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Leisure and Fun Games for Children with Intellectual Disabilities During Lockdown

[Fun, Entertainment and Learning]



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Introduction:

Everything has changed drastically due to the Covid -19 pandemic. With complete lockdown of schools, cinema halls, parks and other public places often parents come across how to engage their children. Parenting a child with special needs is not a cakewalk especially when the family has to make a lot of adjustments in their routines. One question which all parents ask is : *what should the kids do all the day?* With uncertainty about the duration of the lockdown, quarantine and the approaching summer vacation it is time that a serious thought is given on how children with intellectual and developmental disabilities can be actively engaged during this crisis period.

Working from home and working for home can be very tiresome and stressful for parents. You may be tempted to give in your smart phone, i-pad or laptop to engage your child with special needs. Because that seems to be the easiest option available. Indulging too much into these gadgets can be very harmful and may have negative impact on development. Just as learning activities and therapies are important so are the fun filled leisure activities. Every kid loves to have fun and entertainment. Instead of simply giving the electronic gadgets and allowing them to watch television for prolonged duration, here are some fun filled activities and games which can be tried at home with ease and with materials which are readily available at home. Remember these games are not only for fun but it is also a stress –buster. Entire family can have relaxed and stress free time for a short while, because everyone deserves it.

Some general tips before you start:

- + Ensure the participation of well siblings*
- + Select games where all family members can play.*
- + Keep a specific time period in a day for games. Eg: at 11:30 am or 4:00pm*
- + Check the material needed before you begin to avoid any chaos.*
- + Explain and demonstrate how the game is to be played.*
- + Don't drag the game for too long as the kids might get bored.*
- + Always appreciate the participation.*
- + Remember it's for fun that you are playing. Learning will happen automatically*

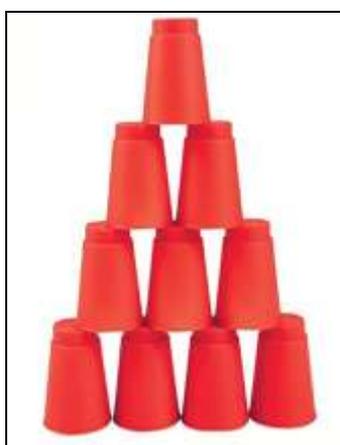
Here are some interesting fun filled games for children with special needs which can keep them active and engaged.

1. Stacking Cups

Materials: Paper/Plastic Cups , Waste paper sheets (Cut in rectangular shape)

No. of Players: 2-4

Procedure: Arrange cups in vertical order. Each player has to take one cup at a time and stack into a pyramid or arrange the cups in the patterns as shown in the picture. The one who arranges more number of sets in the given time limit is the winner. Don't forget to set a time limit. 90 seconds could be very ideal and you can slowly reduce it to 60 seconds.



1



2



3

2. Pick Me Fast

Materials: Medium Size bowl, small size bowl, Sand, beads/ shells/coins of two different sizes

No. of Players: 2 – 4

Procedure: Take sand into a medium sized plastic or steel bowl. Mix shells, beads and coins of different size and shape one at a time. The players can start the game at a time (or alternatively) to pick shells from the sand and place in the small bowl. The one who picks more shells within one minute is the winner. You can increase the time limit if you wish. Don't forget to keep the timer...

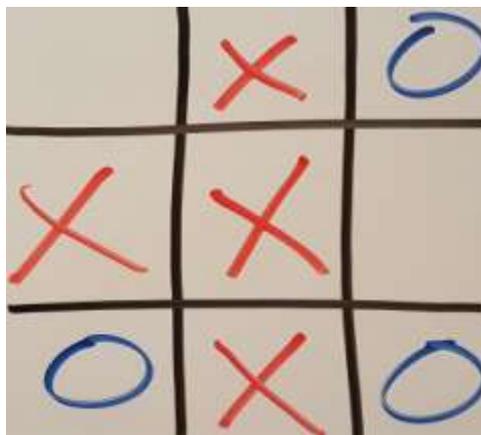
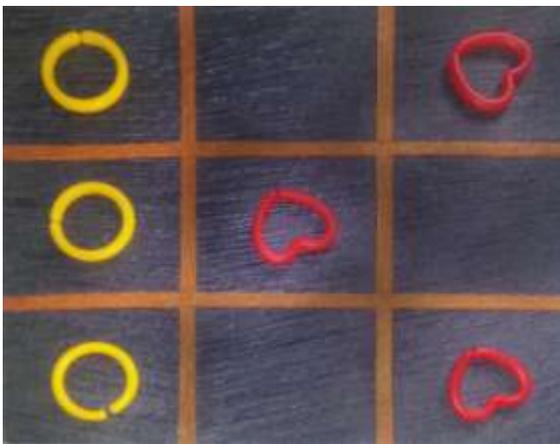


3. Tic- Tack- Toe

Materials: Card board (with nine squares preferably with contrast paper border) 3 beads or rings of two different colours.

No. of Players: 2

Procedure: Take a waste cardboard and draw lines to make nine squares in three rows as shown in the picture. You can also simply draw the same on a white sheet. Two players will play the game simultaneously. Let each player select a bead or ring. The first player puts the ring in any of the 9 boxes followed by the second player. The player who puts all the three rings/beads in horizontally, vertically or diagonally is the winner. If you don't have beads or rings you can simple draw a symbol in the white sheet.

