

Full of Beans

Broad-beaning the horizon

Learning with mum is fun and there are lots of different ways you can keep children busy and teach them new things over the summer months.

The following activities can be done indoors or outdoors and include needlework, design, song and rhyme. They do require a little adult help so set aside some time to lend a hand.

For every activity each child will need a bean bag. These can be bought ready-made from toy shops or you can simply set aside a large batch of peas or broad beans to harden. Below is a step-by-step guide to making your own. Once the children have a bean bag there are a number of traditional English games you may have played when you were young, that they can now enjoy too.

The Bean Bag

You will need per child:

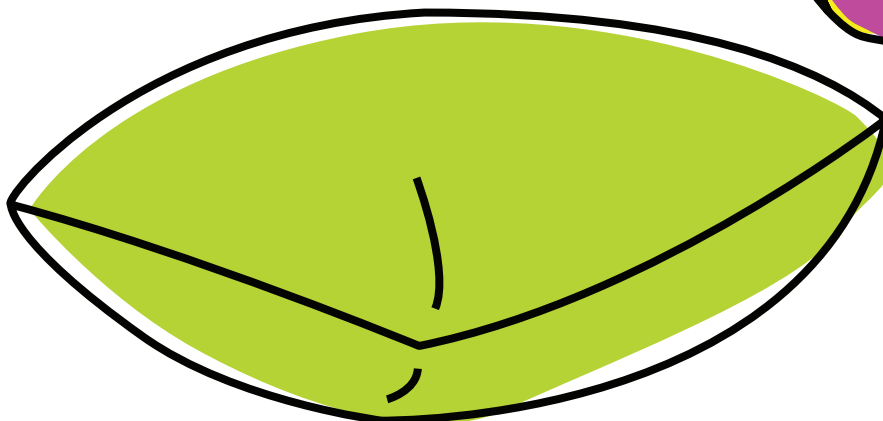
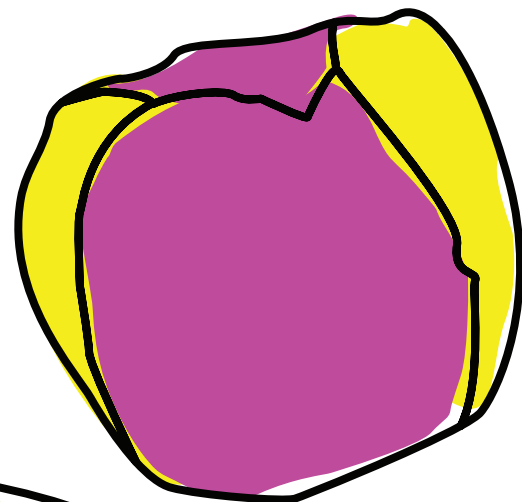
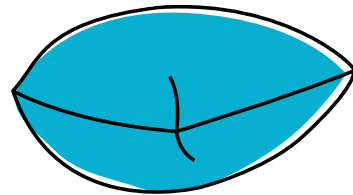
- 2 x 10 cm squares of plain, soft material
- A large darning needle
- Wool
- 3-4 large handfuls of peas or beans

