

Planning Activities With Your Kids

Aren't you excited?!?!?! School is almost out and everyone is ready for 10 weeks of sunshine and fun! You're ready, right? If not, here's the help that you need to plan a summer with the kids that even you will enjoy.

A few things to remember -

1. Keep a routine -- yes, it's summer break BUT that doesn't mean that they should be up all night and sleep all day. There needs to be some sort of normalcy even in a somewhat relaxed atmosphere.
2. Chores are okay -- things still need to get done ... even in the summertime. Beds still need to be made, bedrooms need to be cleaned, laundry needs to be done, etc. Having a few things for them to do each day will teach discipline and responsibility.
3. Having kids help with larger projects is okay too -- summertime is a time for YOU to get a few extra projects done and it's perfectly okay to have kids help (even small kids). There are a few tricks (or incentives) that can be used that will almost make it feel like a game.
 - a. Work together in blocks of time -- for example, perhaps their project is sorting out their closet and yours is sorting the linen closet. Work together in their closet for 15 minutes or so and then go work on the linen closet together for the same amount of time. Go back and forth until both projects are completed. My kids always worked better if they had someone to talk to.
 - b. Have a time challenge -- everyone does their project for a certain amount a time ... see who can get the most done. Even older kids enjoy this though they deny it!! Maybe have a little prize for the winner or a something special when everyone is done.
4. There is nothing wrong with screen time -- Of course, you don't want the screen to babysit all summer but having a limited amount of time (even each day) will give you a break and keep them from nagging you about it. Just be sure to put a limit on it ... perhaps even set a timer.
5. You should be having fun too! -- summertime is a time to be have fewer activities and a slower pace. Mom should be enjoying this time too! Obviously there are diverse interested but with some give and take, everyone should have be enjoying summer break.
6. Take time for yourself -- this is your summer break too so be sure to have things that will refresh you and revive you. Perhaps lunch or coffee with friends.
7. Make memories! -- Making memories isn't always about going to the most popular places or about spending the most money. Making memories is about laughing, enjoying time together, being silly and spontaneous and, yes, perhaps a little childish. It's okay, really!

So relax and enjoy your time with your kids this summer!



Activity Suggestions

***Yard Games**

- [Jenga](#) (or make your own using 2x4's)
- Twister - Buy spray paint to make the dots on the grass (the next time you mow they will disappear)
- [Badminton](#)
- [Bocci Ball](#)
- [Crochet](#)
- Tic Tac Toe ([here](#)'s a link to a blog showing how to make it)
- Obstacle course

***Outside Water Activities**

- [Sprinkler Relay](#)
- Homemade [sprinkler](#) from a recycled water bottle
- [DIY Sprinklers](#)
- [Water Wall](#)
- [Water Balloon Target Practice](#)
- DIY [Slip n Slide](#)
- Wash the car - Yep that's what I said! I can pretty much guarantee that a water fight will break out.

***Gardening Type Activities**

- Mini greenhouses - after planting a seed in a pot (any old pot will do), cover with a clean plastic bottle (water bottle or 2 ltr bottle with the bottom cut out). It makes its own greenhouse for your plant.
- Themed garden - pick a theme, any theme and plant the ingredients.
 - Salsa garden - tomatoes, peppers, onions, cilantro
 - Italian - tomatoes, onions, oregano, basil, garlic
 - Alphabet garden - have them pick a letter (perhaps the first letter of their name) and plant things that start with that letter
 - More [ideas](#)

***Outdoor Crafts**

- Painted Ladybug stones - find round rocks and paint them like ladybugs or any other bug. Place in flowerbeds, potted plants or garden for a colorful display!
- Garden stepping stones - mix some concrete and put into a mold (pizza box, aluminum pans, just about anything), use colored rocks, leaves, sticks, hand or foot prints to decorate, even write your name (you can be as creative or as simple as you want to). Let cement harden, remove mold and place anywhere you would like.
- Birdfeeders - I like the old fashioned ones made with peanut butter! Take a pinecone or toilet paper tube and slather with peanut butter (or any nut butter) and roll in bird seed. Attach string and hang in your yard. Now just sit back and wait for the birds to get hungry. [Here](#) are some more ideas.
- Finger painting with pudding - I liked to use pudding with my kids because I knew it would wash out of their clothing easily.
- Tie Dye Shirts

***Outdoor Activities**

- Scavenger Hunts
- Obstacle Course
- Camp in the backyard
- Shadow Art - Put long pieces of butcher paper on side of house, garage or other building, have kids stand in front and have another trace around them. Then decorate however you would like -- paint, markers, etc.
- Figurine Art - Put pieces of paper on the ground, place figurines so that they cast a shadow on paper (you can use anything from animals to superheroes), trace around and decorate.
- Bike ride
- Nature walk
- Other [things to do in the backyard](#)

***In The Kitchen**

- Jello Jigglers
- Frozen juice or pudding pops
- Flavored popcorn
- Mini pizzas - use english muffins as the crust (or a flour tortilla) and top with your favorite toppings
- Fruit kabobs - put variety of fruit onto skewers
- [Ice Cream in a Bag](#) - okay this one is actually an inside/outside activity.

***Indoor Activities**

- Games - board games, card games
- Reading aloud - Kids are never too old to be read to. Select a book that everyone will enjoy and enjoy it together ... take turns reading, use voices, make it fun.
- Build a blanket fort - you know the ones, put blankets over tables and chairs and make your own secret fort.

***Indoor Crafts**

- Play Dough - endless hours of fun and creativity. Make your own! Recipe [here](#)

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***Field Trips**

- Library
- Local museums
- Fairs and festivals
- Parks

Other Sources for Ideas:

[101 Days of Summer](#)

Things to do with [pool noodles](#)

[Activities for Boys](#)