



Summer 2023 – Activity Ideas for Kids

Enjoy this list from www.verywellfamily.com of 100 ideas for you and your kids to fight summertime boredom. Many of these activities are designed for the entire family to enjoy!

The original article also offers a more structured list featured here: [things for kids to do every week of summer](#).

Nature Activities for Kids



Take advantage of long sunny days by exploring the natural world (just don't forget the sunscreen).

- **Go bird watching.** Take photos and keep track of your sightings. Use an app or guidebook to identify feathered friends.
- **Grow fresh herbs in containers.** Use old coffee cans, milk jugs, mason jars, plastic cups, or anything else you have around the house. Keep [your herb garden](#) on a patio or windowsill.
- **Look for shapes in the clouds.** Put a blanket in the grass and stare up at the sky. Take turns talking about what you see in the clouds.
- **Make a bird feeder.** Watch birds visit your yard and add to your list of bird sightings.
- **Make fairy houses.** Use moss, bark, and leaves to create a dwelling fit for Thumbelina.
- **Pick your own plants.** Find a farm with blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, [veggies](#), or flowers and get picking.
- **Plant a butterfly or hummingbird garden.** Create a backyard wildlife habitat.

Rainy Day Activities

When the weather keeps you [indoors](#), there's still lots to do!

- **Break out your movie collection or use Netflix.** Have a [movie marathon](#) complete with popcorn.
- **Build a fort.** Put pillows in the living room or cardboard boxes in the yard.
- **Build a Lego castle.** Clear off a table and make it a family project. Work on it all summer.
- **Camp in.** Put the sleeping bags on the floor and have a family [slumber party](#).





- **Experiment with new hairdos.** Let the kids try out non-permanent colors, braids, or a spiked, gelled look.
- **Get an origami book and fun paper.** Create fun animals and [shapes](#). Give them to friends or family members as gifts.
- **Have breakfast in bed.** Take turns being the server and the served.
- **Hold marble races.** Use an old pool noodle as the track. Simply cut it in half, making two tracks of equal length. Then, race the marbles down the tracks to see who has the fastest one.
- **Make a time capsule.** Have each family member write down something they are grateful for and include a special item in the time capsule. Then, store it away until a designated date. You can open it as early as Thanksgiving or as far off as high school graduation.
- **Make paper airplanes.** See whose airplane goes the farthest.
- **Play a card game.** Choose from crazy eights, spoons, go fish, or even poker. Take your pick. Or buy a [board game](#) for the family to enjoy.
- **Play charades.** Turn all the summer drama into a game.
- **Rearrange the furniture.** Give the kids graph paper and have them draw out a plan first.
- **Set a goal and complete a home project.** Whether it is cleaning the garage, organizing the basement, or redecorating the spare bedroom, find ways to let the kids help.

Local Sites for Families to Visit

Summer is ideal for a few staycation experiences. If you have friends or family visiting, bring them along to see what's special in your area.



- **Eat at the counter of a diner.** Let the kids enjoy fried food and milkshakes.
- **Find a free concert near you.** Kick back and enjoy some tunes with the family.
- **Go to a demolition derby.** Expect to see some major crashes.
- **Go to a flea market or garage sale.** See if the kids are better negotiators than you.
- **Go to a local carnival or county fair.** Eat cotton candy, elephant ears, or something really sugary at least once this summer.
- **Pack a picnic.** Plop down to eat it just about anywhere such as a free concert, at a playground, or in a state park.
- **See a dramatic performance together.** It doesn't matter if it's a puppet show in the park or a touring Broadway show, enjoy seeing it as a family.
- **See a matinee.** Find a bargain movie house and enjoy an afternoon at the movies.
- **Take a garden gnome with you.** Take the gnome's picture at each destination you visit. At the end of the summer, create a scrapbook with its photos.



- **Take a road trip to a nearby city.** Spend the night if you can or just make it [a day trip](#) exploring the sights.
- **Take in a minor-league baseball game.** The parks are super family-friendly, and there's always a fun giveaway or chance to win a prize.
- **Visit a historic house or farm.** Learn how times have changed and what people back then lived without.
- **Visit a local farmers' market.** Feast on the fruits and veggies of the season and enjoy a few locally made treats.