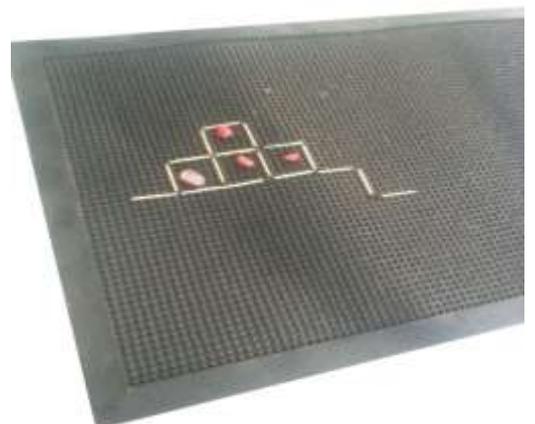


4. Square it

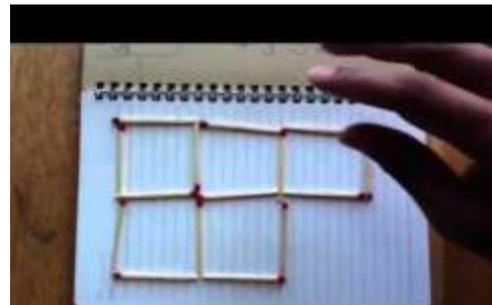
Materials: Card board or a Plastic mat , match sticks and colour pebbles, paper and pen

Play Group: 2

Procedure: The first player places the match stick in straight line – vertical or horizontal. Then the second player places the match stick connecting to first stick. The players take turns in placing the sticks. Players should try to avoid forming the third side of a box since that will give the other player a chance to complete the fourth side. When a player



completes a box, put a pebble for identity. His/her turn ends only when they fail to close a box to make a square. Whoever makes more number of squares will be the winner. If cardboard is not available you can use a white paper. Once the square is made write your initial for easy counting. Keep a time limit. Begin with 3 minutes or so and as the child learns gradually decrease the time.



5. What do you hear???

Materials: Objects like bell, paper, spoon, plate, flute, whistle, plastic water bottle and any unique sound producing item.

Players: 2 -4

Procedure: Place the objects before the child and let them observe. Ask the children to close their eyes. You can blindfold the child if he/she is comfortable and doesn't get anxious. One by one take an object to make sound. Ask your children to listen carefully and guess what object it was. Non verbal child can point the object instead of naming object.

Alternatively you can also play sounds of different objects, animals in your smart phone one by one and let your child guess the sound. Give him/her enough time to respond. Whoever tells the maximum correct answers in the given time is the winner. Before you play a new sound, ensure that nobody talks so that everyone can focus on the sound.



6. The Mystery Box (Touch and feel game)

Materials: Shoe box or any Carton box, different objects like brush, powder tin, belt, pen, bell, paper, spoon, plate, flute, whistle, small water bottle etc

Players: 2 or more

Procedure: Cut out a hole in the shoe box big enough for the child to fit his hand inside. Place different items in the box and ask your child to identify them by touch alone. For more fun you can blind fold (only if your child is comfortable) and ask the child to identify the objects he/she daily uses. Add variety of textured objects. If you don't have a box, you can use paper bag or any bag.



7. Balloon Game

Materials: Balloons

Players: 2 or more

Procedure: Blow a balloon and tie it. Ask your child to tap in the air and see that it does not hit the ground. Set a time limit for the siblings to play. The one who can keep the balloon for a longer time is the winner. Remember if the balloon hits the ground the player is out. Be careful that children don't hurt themselves by hitting the furniture in the room.



8. Photo Recognition Game

Materials: Photos of family members and friends (at least 10) from the album

Players: 2 or more

Procedure: Arrange the selected photos in front of your child. Call out the name of the family member or friend and ask your child to identify them in the photo. Let them point them out with in 30 sec. You can also ask where/when the photo was taken (Eg: during birthday party, in a cousins marriage, during a family trip). Encourage your kids to recall the good memories associated with the photos. You can start the game with the questions like

- a) Where is Rocky? Can you tell when was the photo taken?
- b) Where is Grandmother? Where was the photo taken?



9. Pick and Drop

Materials: Straw, Two bowls, Thermocol balls.

Players: 2 or more

Procedure: Keep a bowl filled with thermocol balls and an empty bowl on the table. Ask the child to keep the straw in the mouth and pick one thermocol ball and put it in the empty bowl. Whoever keeps more number of balls in one minute will be the winner. Remember while playing the game, hands should not be used to hold the straw. You can change the time limit if you wish.



10. Spoon and Marble Game

Materials: Spoon and Marbles (Alternatively you can use beads or blocks), bowls and a table

Players: 2 or more

Procedure: Place two tables some distance apart and keep 2-3 bowls with marbles on a table. The other table should have empty bowls. The kids must transfer the marbles to the empty bowl on the other end. To do this, they have to hold spoons in their mouth and balance the marbles/beads/block on the spoon, from one table to the other. Remember while playing the game, hands should not be used to hold the spoon. If the marble falls down let them pick up and continue until their time is up. Whoever transfers the most number of marbles, wins the game. It can also be played similar to the lemon and the spoon race which is of great fun.



Apart from these you can also try playing the usual games like

- Snakes and Ladder
- Ludo
- Caroms
- Hide and seek
- Bucketing the ball
- Puzzles of different kinds
- Dumb Charades
- Blow the bubbles
- Passing the ball
- Building blocks
- Freeze and many more games which you played during your childhood.

These games are not only for fun and excitement but also enhance fine motor coordination, language development, Sensory motor orientation, eye hand coordination, memory and socialisation skills. So parents take a break from your work and spend time in these fun games. You will definitely enjoy some quality family bonding time.



Play together, laugh together and help them grow happily.