



Building Kids' Brains while Waiting (without electronic games!)

by **Judy Arnall**

Are you worried about your children's bent necks and poor posture? Do their batteries run out at the wrong time? Concerned that your toddler might drop your iPhone? You don't have to rely on cell-phone applications, portable handheld gaming devices/media players and other electronic devices to occupy your kids during waiting times.

These constructive ideas will stimulate imagination, creativity, intellect, problem solving and social skills. Best of all, they don't require cables or batteries, can be taken anywhere and will amuse toddlers to teens.

The lot of these items should fit in a small 9X12 inch container, such as a rectangular plastic box with a snap lid, a backpack or even a laptop side pocket or briefcase for ease of carrying to restaurants, doctors' offices or airports.

The Busy Brain Kit for all Ages

- 1. Pipe-cleaners** These versatile little wires can be molded into cars, people and many other items for make-believe play.

2. **Playdough** Keep moist in a plastic Ziploc bag. Kids can make 3D sculptures for toys. With a digital camera, teens can make animated figure movies. Pass the cheese, Gromit!
3. **Masking tape or cellotape**
4. **Scissors**
5. **Small whiteboard** and dry-erase markers, with a cloth for erasing. Endless opportunities to make signs, keep game scores, or play picture games.
6. **Colouring markers** My kids used to colour the doctor's waiting room bed-covering paper!
7. **Pens and Pencils** Play hangman or other words games. Write in a journal or just draw!
8. **Plain paper** for drawing houses and scenes, or constructing cars, buildings, items and people, to be coloured, cut out and assembled with tape and scissors.
9. **Deck of cards** Great for teens to play Cheat, Snap, Spoons, Blackjack, Uno and many other games.
10. **Dice** for playing addition, multiplication, and chance challenges. Dice also work with homemade board games created from above items.

The play value in this box of items will last a long time, especially if you only keep it for on-the-go errands. In the rare event that your child might get bored, you could also bring a book, and read to your child. Encourage your school-ager or teen to bring along a book too.

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