

# How to Make Homemade Gifts for Kids

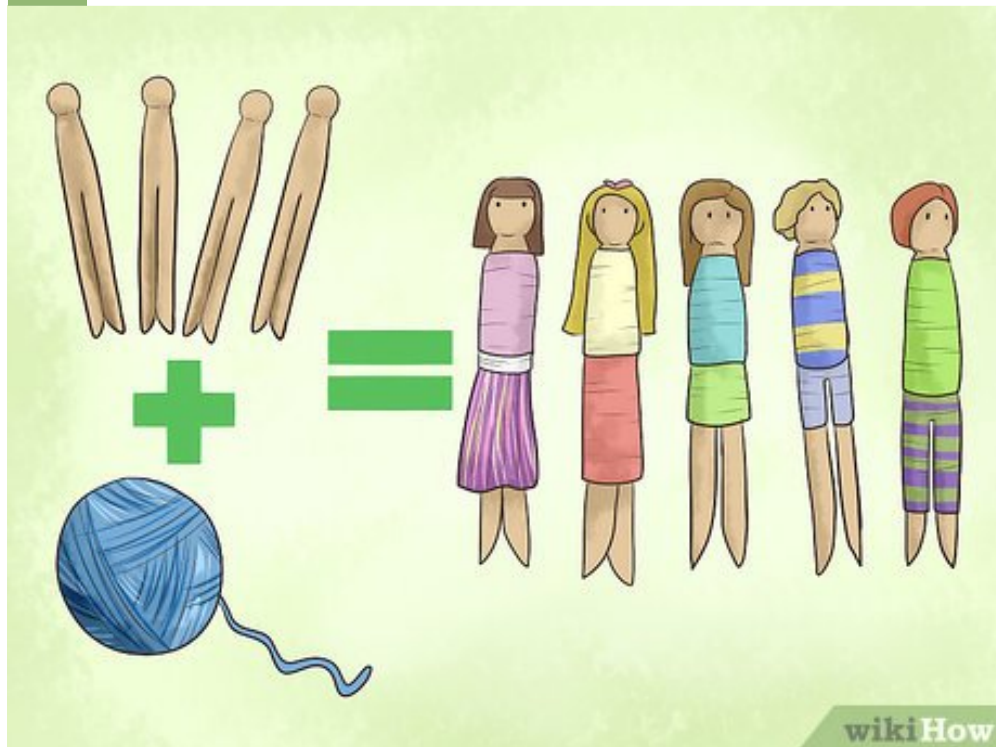
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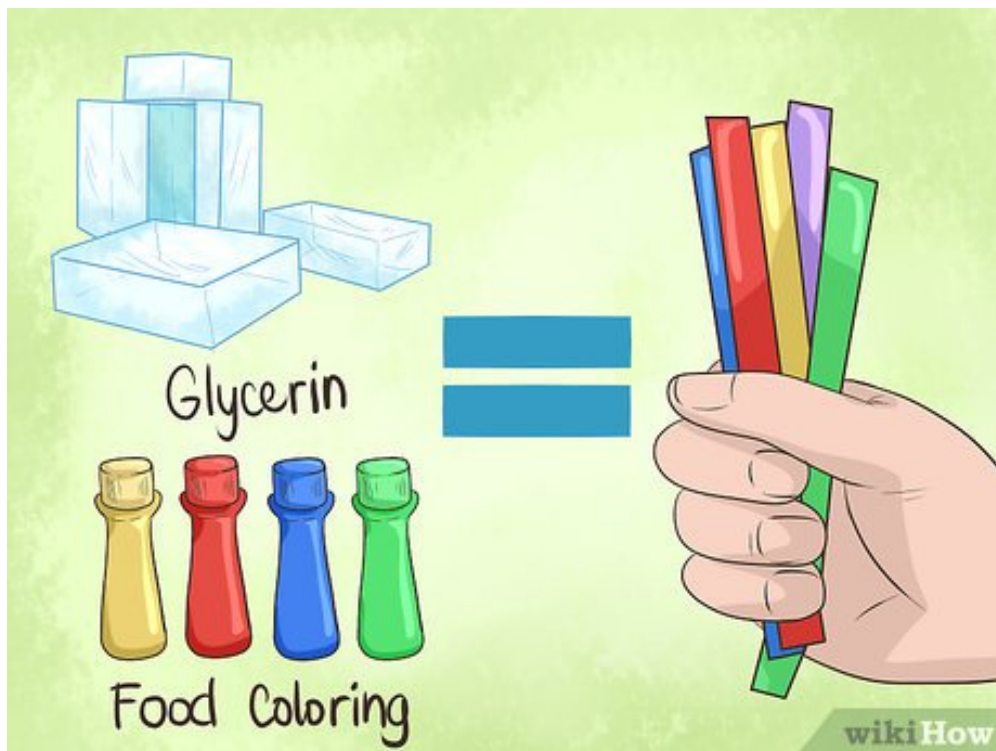
Giving a fun and thoughtful gift doesn't mean that you have to buy something from the store—there are tons of homemade gift ideas for kids of all ages! Take into account how old the kid is and what kinds of things they are interested in. You could make gifts that the child can use on their own, like clothespin dolls and homemade slime, or you could even make a gift that you can use together, like a personalized apron for baking adventures or coupons for special nights out!

