



Whether it rains,
snows,
sleets or blows
Let the sun
shine inside

Get the
best
of the
weather!

Our rich variety of days, weeks and seasons creates a patchwork of sunny bright times, light snowy times—and cloud-filled rain times. And when the weather is its worst, the children depend most on the cheerful climate you create inside your home. In gloomy weather, a little bit of the gloom may try to creep inside. But before any storm clouds gather, look to this list . . . and proceed to *do* something about the weather! A project to change the day's direction—and maybe turn it best of all!

If it's a Snowy or Rainy Day

*Anticipate the sunny days ahead. Now's the time to oversee the kite-building, if your children plan to fly kites later. It's time to think about a party . . . and making your own invitations (and a good time to plan every detail, including what to eat, what to do). Start a new geranium plant . . . what about all the little things you've been *thinking* about doing—for how long, now?

*Tackle the dresser drawers or closets. Children are fascinated with what's inside boxes and attics. You'll undoubtedly find something you want to discard. Guess who will think it's a treasure!

*Let the children bake cookies. Here's a recipe you can start the day before or early in the morning. When the dough is thoroughly chilled, the youngsters can roll and shape it—and decorate to their heart's content. Set out the raisins, chocolate morsels, nuts, confectioners' sugar and any cake decorations you have on hand—and let the children use their imaginations!

OLD-FASHIONED PEPPARKAKOR

3½ cups sifted all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon soda
1½ teaspoons ginger
1½ teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon cloves
¼ teaspoon ground cardamom
½ cup butter
¾ cup sugar
1 unbeaten egg
¾ cup light molasses
2 teaspoons grated orange rind

Sift the flour, soda and spices together. Cream the butter, gradually adding sugar. Add the unbeaten egg, molasses and orange rind. Beat well. Stir in the dry ingredients gradually, mixing until well blended. Cover and chill thoroughly. (If desired, dough may be stored up to 1 week and baked as needed).

Before shaping, divide the dough into three parts. Roll out one-third, at a time, storing the rest in the refrigerator. Roll on well-floured surface to ¼-inch thickness. Cut into desired shapes with cookie cutters or pastry wheel. Place on greased

baking sheets. Bake in moderate (375°) oven 8 to 10 minutes.

Before all the cookies get eaten by the cooks, organize a reason for saving them. Will they be dad's surprise for supper? Mailed to someone in the service? Frozen for a coming holiday? They'll be delicious any time!

*Make some clay for the children to play with. Salt and starch are all you need to make a sparkly, home-made "clay" for modeling. Recipe: 1 cup salt and ½ cup cornstarch, mixed in the top of a double boiler. Slowly stir in ¾ cup cold water (and a drop of food coloring if you wish). Place over boiling water. Stir until mixture is so thick you can hardly get the spoon through it. Scoop it onto waxed paper or a cookie sheet to cool.

When cool, it's ready to knead and roll into shapes. (To save part of the mixture, wrap it tightly in wax paper. It will stay moist and pliable for several days). To shape: experiment with turning simple shapes—different-sized balls, oblongs and strips—into animals, fishes or birds. For finishing touches: have spoons, forks, knives, an orange stick handy. For easy clean-up: put newspapers under the whole project.

*Crayon scratchboard—a new twist when the coloring books get dull. All sorts of colors are crayoned on a piece of paper. Then black crayon is rubbed thickly over the whole area. Pictures are made by scratching parts of the black off, to expose the colors underneath. A blunt fingernail file is a good "scratcher."

*Write letters. The children can help the oldest, or you, write a news-filled letter to a far-away member of the family. Ask everyone to remember what has happened that will be fun to tell, and let each one send a special message of his own.

*Suggest a new game for the children to play. "Hide the Thimble" is nice and quiet—and fits any room in the house. The players hide a thimble while "it" is outside the room. The thimble must be in plain sight, but can be unusually placed to fool the eye. Suggestions for hiding: next to the leg of a chair; atop a picture frame or lamp; just inside the door "it" will enter. If the game gets difficult, players can tell "it" if he's "warm" (near the object) or "cold" (very far away).

"Hot Potato" is a noisier game that gets faster and faster, louder and sillier. It's wonderful for letting off energy! The players group in a loose circle, as if to play catch with a ball. Instead, they sit down and roll the ball between them. The ball is treated as if it were a "hot potato" and everyone tries to swat it away from himself—at another person. Watch them play, and you'll begin to think it's a *real* hot potato!

IF IT'S A MEASLES, MUMPS OR SORE THROAT DAY

When one of winter's illnesses comes visiting and you have a grumpy child at home in bed, there *are* ways to give extra care and comfort to your child, without exhausting *you*. Rules: be kind but firm. Let the child know you expect certain responsibilities, too. Then set up a daily routine of boredom breakers. Remember, giving him something to think about and something to look forward to is as stimulating as the best game—and less tiring. The extra benefit: you spend more time with your child, less time running back and forth at random.

*For a wide-awake morning: a spongebath and mild exercise before breakfast. Exercises can range from the funny (rolling your eyes and wiggling your fingers) to in-bed sit-ups. You be the supervisor, counting the exercises and keeping them mild. After breakfast, let morning be the time for school-work and reading.

*For lunch: serve hearty soup, crackers and an assortment of fresh vegetables cut into small shapes. Aided with toothpicks, youngsters can make faces or animals from crackers and carrots, radishes, celery or raisins. The wonderful part of this "game" is that it fascinates younger children—and they'll be more apt to eat these nutritious foods.

*After lunch: read to him. Each day read a chapter from a good children's novel. If the illness is over before the book is finished, the child has incentive to read for himself. Or read from a book he is currently reading.

*Special for any time: an inexpensive little notebook that becomes his "progress report". It's his diary during the illness . . . and his daily duty to keep up to date.

*When you hear someone say "I'm bored," bring out one of these ideas: *Water coloring*. (Do you have a vase or bowl of fruit for a "model?")

Learn to play solitaire. Here's an easy variation: the cards are laid face-up in 7 overlapping rows that form a pyramid. The top row consists of 1 card, partially covered by the second row of 2 cards, then a third row of 3 cards, and so on to the bottom row of 7 cards. The object is to pick up all the cards by combining any two that equal the number 13 (5 and 8 for instance). The king counts 13 (and can be removed by itself); the queen 12, jack 11, ace 1. Only the cards at the bottom of the pyramid can be played. When no cards can be removed, the ones left over in the deck are turned up one at a time, to be combined with cards in the "pyramid."

Play almanac (for fifth graders or older). The almanac, or a good dictionary, becomes a reference for a game of memory. As a starter, how many states can one list from memory? And their capitals? From here, one can go on to naming American rivers, South American countries and their capitals, U.S. Presidents (in order!).