

MummyPages Mums Arts and Crafts guide brought to you in association with **Kinder**

cool
after
school





With Christmas having drained our funds, and long evenings and rainy weekends keeping the kids indoors, Mum needs all the help she can get when it comes to entertaining her little ones.

We asked the MummyPages community for some budget-friendly tips and ideas to keep the kids entertained and out from under Mum's feet. They came back with lots of suggestions that we used to create this handy Kiddie Crafts guide.

You'll be a crafts ninja by the time Midterm arrives.

Homemade craft supplies

Kids love crafts, but the cost really can add up for parents. Our mums have shared some of their tips and recipes for simple, homemade craft supplies. And these homemade craft supplies can even double as crafty activities with the kids – sneaky mums!

1. To make non-toxic paint, combine 2 tbsp of salt with 250g of corn flour, a litre of water (approx, depends on consistency) and your food colouring of choice.
2. To create mouldable Moon Sand, mix 4 parts flour with 1 part baby oil and watch your kids have hours of fun.
3. If you're on a budget, just buy white paint and add different food colourings to small separate amounts of the paint to give the kids some colour options.
4. For homemade Playdough, mix 240ml of water, 250g of flour, 2 tbsp of oil, 270g of salt and 1 tbsp of Cream of Tartar, along with the food colouring of your choice, in a saucepan. Heat and stir until it resembles the consistency of Playdough. Allow to cool slightly and then knead until smooth. Store this dough in an airtight freezer bag for the kids to use whenever they need.
5. If you want to get creative with your paint, wash out empty deodorant roll-on bottles, fill with paint and roll over paper for some fun creations.



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Organisation tips

Tried, tested and recommended by mums, these organisation hacks will make craft time a lot easier to handle.

1. To stop toddlers mixing all the paint colours together - resulting in several 'brown' paintings, put a separate paintbrush into each colour.
2. Shoe hangers are a great way to easily organise smaller craft items when you don't have a lot of room to spare or your little one's room is a whirlwind of craft supplies.
3. Use old ice cube trays as cheap paint trays.
4. Store your paintbrushes in an empty biscuit tin to stop them drying out.
5. Clean out old tin cans, cover in paper and decorate with buttons, stickers, markers or paint. You can then use them to store markers and colouring pencils.



Cleaning secrets

Wouldn't craft time be far more enjoyable for mums if there was no clean up? The MummyPages community shared some of their cheats with us so we could help other mums cut down on the inevitable clean up.

1. Cover the table with a black bin bag that had been cut along one side and the bottom, so it opens up. Tape it to the table and when you're finished, just gather each corner into the middle to keep the mess inside and pop it in the bin.
2. A plastic party table cover from a discount euro shop makes a great table protector when painting. Again, remember to tape down the edges.
3. Use old sheets to cover the table instead of old newspapers as you can reuse the sheet.
4. Soak your paint brushes in fabric softener or hair conditioner for 10 minutes and the paint will practically fall off.
5. Use cotton buds instead of paintbrushes for young children. You can throw them out once they're finished and save yourself some cleaning time.



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Craft ideas

No one knows Kiddie Crafts better than mums, so we asked the MummyPages community to tell us about their children's favourite craft activities. We were inundated with creative suggestions – here's our Top 10.

1. Recycled crafts

Keep all your old birthday and Christmas cards for the kids' craft segments. They can make new birthday cards, collages or even add the card designs to their own drawings.

2. Blow paint

All you need is some paint, straws and large sheets of paper for this fun activity. Carefully suck a tiny bit of paint up into the straw and then blow the paint onto the paper to create fun designs. For younger kids, it's best to make safe homemade paint with water and food colouring as your little ones may suck the paint up a little too enthusiastically.

3. Toy car garage

Collect 30 or more toilet roll inserts, stack them into the shape of a square and stick them together using glue or tape. Paint the cardboard in whatever colours your children want and Ta Da! You have a handy space for your children to store their toy cars in.

4. Bags

Canvas bags are cheap, easy to decorate and make the perfect personalised gift from the kids. Decorate with hand drawn pictures or prints of your child's hands and feet. Use paint, sparkles, ribbons, buttons, googly eyes – let them go crazy! Plus kids love seeing their special bags being used, even if it is just to store your collection of plastic bags.

5. Bird feeders

Use cardboard milk cartons to create bird feeders for your garden. Cut out a little doorway (this can be tricky for little hands so Mum should do this) and let your child decorate them any way they want. Fill with bird food, hang them in your garden and let your child watch the birds enjoy their newest creation.

6. Nature crafts

This one doubles as two activities – healthy outdoor exercise and an art project! Take the kids on nature walks and encourage them to pick up twigs, leaves, sea shells and anything else they come across. Once you get home, craft time can begin, as you kids use their new-found treasure to create beautiful pictures or cards.

7. Paper Marché masks

Mix 2 parts PVA glue to 1 part water. Dip tissue paper into the mixture and mould it onto one side of a blown up balloon. Cover the whole side, making sure to leave holes for the eyes and mouth. Repeat the process, layering until your mask is thick enough to hold its shape. Once dry, pop the balloon and decorate your mask in any way you want.



8. Spud stamps

Use potatoes cut in half as a cheap alternative for stamps for your kids. Have an adult cut the spud in half with a sharp knife and then carve a simple shape into it. Set your kids up with some paint and let them have some messy fun.

9. Prints

Using hands and feet to paint is a great way to introduce toddlers to arts and crafts. Make prints of their hands or feet (don't forget to mark the date!) and let your child enjoy the feel of the paint and the experience of making something colourful and pretty. You can also use it as an opportunity to teach older toddlers how to count, using fingers and toes.

10. Flying saucers

Collect the caps from empty bottles. Cut a circular piece of cardboard from a cereal box, using a glass as a template. Place a cap in the centre of the circular cardboard, using a small bit of PVA glue and cover tightly with regular kitchen foil. From there you can add old buttons for windows and lights or dribble paint onto the foil to decorate. If your kids aren't interested in UFOs, you can cover the structure in fabric instead of tinfoil and fashion them into fun hats.



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