## Method 1 of 3: Making Gifts for Your Toddler or Preschooler



**1 Use clothespins and yarn to make clothespin wrap dolls.** Use the clothespins that have round heads rather than the ones that separate at the top. Wrap thread around each clothespin individually to create the illusion of “shirts” and “pants.” For example, wrap red thread around a clothespin until you get halfway down, then switch to black thread for a doll that is wearing a red top and a black skirt. You can also cut off some thread and glue it to the pinhead to make hair. Use a marker to make little eyes.<sup>[1]</sup>

- You can make “shorts” or “pants” on the clothespin dolls by wrapping the bottom thread in-between the spokes of the clothespin.
- Make a striped top or bottom by alternating colors for a fun outfit option.
- Your child can create stories and play with the dolls just like they would with other dolls from the store.
- If you don’t own the materials already, you can buy them inexpensively from a craft store.
- Materials needed: clothespins, yarn or embroidery thread, markers, and glue or a hot glue gun.



**2 Make bath crayons for a fun bath time activity gift.** Buy glycerin from the craft store and melt it in a microwave-safe container for about 1 minute. Divvy up the glycerin between several different cups, and then add different colored food dye to each one. Pour the colored glycerin into a mold (ice cube trays work well for this!) and let them sit for 1-2 hours.<sup>[2]</sup>

- When the kid takes a bath, they can draw and scribble on the shower and tub walls with the bath crayons. It's like amped-up coloring because they get to do it at bath time!
- Food dye normally washes away easily because of the combination with the soap, but if you're concerned about your tub getting discolored, use specialty soap dye.
- You could combine the bath crayons with a hooded towel and other bath toys to make a gift basket.
- Materials needed: glycerin, food or soap dyes, and molds.



**3 Repurpose scraps of wood into “food boxes” for creative play time.** Paint a block of wood red, blue, yellow, or green, depending on what food item you’re mimicking. Search online for downloadable and printable labels, and then glue them onto the block once the paint is dry. For example, you could paint a block of wood dark blue and then print a label for macaroni and cheese.[3]

- For extra adhesive that’ll keep that label in place for longer, use Mod Podge.
- If you don’t have scrap wood at home, you could ask someone who has a wood shop to donate scraps to you.
- Your child can use these blocks to play “grocery store,” “kitchen,” or “**restaurant**” along with other food-themed toys they might have.
- Materials needed: wooden blocks, paint, printed food labels, a paintbrush, and glue or Mod Podge.



**4 Stuff and sew a felt alphabet.** Use different colored felts to cut out 2 sets of the entire alphabet, 1 set for the front and 1 set for the back. Stitch the corresponding letters together, leaving a small opening. Stuff pillow or craft stuffing into the hole until the letter is full, then sew up the opening. You can make the letters different colors and sizes, and you could even use differently colored threads to make the letters more colorful and vibrant.<sup>[4]</sup>

- If you don't want to freehand the letters, print off large letters to trace onto the felt.
- You can use the letters to help them learn the alphabet and how to spell their name.
- Materials needed: felt, scissors, needle, thread, and pillow or craft stuffing.

## Method 2 of 3: Crafting Gifts for Your Grade-Schooler



- 1 Make a personalized apron for a kid who loves to cook.** You can use a tea towel, [old jeans](#), or thrifted fabric to make an apron. Find a pattern online to follow, and use your [sewing machine](#) to make an apron that ties around the back and around the neck. Consider [embroidering](#) the kid's name onto the apron for an even more personalized gift.<sup>[5]</sup>
  - You do need to have some familiarity with a sewing machine in order to make this gift.
  - Materials needed: scissors, a sewing machine, a dishtowel (or other fabric), ribbon, and safety pins.





