



hands at home

December 2024

DIY Gift Making

DIY holiday gifts offer a fun and meaningful way to incorporate therapy goals into festive activities.

- Create sensory-friendly gifts like salt dough ornaments, where kids can knead and roll dough to strengthen fine motor skills and follow step-by-step instructions.
- Encourage expressive language by having the child describe their design choices or narrate the steps while making handprint art or custom photo frames.
- Upcycle items like jars to craft colorful candle holders, practicing scissor or glue skills for fine motor coordination.
- Edible gifts, like hot cocoa kits or decorated cookies, are perfect for sequencing tasks and introducing new vocabulary related to cooking and holidays.
- Kids who enjoy drawing can design custom cards, practicing handwriting and storytelling to personalize their creations.

Keep activities flexible and engaging, celebrating each child's unique creativity while embedding therapeutic goals into the joyful process of gift-making.




Holiday Sensory Overload


Kids thrive on consistency but holidays bring changes and new challenges they may not have much practice regulating themselves for:

- New decorations
- Family gatherings
- Change in routine
- Different locations
- New foods
- Vacations
- Music
- Lights

Start by introducing new elements gradually and using visual aids or social stories to explain what to expect. For new decorations, involve the child in setting them up to create familiarity, and for family gatherings, practice greetings or role-play scenarios. Use a visual schedule or calendar to help with changes in routine and explore new foods in a playful, low-pressure way beforehand. For sensory changes like music or lights, provide sensory-friendly options (e.g., headphones or dimmer settings) and identify quiet spaces to retreat if needed during vacations or visits to new locations.


What's Happening?

 **Gingerbread House Day**
on 12/12/2024.

 **National Hot Cocoa Day**
on 12/13/2024.



 **Hand in Hand is CLOSED**
on 12/25/2024.

 **Make Cut Out Snowflakes**
Day on 12/27/2024.

Family Time Activities

The holiday season is always a fun time to spend extra time with family! See

below for a list of fun activities in and out of the home this season!

- Parkview Field Holiday Light Display: **NEW** this year! Check website for schedule of this walk through light display!
- Blue Jacket Fantasy of Lights Display: 3-mile drive thru light experience near Franke Park. Check website for schedule.
- Check out Visit Fort Wayne for the 2024 Holiday Lights Challenge
- Gingerbread House making/decorating: Get creative and make different structures using different types of candies, crackers, and cookies! Check out the Festival of Gingerbread at the History Center.
- Cookie Baking and Decorating
- Homemade decorations such as ornaments, snowflakes, garland, and more!
- Holiday movie night with homemade snacks!





Salt Dough Hands

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Materials:

4 Cups Flour
1 Cup Table Salt
1.5 Cups Water

1. Mix ingredients together in a large bowl using a wooden spoon. When dough becomes too stiff to stir, use hands to bring the dough together. The dough should be easy to work with (soft and not too stiff or too sticky). Add flour/water to reach right texture.
2. Knead until the dough is uniform and soft (usually 3-5 minutes).
3. Divide dough into 2 or 4 sections and roll out to about 1/4-1/2 inch thick between two sheets of parchment paper.
4. Preheat oven to 250 degrees F.
5. Cut out using cookie cutters or a round object such as cup making sure it is large enough for your child's hand print (4-5 inches.) Press hand print into the dough.
6. Place on parchment paper on a baking sheet and bake for 2-3 hours. Check throughout. Should not be rock hard but also not quishy.
7. Remove from oven and cool.
8. Use acrylic paint to paint/decorate. Once dry, seal it with Mod Podge.

Scan Here for
more
information!





Provider Spotlight

STUDENT EDITION

December 2024

Did you know that HIH accepts students and interns at the high school, undergraduate, and graduate levels? We enjoy teaching future professionals skills they will need to be successful in the workforce and allowing students to gain hands on practice and experience in the field! You may have seen these faces around the building this semester and we are so grateful for them! If you know any students looking for a professional experience in a fun and positive environment, send them our way!



Adair

- **What was your favorite thing about Hand in Hand?**
- The super fun and kid friendly spaces such as the gym
- **What are your future plans following graduation?**
- I currently plan to attend Grace College and major in Special Education. I also want to pursue some sort of cosmetology degree at some point!
- **What was your favorite part of your internship at Hand in Hand?**
- I enjoyed observing and playing games with the kids that come in, along with getting to create little crafty things for the Halloween party and for kids to do during session.
- **What was the biggest thing you learned from your internship?**
- Patience is a huge thing when it comes to helping and interacting with kids and it doesn't look the same in every session!

What was your favorite thing about Hand in Hand?

The therapists and staff are great! They were really helpful to me during my fieldwork experience and made it more enjoyable. It was also cool using the gym!

What are your future plans following graduation?

After graduation, I would be interested in working at a pediatric clinic.

What was your favorite part of your internship at Hand in Hand?

Seeing the kiddos reach their goals and build confidence with daily activities!

What was the biggest thing you learned from your internship?

I was able apply what I learned from school to start helping kids become more independent. It was great to be able to learn so many things from my clinical instructors, Kelly and Cara.



Seth