

Indoor bowling

A great way to reuse water bottles. Line six water bottles up at the end of your hall or living room. Place a line of duct tape at the starting line. Grab a medium-sized indoor ball and start bowling! If you want, keep score and give out trophies at the end. (Note: if you need to stabilize the water bottles or make the game more difficult, simply fill them up with some water. Don't forget to screw the tops on tightly!)

The Flour Game

You take a plastic cup, fill it with flour (pack it in tight), then turn it over onto a plate and carefully lift the cup. You will have an upside-down, flour-shaped cup on the plate. Carefully set a small piece of candy or small light toy on top of the flour shaped cup. Take turns using a butter knife to cut off some of the flour structure and try not to knock off the candy/toy. The person who knocks off the candy/toy loses.

Treasure hunt

Kids love finding hidden objects — especially when there's a prize at the end. Simply write your clues on some slips of paper — get creative. Place the first clue somewhere easy to find, like inside your child's snack or cereal bowl. Then leave as many clues as you like around the house, making a trail to the final clue. Instead of a prize, the treasure hunt can lead to pennies around the house. This way the kids get to collect all the pennies and put them in their piggy banks in the end.

Hot Potato

This game will have everyone giggling. Ask the kids to sit on the floor in a circle. Turn on some tunes and have them pass the potato (a bean bag, soft ball or rolled up sock) around the circle as fast as they can. When the music stops, the player holding the potato leaves the circle. Keep going until only one player is left and wins the game. Adjust rules for the number of kids playing.

Picnic memory game

To play, everyone sits in a circle. The first player says, “In my basket for the picnic, I packed...,” and then says what item he or she packed. The next player then says, “In my basket for the picnic, I packed...,” and then recites what the first player packed and adds his or her own item to the basket, and so forth.

The listening game

Lay out several miscellaneous items. Have your kids look at all the items, and then take them away. Next, ask one child to hide his or her eyes and listen as you pick up an item and make sounds with it. Ask the child to guess which item made the sound. Examples of items might be a comb (run your fingers along it), a glass (gently tap it), shakers, sandpaper, blocks rubbed together, a pot and spoon. Be creative and have fun!

Make your own Bubbles

You need a plate and straw for each player, some dishwashing soap and water. Place a dime-size drop of dish soap at the center of each plate. Pour a little water onto the plate and gently mix with the dish soap until some suds start to form. Have the kids place the straw in the suds and blow very gently. Watch as massive bubbles start to form. To make this competitive, see who blows the **biggest, or longest-lasting, bubble**.

Indoor basketball

You can't be too little for this version of basketball. All you need is a bucket or laundry basket and a rolled up sock. Each player takes a turn at throwing the sock into the bucket/basket. When a player scores a bucket, he or she takes a step back and throws again until missing. The player who shoots the ball in the bucket from the farthest distance wins.

Simon Says

This traditional favorite will never get old. To start, choose one player (probably a parent for the first round) to be Simon. The rest of the players will gather in a circle or line in front of Simon as he calls out actions starting with the phrase “Simon says”: “Simon says...touch your toes.” The players then have to copy Simon’s action, touching their toes. If Simon calls out an action without uttering the phrase “Simon says,” the kids must not do the action. If a child touches his toes when Simon didn’t say..., he or she is out of the game. There are lots of great ways Simon can trick players into doing actions when Simon didn’t say

Touch-and-feel box

Find a shoe box or any box that has a lid on it. Cut a hole in one of the sides of the box —large enough for your child to fit her hand in. If you want, get creative and decorate the box with glitter and question marks. When you’re ready to play, put an item inside the box and have your children guess what it is. They can ask questions about the item if they need to, or you can offer clues. Get as ooey-gooey as you wish (fresh pumpkin seeds or slimy spaghetti), or use such simple objects as a brush, a toy, a piece of fruit. To make it competitive, you can give a point to the first child to name the object.

Freeze!

Choose some of your kids’ favorite music and turn up the volume. Ask them to dance until the music stops. When it does, they have to freeze in whatever position they find themselves in – even if they have one leg up. To make the game more challenging, ask the kids to freeze in specific poses: animals, shapes, letters or even yoga postures. Toddlers in particular love this game.

Magical Mama (or Papa)

Be your kids' very own Harry Houdini—without the locks, chains and water tanks, of course. Simply place a coin under one of three cups and shuffle the cups around. Then ask your children to guess which cup holds the coin. Sneaky parents can place the cups near the edge of a table and secretly drop the coin. Watch your tots' eyes light up in amazement when they learn the coin is gone!

Building

You don't need a fancy building set for this. Popsicle stick cities, card towers, even buildings out of blocks, or indoor forts out of boxes or pillows, will do just fine. If you want to get competitive, whoever builds the highest tower wins.

DIY balance beam

Get your masking tape out and make your own balance beam! We all know how much kids love walking in straight lines every chance they get. Put on some music, and one at a time the kids can take their turn walking one-foot-over-the-other across the straight line of tape. Make the game more challenging by having the kids walk backwards or balance with one foot on the line.

Hot Lava

What kid hasn't "invented" this game! Playing it as a family game is a blast. The only rule is don't touch the floor – it's lava! No supplies needed!!

Paper-bag skits

Give each kid a bag filled with props, such as a spoon, toy jewelry, a sock, ball or ribbon. Then give them each of them time to come up with a skit just using the props in the bag. This game is so much fun that it doesn't have to be competitive. If the kids want, though, they can all vote on a winning skit.