**2 Create a **slime** pack for a fun, cheap gift.** There are tons of different slime recipes online that you can use. Generally, you're going to mix together borax, water, and food coloring. Make different colored slimes, make slimes that have little bits of confetti mixed into them, or even make **glow-in-the-dark slime**. Store the slime in plastic containers. [6]

- Make sure the child you are gifting the slime to is old enough to understand that they can't eat the slime, as it can be toxic when consumed.
- Materials needed: Borax, water, food coloring, bowls, and plastic containers.



**3 Build a mini bowling set that can be used at home.** Save up 10 empty plastic soda or water bottles. Remove their labels, decorate them with paint, and fill them with sand. You could even paint all the bottles to be different characters from one of their favorite shows, or make them themed, like magic, sports, or music.<sup>[7]</sup>

- You may need to buy a mini-bowling ball online or at the store—they sell ones specifically for this purpose! If you can't find one you like, you could even use a baseball that you paint to match the bottles.
- Materials needed: 10 plastic bottles, paint, a paint brush, and sand.





**4 Write out compliment or encouragement cards for a year-round gift.** This can be done in a lot of different ways—you could prepare 52 notes to give to the child so they have 1 to open each week for an entire year. You could also mail 1 card per week so they get to experience opening their own mail. For the cards, feel free to decorate them with stickers, different colored markers, or even add some glitter. Write down what makes them special or different encouraging quotes.

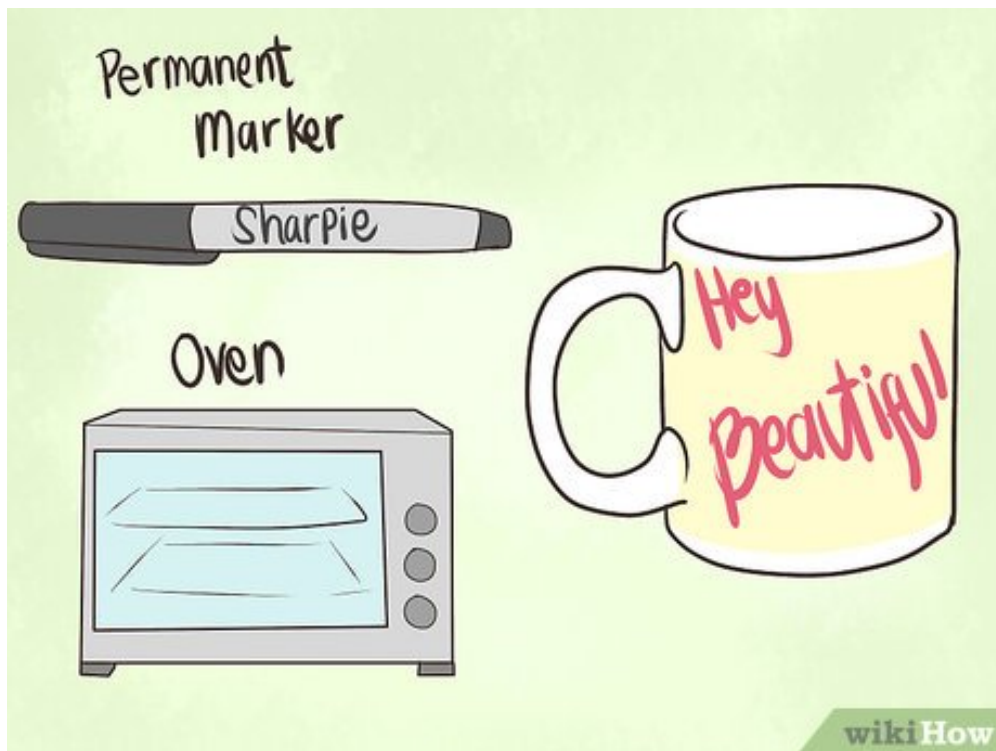
- For example, you could give a compliment card that says something like, “You are such a great older sibling, and you do such a good job helping your mom and dad around the house.” Try to be as specific as possible.
- Materials needed: paper, envelopes, stamps (optional), stickers, markers, glitter, and other crafting materials.

### Method 3 of 3: Creating Gifts for Your Teenager



**1 Design personalized pillow cases for your teen.** Does your teen have something they are obsessed with, like a band or a TV show? You could even use one of their favorite quotes or funny sayings. Get some inexpensive white pillow cases online or from a crafting store, and then use fabric markers to draw, write, and design a custom pillow case. Let the ink dry, then iron the pillow case to set in the design (check the fabric markers instructions first!).<sup>[8]</sup>

- Materials needed: pillow cases (preferably white), fabric markers, and an iron and ironing board.



