Are parents asking you for gift ideas for the holidays? Maybe you want to give your child's teacher a special gift for the classroom? Why not try creating your own gifts to give. Just like the craft stores sell all of those kits to create anything that you can think of, how about create some fun play time kits on your own.

Step 1: Buy a plastic container with a lid or decorate a cardboard or shoe box.

Step 2: Decide on a theme. Here are some suggestions:

1. Ball box - include various sizes and textures of different playground balls
2. Bubble box - include bubbles, different bubble wands and bubble trays
3. Jump rope box - add traditional jump ropes, chinese jump ropes and double dutch ropes
4. Sidewalk chalk box - have an art contest, create new black top games, hopscotch, etc.
5. Activity card box - write one playground game on each, i.e. freeze tag, hide and go seek, obstacle course, etc. The children can pick out one card at a time to choose a game.
6. Science box - magnifying glasses, bug containers, tweezers
7. Water paint box - buckets for water, large paintbrushes and paint rollers to "paint" the black top with different designs
8. Beach party box - include beach balls, tether ball set, paddle ball and Velcro mitt set
9. Celebration box - include streamers and ribbon sticks to run and play with
10. Catch All Box - Velcro mitts, Frisbees, soft footballs, small balls, recycled plastic milk jugs with tops cut off but handles left on to catch balls
11. Hula Hoop Box - suggest hula hoop contests or use hoops to create obstacle courses
12. Race Box - include stopwatches and cones; the children can set up races and time each other
13. Don't forget to create some active free play boxes for indoor recess or staying active on those chilly winter days as well. These would make nice gifts for teachers and parents.
14. Pedometers - children can see how many steps they take during recess and try to increase each time. You can get these at some dollar stores.
15. Dance party box - radio with batteries, dance music. Find an old radio player at a garage sale.
16. Indoor balls - balloons and cardboard tubes. Have the balloons all blown up. Put them inside stockings if you are worried about balloon pieces if they pop.
17. DVD box - collection of exercise DVDs for kids
18. Bean bag box - include bean bags and targets to throw at
19. Ebooks - Print these ebooks and put in a box or folder for teachers/parents to use to encourage motor activities: Mini Movement Breaks, Classroom Activity Posters, Roll Some Fun, Dancing with the Owls, Imagination Action Journeys and Motor Minute Challenges.

Creative Play

20. Imaginary school - include a wipe off board, paper, red pen, pretend play school packet, pencil holder.
21. Imaginary hospital - band aids, ace bandages, gauze and flashlight. Try printing and laminating the pretend play doctor and hospital packet.
22. Imaginary play with animals - stuffed animals, pretend play animal packet, simple cages and brushes
23. Imaginary office - tape, stapler, paper, calculator, pens, pretend phone and name tags
24. Arts and crafts - unusual crayon colors, scented markers, rainbow pencils and paper.
25. Sensory - dollar store fidgets, different types of fabric swatches, smock and kids shaving cream
26. Fine motor - Lego's, fine motor breaks notepad, beads, lacing string and small clips.

With the amount of active and imaginary free play time dwindling, physical and occupational therapists can play a crucial role in educating school staff and parents on the benefits of play for ALL children.