

GAMES FOR SMALL SPACES



Small Indoor Spaces can be effective spaces for active play. Adult led activities can support children in moving safely in limited space. Portable play equipment such as bean bags, soft balls, scarfs, ribbons support active play in small spaces. These items can be store bought or homemade. Games should be fun and somewhat challenging. Games that are active and promote fundamental movement skills are a plus!

Adapted from <https://activeforlife.com/big-fun-in-small-spaces/>

1. **Catch and clap-** This game is catchy and can be played with one or several players. One child throws a ball or bean bag to another child who has to clap before they catch the ball. To play on their own, see if children can throw the ball in the air and clap before they catch it. How many times in a row can they throw and catch?
2. **Hopping obstacle course-** In a hallway or living room, set up a maze of items such as empty shampoo bottles, toilet paper rolls, or stuffed animals. Can the children hop around them, hop around them with one foot, hop around them with one foot while touching their nose, hop backwards around them?
3. **Indoor skate-** Recreate the thrill of skating with the use of a non-carpeted floor. Have children place each foot on a face cloth or felt square and have them push and slide across their own personal rink. Have them use one foot to twirl and spin or see how far they can go with one push. If floors are carpeted use paper plates instead of cloth.
4. **Snowball fight-** Save yourself the wet snowsuits and mittens with an indoor “snowball” fight. Scrunch up tissue paper into “snowballs” and let the throwing commence!
5. **Velcro catch-** Pick up a Velcro mitt and ball set at a dollar or toy store or make your own for this throw-and-catch game. To make your own, use one child’s glove (let’s be honest, who doesn’t have one unmatched glove in their winter stash?). Pick up a wiffle ball (or two in case the first goes missing—see glove example above) along with fuzzy Velcro circles at the dollar store. Put eight of the hooked portions of the Velcro stickers on the ball and voilà. You have your own set. Have kids alternate as the thrower and the catcher and watch as both skills improve.

6. **Charades**-The options are limitless in this classic game of acting and guessing. Have children pick an animal such as an elephant or monkey, or an instrument like a piano or guitar. Can they act it out and see if others can guess what they're doing?
7. **Minute to win it**- Set a timer and see how many jumps in place (or on a potty-spot) children can do in a minute (or squats or lunges). Join in with the children! This is also a great opportunity to practice counting.
8. **Movement songs**-Combine your love of song (whether or not you can hit a note) with movement. There are so many songs you and children can move and groove to. There's nothing like a good old-fashioned Hokey Pokey, If You're Happy and You Know It, Wheels on the Bus, or Shakes Your Sillies Out. If you don't know the words, find videos of the songs online. Adding your own words makes the activity even more fun.
9. **Mini-hoop ball**-Hang a mini basketball net over a ½ door of on the wall and have children kids shoot from a standing position. Can they sink a shot while standing backwards or one foot? Use balled socks as the "ball."
10. **Sensory crawl**-Cardboard boxes provide the basis of so many games and activities. Make a sensory tunnel out of a cardboard box for infants and toddlers. Dangle socks or ribbons at either end of the tunnel for crawling through. Fill the tunnel with feathers or balls or blow bubbles into the box for kids to pop.
11. **Mini sticks**- Turn a laundry basket on its side and use as the net for this miniature hockey game. Have children use a pool noodle cut in half as a stick and balled socks as the puck.
12. **Bean Bag balance challenge**- Improve posture and balance with this fun game. Can children walk from one side of a room to another with a bean bag on their head? Can they balance two bags? See if they can walk backwards and still keep the bags on their heads. Can they walk on their tiptoes or waddle like penguins?
13. **Towel parachutes**- The outdoor versions of nylon parachutes take up a lot of room and need many hands to hold. Use a towel as a small space version. With at least two people holding the edges of the towel, put stuffed animals, balls, or rolled-up socks in the middle, and watch them soar as you wave the towel up and down.