**2 Make a personalized sharpie coffee mug for a unique gift.** Use a plain white mug and oil-based permanent markers for the best results. Draw a design or write a cool quote on the mug (practice beforehand on a piece of paper if you need to!). Let the design dry, then heat the mug in the oven for 20-30 minutes at 425 °F (218 °C). Once the time is up, remove it from the stove and leave it alone on the counter overnight, and then it's ready to go!<sup>[9]</sup>

- Wash sharpie mugs by hand only—don't put them into the washing machine or you could ruin the design!
- Be careful when taking the mug out of the oven and remember to use oven mitts.
- Materials needed: white coffee mug, oil-based permanent markers, and an oven.



**3** Create a **coupon book** filled with special activities or allowances. Use stock paper to write out some fun activities, like staying out past curfew or getting to skip chores for one week. Put one item on each piece of paper. Staple the coupons together or punch holes in them and tie them together with a ribbon, and create a fun cover for the booklet before giving it to the teen.[10]

- You could even create your coupons online for a more authentic looking booklet. Search for "coupon template" for different printable options.
- Other ideas for coupons: trip to get ice cream or coffee, movie date, sleepover, manicure, new video game, trip to an amusement park, bowling.
- Materials needed: stock paper, stapler or ribbon, markers, and pens.



**4** Make a **scrapbook** for your teen for when they graduate from school. Include family and friend photos. Insert programs from activities they participated in, like sports or plays. Write captions on each page, or even include a few journal entries or paragraphs about your child and how they've grown over the years.<sup>[11]</sup>

- This could be a project you work on annually, adding to it each year as your child makes their way from middle to high school, and then to graduation. In a world where most photos are stored online, having a physical book with memories can be a really meaningful gift.
- Materials needed: a scrapbook, pictures, scissors, adhesives, stickers, stamps, markers, pens, and card stock.



**5 Assemble a gift basket full of your teen's favorite things.** Choose a vessel to put the gifts in, like a pretty basket, a storage tote, or a purse or backpack. Choose items along a similar theme, like spa day, movie night, book club, or sports team. Visit thrift stores and dollar stores to find fun items to fill it up.<sup>[12]</sup>

- If you're trying to be frugal, set yourself a dollar limit, like \$20, and see how many fun items you can find within that price range.
- You could also put baked treats or homemade snacks into the basket.
- Materials needed: a decorative basket and themed gift items.



## Community Q&A

### Question

**My little brother keeps asking for dinosaur toys, but I want to make something homemade for his birthday tomorrow. What should I do?**



**Vivigolden**  
Community Answer

Sew him a new stuffed dinosaur toy using felt, needle and thread, and stuffing.

Helpful 25 Not Helpful 9

### Question

**What about college-aged cousins?**



Community Answer

Try a care package. Being in college is hard, on campus or not. We'll forget to eat, sleep, relax, clean, and take breaks. Here are some things that will 100% be appreciated: blankets, lotion (ideally with calming scents), snacks, shawls/scarves, a reusable water bottle and/or travel thermos, etc.

Helpful 15 Not Helpful 3



#### Question

**What about a middle school kid? My sister keeps asking for an anime plushie.**



**Ceci**  
Community Answer

Well, you could draw the character on felt and make it into a plushie using the same method as the alphabet letters.

Helpful 12 Not Helpful 0

#### Question

**I have a teacher who likes to bake. Should I get her a gift basket, or an apron?**



Community Answer

A gift basket filled with baking ingredients and cooking utensils could be a good choice but an apron might be more affordable, especially if you make it yourself.

Helpful 9 Not Helpful 1

#### Question

**What would you put in a video game themed care package? (Sims 4 or Minecraft preferably)**



Community Answer

Add maybe a new controller, headset, snacks, and maybe a mug or cup with the game theme on it.

Helpful 3 Not Helpful 0

#### Question

**This boy bought me a bracelet for my birthday but I don't know what to get him?**



**Ronnie robichaud**  
Community Answer

If he is a good friend and wouldn't mind wearing a bracelet, then maybe make him a homemade one with his favorite colors. Just make sure it's small and in his favorite colors and style.

Helpful 1 Not Helpful 2



#### Tips

- Another fun idea is to take the child to a pottery painting store. You can both paint something together that the child can keep as a keepsake.
- If you paint or draw, you could create something specifically for the child.
- Try to lean into your strengths—if there is a skill you have, try to use it to make a homemade gift.
- You could take a styrofoam cone, and take their favorite chocolate or candy and stack them on top of each other to make it look like a Christmas tree.

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