

## Winter Crafts for Kids

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As wonderful as our Manitoba winters can be, there will always be days when it is just too cold to be outdoors. So what can you do to keep your kids happy in the house while winter rages outside? One great way to keep little hands busy is making art or craft projects as a family. And, arts and crafts are more than just fun: research shows that involvement in art and creative activities can help kids in other ways, too.

Whether your plans include a particular craft project, or some unstructured creative time, art and craft activities hold many benefits for children. Some of the ways that arts and crafts help your child learn include:

**Motor skills:** For young children, working on art activities can help develop the same fine motor skills they will need to do things like hold a crayon and learn to write. In fact, using safety scissors helps preschoolers develop the same muscles they will use when they start to write letters and numbers.

**Creativity and Problem Solving:** Sometimes, with art activities, things don't always go as planned. Although this can be frustrating for kids in the moment, it also allows them to use critical thinking skills to find solutions. Having time to be creative also allows children to use their imaginations. Art is full of possibilities for your child to explore!

**Following instructions:** While unstructured art activities are lots of fun and allow your child to create freely, there are also benefits to craft activities with a more defined end result. Being able to listen and follow instructions is a key skill for children in school, and family craft time is a great time to practice this together.

**Visual skills:** Crafts offer your child opportunities to recognize colours and patterns. You can help grow these skills by encouraging your child to follow patterns, or by pointing out shapes or colours as they create them.

Many families today are often so busy getting from school to activities and back home, that spending time sitting together working on an activity seems almost impossible. Working on crafts together can be a great way to slow down and bond with your children, as well. By turning off the technology and spending a few hours working on a craft together, you and your kids can create some memories and share some laughs – no one said your projects have to look perfect to be perfectly fun!

Here are a few winter craft ideas to get you started:

**Papier-Mache Snowmen:** Younger children will need some adult help for this craft, while older kids might be fine working more independently. Use old newspaper to create three 'snowballs' for the snowman's body. You will need to weigh or tape down the bottom one so that he doesn't topple while you apply the papier-mâché. Cut or tear long

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strips of newspaper and dip them in a mixture of flour and water (hint: you can find a papier-mâché recipe, as well as other great craft recipes in the links below) Once your snowman is covered, give him a day or so to dry. When dry, your kids can paint him white and add buttons for eyes. Fabric scraps or construction paper and a bit of creativity can make for a great outfit for your snowman.

**Homemade snow globes:** Collect a few baby food jars or other small jars to use for the 'globe'. Your child can pick out a figurine to place inside: maybe a plastic army man or an ornament that is no longer used. An adult with a glue gun can attach the figurine to the inside of the lid. Next for the fun part: fill the jar with water and add glitter or sparkles! Seal the jar tightly; perhaps using glue to ensure you won't have leaks. Your child can decorate the base of the jar if desired and then can enjoy watching the glitter 'snow' inside the globe.

If you and your family want to find more information on wintertime crafts, check out the links below. Happy crafting!

[PBS: Winter Crafts for Kids](#) – Looking for some art inspiration? PBS offers a great slate of ideas to get you and your kids started on some winter craft projects.

[PBS: The Importance of Art In Child Development](#) – If you want to learn more about how arts and crafts can help your child learn and grow, this is a perfect place to start. It provides lots of information about how creativity contributes to child development.