Rainy-day activity chooser

The weather has changed, the outdoor plan has disappeared and somebody has already said they are bored.

Start with three questions:

How much time have you got? How much energy needs using? How much clearing up can you face?

Choose a row below and try one activity. You can always choose again afterwards.

Pick your starting point

Your situation	Try this
Five minutes, very little preparation	The mystery object
Ten minutes, quiet play	A six-panel comic
Fifteen minutes, plenty of energy	An indoor movement trail
Twenty minutes, happy to make some mess	Scrap-paper collage
Half an hour, something to do together	A family quiz
A longer stretch, imaginative play	A pretend café

The mystery object

Choose an everyday object and hide it in a bag. Give three clues about its shape, texture or purpose.

Everyone else guesses what it is. Then swap roles.

For younger children, use familiar objects and let them ask questions.

A six-panel comic

Divide a sheet of paper into six boxes.

Draw a character who finds something unexpected. Use the next four boxes to show what happens, then finish the story in the final box.

Stick figures are welcome. So are speech bubbles containing nothing but “Oops!”

An indoor movement trail

Create a short route in a clear space:

1. March on the spot.
2. Stretch towards the ceiling.
3. Walk around a cushion.
4. Balance briefly like a flamingo.
5. Finish with a quiet superhero pose.

Adapt movements for the people joining in. Keep the route away from stairs, breakables and slippery surfaces.

Scrap-paper collage

Gather unwanted paper, old envelopes and suitable packaging. Tear or cut shapes and arrange them into a creature, house or imaginary garden.

Use age-appropriate scissors and supervise as needed. Arranging the pieces without glue makes it easy to reuse them.

A family quiz

Each person invents three questions. Include something everybody has a chance of knowing: a family pet’s favourite spot, a familiar story or the colour of the front door.

Take turns being quizmaster.

A pretend café

Make a menu, name the café and take turns ordering. Use paper food, toy food or drawings.

Older children can add prices and work out a bill. Younger children can focus on greeting customers and remembering orders.

If nothing appeals

Offer two specific choices: “Would you like the mystery game or the café?”

Or leave a little room for doing very little. A rainy afternoon does not need a packed timetable.