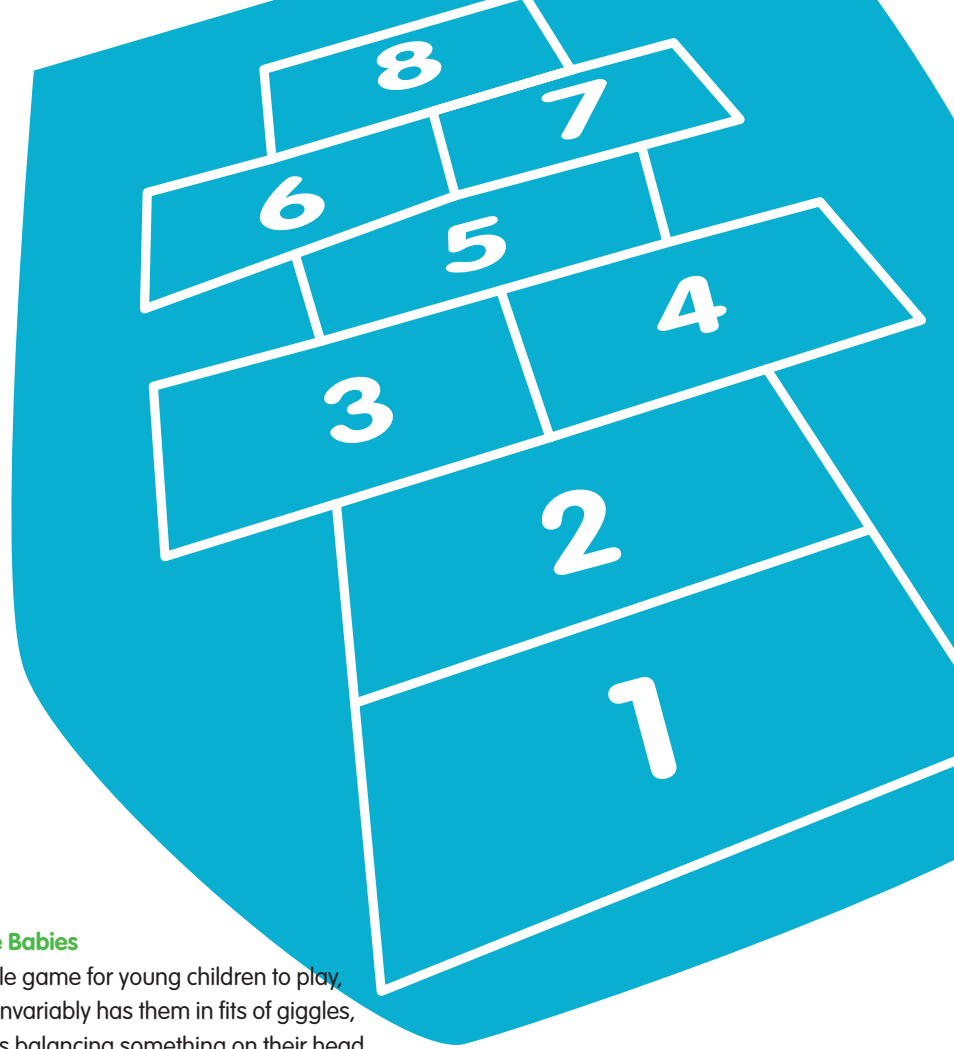
How to make:

First, ask the children to draw or paint a picture or symbol on one side of each piece of material so they can identify that it's theirs. You can use stencils or perhaps introduce some craftwork by painting some of the peas and using beads which can be stuck on with children's glue if they want to experiment.

Carefully threading wool through a large darning needle show the children how to sew the sides together, perhaps inviting them to try their hand at sewing. Sew three sides, turn inside out so the seams are on the inside, then ask each child to fill the bag with peas, before sewing the last side together.

Now they are ready to have bags of fun!





Hop-Bean-Scotch

Hopscotch is a wonderful hopping game that can be played on a bare patch of ground or on a floor indoors so come rain or shine the children can have some fun.

You will need chalk or masking tape to draw a 10 section, numbered hopscotch pattern on the ground or carpet and a bean bag marker for each child.

Each child stands behind the starting line and tosses his or her marker in square 1. He or she hops over square 1 to square 2 and continues hopping to square 10 before turning around, and hopping back again, pausing in square 2 to pick up the marker, hop in square 1, and on to the end. Then the next player has their turn and does the same thing. Each player keeps going, tossing the marker in each square up to number 10. All hopping is done on one foot unless the hopscotch design includes two squares that are side-by-side. Then two feet can be placed down with one in each square. You must always hop over any square where a marker has been placed.

A hopper is out if the marker fails to land in the proper square, the hopper steps on a line, the hopper loses balance when bending over to pick up the marker and puts a second hand or foot down, the hopper goes into a square where a marker is, or if a child puts two feet down in a single box.

Beanie Babies

A simple game for young children to play, which invariably has them in fits of giggles, involves balancing something on their head. Simply ask each child to see how far they can walk from one point to another without dropping the bean bag perched on their head. Catch the moment on your mobile phone or video for a reminder of how the simplest things can bring a smile to a child's face.

Musical Beans

Settle the children into a circle with one child holding the bean bag. Start the game by singing the first two lines of a song or rhyme which the child next to you has to complete, and so on, passing on the bean bag to the child whose turn it is. As children forget their lines they are eliminated from taking another go and the winning child is the one who can remember the most lines/songs/rhymes.