Summer Activities that Exercise Their Brains

Avoid the [summer slide](#) by keeping kids thinking and learning while school is out.

- **Build your brain.** These [brainteaser games](#) can help.
- **Get a book of riddles.** See if you can stump each other; then write your own riddles.
- **Get the summer homework done.** Not exactly fun, but you'll be happy to get it out of the way.
- **Have a puzzle race.** Use 100-piece puzzles and see who finishes first.
- **Interview an older relative.** Write out your family history.
- **Join a summer reading club at your library.** Or create your own, keeping a list of all the [books](#) read over the summer. Parents can participate too. Just don't expect a prize, because your kids can probably [read way more books](#) than you do!
- **Master a new skill together.** Learn to juggle, play the harmonica, or sew.
- **Read a chapter book aloud.** Plan to read a chapter or more a night. You can even read a whole series together.
- **Show the kids that science is fun.** Try these [experiments](#).
- **Write and illustrate a comic book.** Make it a group effort or let everyone do their own.
- **Write in a journal each day.** Allow older teens to create a [bullet journal](#) if they prefer. Then, at the end of the summer, share selections with each other about the highlights of summer.





Artsy Activities for Kids



Get out those craft kits you've been saving or try one of these artsy activities.

- **Collect rocks and paint them.** Turn them into pet rocks, garden ornaments, or gifts for family members.
- **Create a summer mural.** Stretch a long piece of white craft paper across a wall in the basement or garage and create a [family mural](#). Include hand-drawn, painted, or colored pictures of your summer activities. Work on it all summer, adding to it little by little. Hold an "unveiling" party for relatives at the end of the summer.
- **Decorate your walkways with chalk.** Use regular [sidewalk chalk](#) or make your own using cornstarch, water, and food coloring.
- **Keep a summer sketch diary.** Take turns sharing your sketches at the end of the summer.
- **Hold a photoshoot.** Plan different outfits and poses and take pictures outside or around town. Older kids and teens can then edit the photos on a computer.
- **Make music.** Make your own instruments or play traditional ones. Record your [musical creations](#) if you want.
- **Make playdough creations.** [Make your own playdough](#) to mold into creative shapes. Then rip them up and do it again.
- **Play with clay.** Then bake your creations to make them permanent.
- **Press summer flowers.** Make a pressed flower picture with waxed paper.
- **Put on your own dramatic performance.** Write a script, make costumes, or just do a little improv.
- **String beads.** Beading projects can be as simple or complex as you choose.

Summer Activities that Promote Exercise

All you need is a little space and sunshine for these activities that get kids moving.

- **Build a water blob or a slip 'n slide.** Use plastic sheeting and duct tape to create large plastic pillows (or water blobs) filled with water. Set the blobs up in the yard and allow kids or teens to hop from one blob to another. Or use a plastic tarp and a garden hose to create your own slip 'n slide.





- **Build an obstacle course in the backyard.** Pretend to be America Ninja Warriors and see how quickly you can each get through the course.
- **Climb trees together.** Of course, do this only if the kids are big enough and you are brave enough.
- **Fly a kite.** Make your own kite or buy one at the dollar store. Spend a few hours flying it in an open field.
- **Go fishing.** In many states, kids can drop a line in without a license.
- **Have a bubble gum bubble blowing contest.** See who can blow the largest bubble without it popping.
- **Have a water balloon baseball game.** Use a plastic bat, a bucket of water balloons, and old towels as bases and you are all set.
- **Have a water gun race.** Put a hole in the bottom of two or more plastic cups and thread string or yarn through each one. Secure the ends of the yarn to a starting point and an ending point. Use full squirt guns to shoot water into the cups so that they race along the string. The first cup to the finish line is the winner.
- **Hold a hula hoop contest.** See which family member can hula hoop the longest.
- **Jump rope.** Chant these jump [rope rhymes](#).
- **Make good use of nearby parks.** Go to your local park's website. Print the schedule of activities and hang it on your refrigerator.
- **Paddle a canoe.** Look for a local park that offers canoe rentals and spend a little time out on the water.
- **Play balloon tennis.** Gather a [balloon](#), paper plates, and painting sticks and you are all set. Attach the sticks to the paper plates to make the paddles and use the balloon as the ball. This is a great activity for indoor or outdoor play.
- **Play croquet on the lawn.** And try bocce ball too.
- **Play HORSE.** Use your basketball hoop or one at the park to play a challenging game of HORSE. With little ones, set up a mini basketball net next to the real one.
- **Play miniature golf.** Go to a local course or build your own course on the driveway.
- **Play outside in the rain.** Smell the rain on the pavement; splash in puddles; make mud pies.
- **Run in the yard.** Play kickball, frisbee, tag, and other [outdoor games](#). You could even create your own summer Olympics.
- **Set up a badminton net.** Have a family badminton tournament or use the net to play volleyball with a beach ball.
- **Take a hike.** Choose a route near your house or take a drive to a more distant park.
- **Take bike rides for fun.** Either leave from your own house or drive to biking trails.
- **Teach the kids to skip stones.** Turn it into a competition.



