau Gi Bach':

1. **'Dau Gi'** – Snap game.
You can download the playing cards form our website – www.meithrin.cymru/daugibach

2. Help Doti to find the bone – Firstly, show the children how to create a bone shape out of pipe cleaners. Then, you can hide the bones outside and ask the children to help Doti to find them.



3. 'Esgid Newydd' (New shoe) – Collect a variety of shoes, e.g clog shoe, ballet, flippers, rugby shoe, baby shoe, wellingtons, slippers. Place the shoes on the mat and hide with a tablecloth or a blanket. With the children sitting around the pile, remove the cloth to discover the

shoes! "Beth ydi rhain?" (What are these?) "Esgid pwy ydy hon?" (Whose shoe is this?) "Pwy sy'n gwisgo esgid fel hon?" (Who wears a shoe like this?) This is a great opportunity to describe the shoes – discuss their size, colour, weight and feeling.



www.cwlwm.org.uk

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