

20 ways to play in the bathroom

There are lots of ways to play in the bathroom, which link to all sorts of learning opportunities, including messy play, creative play and science play. The ideas can be adapted for short bath times or when you can take a more leisurely approach and provide a great opportunity to connect with your children and have some watery fun at the same time.

...in the bath

1. **Textures** - Collect some differently textured objects to put in the bath to investigate together: different types of sponges, flannels, a loofah etc. How do they change when they're wet? Which absorbs the most water? Have fun squeezing the water out!
2. **Paper boats** - Make a paper boat together before bath time, name it and launch it together onto the water – will it stay afloat during bath time? Next time, try a different material and chart your success.
3. **Funky dos** - During hair-washing, create some amazing and fashionable styles with the shampoo suds– have a hand mirror close by so children can see their creations. Try being a punk with spikes or a Mohawk, how about making cat or rabbit ears?
4. **Singing** - Learn some water related songs to sing together during bath time: I'm forever blowing bubbles, Splish Splash I was taking a bath and so on. If you find the tunes, play them on a CD player from another room and use the song as a timing check if bath time needs to happen in a hurry.
5. **Bubbly fun** - Use hands or even a simple whisk from the kitchen to whisk up some more bubbles: blow them, watch them float, balance them on fingertips, the tip of the nose, try to pass them to each other without them popping.
6. **Sink or float** - Before bath time, choose some items together which have different weights or densities – a Lego brick, a small plastic toy, a beaker, a lolly stick, corks etc. Guess which will sink or float before bath time, then test out your theories in the water.
7. **Contain the fun** - Have fun with different containers in the bath, pouring water from one to the other and on to hands and toes. You could use a plastic beaker or bowls, ice-cube tray, colander, ladle, plastic food tubs, a jug and so on.
8. **Small world play** - Gather some plastic sea creatures and create a beneath the sea environment for small world play. Make up a story for them as you play.
9. **Ball pool** - Turn an empty bath into a ball pool with some small plastic balls! Or choose a few to put in when the bath has water in to play with – push them down and watch them pop up!

10. **Mini icebergs** - Get an ice-cube, plop it into your bath and watch it melt in the warm water - guess how long it might last before it disappears.
11. **Squirt!** - Have squirty water fun with empty shampoo and washing up bottles - who can squirt the furthest? Squirt at a small item balanced on the bath edge to knock it over.
12. **Musical washing** - Sing together 'If you're happy and you know it wash your feet, wash your toes, wash your legs, wash your neck . .' and so on to make washing fun!
13. **Hide and seek** - Take turns hiding an object under the bubbles in the bath – how quickly can you find it?
14. **Steamy windows** - If the mirror is steamy write your names, draw a picture or play noughts and crosses.
15. **Foam sculpture** - If you have some spare hypo-allergenic shaving foam, create a mini sculpture in your hands. Melt your creation by splashing your hands into the bathwater.
16. **Bath time for toys** – After you've had your bath, use the soapy water to clean toys together and put them on the side to dry.
17. **Tidying fun** - Clean the bathroom together after you've finished! Share the different chores and inspect each other's work. Have you done a great job?

...cleaning your teeth

18. **Brush to the rhythm** - Choose a favourite song which lasts about 2 minutes and brush to the music – can you brush to the rhythm? When you've finished brushing, try singing along with toothpaste in your mouth. Who sounds the silliest? Who can actually get the words out?

...washing your hands

19. **The best job** - Wash each other's hands and pay attention to each part of the hand, especially in between the fingers and underneath nails – challenge each other to do the best job. Who is the best hand washer
20. **Twinkly fun** - Help to make hand washing really thorough by singing the following song together: "Twinkle, twinkle little star, Look how clean my two hands are. Soap and water, wash and scrub, Get those germs off rub-a-dub, Twinkle, twinkle little star, Look how clean my two hands are!"