Nighttime Summer Family Fun



Arm yourself with bug spray and you're ready for an evening in the night air.

- **Camp in the backyard.** Pitch a tent and bring out the sleeping bags. Sleep as a family under the stars.
- **Catch lightning bugs.** And then watch them flicker away into the night.
- **Go to the drive-in.** If there isn't one nearby, look for one near your vacation spot. Every kid should go to the drive-in at least once!
- **Have a bonfire.** Roast marshmallows and hot dogs. Make s'mores.
- **Host an outdoor movie night.** Rent or borrow a movie projector and show a movie on a white sheet draped across PVC pipe in the backyard. Or use the side of your house as the screen. Bring sleeping bags, air mattresses, and pool rafts out as the seating and enjoy the show (with popcorn of course).
- **Listen to an audiobook under the stars.** Your library probably has a great collection of classics and newer titles.
- **Stargaze.** Invite friends and make a party of it.

Summer Activities for Kids and Their Friends

Gather cousins, neighbors, or school friends your kids miss seeing every day.

- **Bake cookies for an older neighbor.** Deliver the cookies with a heartfelt note or picture.
- **Create a treasure hunt.** Do it on your own property or around town. Change things up a little and make it a photo scavenger hunt where the kids need to take photos either with their phones or disposable cameras of various things on the list. Examples might include: Take a picture of a flower. Take a photo of something red.
- **Have a backward day with friends.** Wear your clothes backward. Eat dessert for breakfast and breakfast for dinner. Walk backward and even try talking backward.
- **Have a cookout in the backyard.** Make a burger bar where kids can choose their own toppings or set up a "make your own sundae" station. Put on some tunes, and maybe have a bubble machine blowing in the yard.





- **Host a board game night.** Have a kids' game table and an adult one too.
- **Invite kids' friends for a sleepover.** Let them stay up late, watch movies, play games, and eat snacks.
- **Meet friends at the playground or the pool.** Make it a regular occurrence to strengthen the bonds they share.
- **Organize a neighborhood garage sale.** Allow the kids to make some extra cash by selling their old stuff.
- **Go on Zoom or Skype with grandparents or other relatives.** Talk about your summer plans and adventures.
- **Visit a nursing home or retirement community.** Play games, sing songs or have lunch with the residents.

Cooking Projects for Kids



With summer's slower schedule, let kids take on some cooking projects.

- **Create and bake your own pizzas.** Kids will enjoy picking their own toppings. They can help prep by shredding cheese, washing mushrooms, chopping veggies, and so on.
- **Let the kids cook dinner.** Encourage them to plan the menu and shop for ingredients. Then allow them to cook dinner for the family. Supervise younger kids but allow teens to go it alone.
- **Make fresh lemonade or sun tea.** Enjoy it on the front porch with some homemade cookies or sell it at a lemonade stand.
- **Make ice cream.** Turn it into ice cream sandwiches or enjoy it on its own.
- **Teach the kids how to make your favorite childhood treat.** Let them add their own twist or variation to the recipe.