

Simple Activities for Children and Adolescents

Activities for children and adolescents with no screen time:

___ Tell stories.

___ Tell exaggerated “Stories” of the “old days” to entertain.

___ Put on mini plays or skits. Have children act out different characters.

___ Play “Story Building.” One person starts the story, and then other family members add to it.

___ Share secrets, most embarrassing moments, wishes, and/or dreams.

___ Make up different dances or dance to known songs (i.e., the hokie pokie). Have a dance contest.

___ Have a karaoke night. Children can sing their favorite songs.

___ Play “Name that Tune.” One person hums a tune or says a line from a song and others try to guess the name of the song.

* ___ Play “Hide and Seek.” Designate an area with clear boundaries. Have everyone gather around a landmark that will be home base. Pick a family member to be IT. Whoever IT is closes his eyes and counts to a designated number while the rest of the family hides. Once the countdown is done, IT says “Ready or not here I come” then goes to look for, and find, the hidden family members. The first player found will be IT for the next round. Repeat.

* ___ Play “Simon Says.” One player is designated Simon and the other family members do whatever Simon says as long as they say the phrase “Simon says” before the command. If Simon does not say “Simon says” before the command, the family members don’t move. Any player who acts without hearing “Simon says” is out of the game. The winner is the last player left.

* ___ Play “Mother May I.” One family member stands far away from the others and is the “mother” while all of the other family members stand in a group. Mother calls the name of one of the player and says “(insert name here), you may take (insert numbers) steps.” The player then must remember to say “Mother may I?” before moving the allotted number of steps. Mother will either answer “yes” or “no.” If the player fails to ask and takes a step without permission or moves prior to Mother’s response she must go back to the starting line. The first to reach Mother wins and is the new mother. Mother can also call out the types of steps being called (i.e., baby steps, giant steps).

___ Play Eye Spy. One person, or IT player, spies something and keeps it a secret. The item must be something that all the other players can see, and preferably something that will stay in sight for the time it takes to complete a round. The IT player recites the line “I spy with my little eye, something that...” and ends with a descriptive clue, such as “...is red” or “...begins with the letter B.” The other family members then take turns asking one question each. “Is it inside the kitchen?” “Is it round?” etc. The player who is IT can only respond with “yes” or “no.” If a player thinks they know what the mystery item is, they can use his question to guess directly: “Is it that bowl?” “Is it that cake plate?” If the player is correct, it is their turn to spy something.



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- ___ Play "Sound Search." Everyone sits still and identifies as many different sounds as possible.
- ___ Play "Follow the Leader." Players line up and walk behind the leader, copying whatever the leader does.
- ___ Play "Charades." One person (or team) acts out a movie, book, or TV show using only body language while others try to guess what she is acting out. Be sure all members of the family know the movies, books, or shows to be acted out.
- ___ Play "Encore." Assign common words to two teams who take turns trying to think of a song that contains each word. Each team must be able to sing at least eight words of the song in order for the turn to count.
- ___ Play "20 Guesses." Think of a noun, cartoon character, singer, movie, book, television show, or sports star. Have the players take turns guessing what IT is thinking. Answer the guesses with yes, no, sometimes, usually, or rarely. When the 20 guesses are up, the players get a final guess. If no one answers correctly, the answer is given.
- ___ Exercise. Take a walk, do a dance, do yoga, stretch, ride a bike.
- ___ Go outside at night and point out different constellations.
- ___ Play the Alphabet Game. One person chooses a category (e.g., animals) and family members go around naming an animal with the assigned letter. The first person starts with A. Second with B. Etc. The winner chooses the next category. With younger children, they may just have to name something with that letter and not introduce the idea of categories (e.g., animals).
- ___ Read to your pet. This is great for young readers as well as children with reading challenges.
- ___ Play Teacher. Have family members choose their favorite subject and teacher a class to everyone.
- ___ Play Family Feud. One person creates a question with several answers. Split family members into two teams and see who gets the most answers.



Simple Activities for Children and Adolescents

Activities with no screen time that require limited supplies:

- ___ Crumble up a wad of paper and play a ball game (basketball, soccer, baseball, blowing the ball across a table into a goal).
- ___ Play "Marbles." If no marbles are available use rocks or pebbles. Draw a circle and see who can knock the marbles out of the circle using their marbles.
- ___ Draw a snowman. Grab some paper plates and markers. Have the players place their paper plate on their head. Holding the plate in one hand and the marker in the other hand. Someone in the group will give a series of instructions: draw a line for the ground/snow, draw a large snowball for the base of your snowman, create a medium sized snowball on top of the first one, cap your snowman with a small snowball for the head, draw a carrot nose, now add 2 eyes and a mouth, draw a scarf to keep your snowman warm, add 2 stick arms, and finally, finish your snowman by drawing a top hat on your snowman's head. Now that the drawings are complete, place all the snowmen on the table to admire. For younger kids, you can simply use paper and have them look at the snowman as they draw it!
- ___ Make paper airplanes, origami, hats, paper doll chain, or paper boats.
- ___ Have a child draw or trace their hand or random shape, and see what animals you can make out of it.
- ___ Write letters to friends or family. Create homemade cards to send to friends and family to stay connected.
- ___ Play "Tic-Tac-Toe." Make a three by three grid on a piece of paper. One person is the "X" and the other is the "O." The player who succeeds in placing three of his symbols in a row wins.
- ___ Play "Hidden Words." Have everyone agree on a key word, which is at least seven letters long. Then have players try to find as many smaller words inside the key word by rearranging the letters. For example, if kitchen is your key word, hidden words inside of that would be itch, it, kit, etch, etc.
- ___ Play "Find a Word." Make a grid of random letters interspersed with horizontal, vertical, and diagonal words and have the child circle the words when they find them.
- ___ Play "Five Questions." Write down five questions such as:
 - What is your favorite color?
 - What is (or was) your favorite subject in school?
 - What is your favorite song?
 - What is your favorite food?
 - What is your favorite book?
 (Each person has to answer the questions. Once the first set of questions have been answered let another player come up with the next set of questions.)
- ___ Play card games, board games, or dominoes.
- ___ Learn and perform simple magic tricks.
- ___ Do arts and crafts projects.



** This activity should not be done with people who are feeling sick or were exposed to someone sick. It involves close contact with family members or the other players.*

Simple Activities for Children and Adolescents

___ Play "House of Cards/Blocks/Coins." Using a deck of cards, blocks, coins, choose a flat surface and have each person build a house. Whichever house stands the longest wins.

___ Play Guess the Definition. Player 1 chooses a word from the dictionary (try to pick words that we don't often hear). They write down the true definition. All other players write down what they think the definition of the word is. Then, each person votes on the definition they believe is correct. A point is awarded to each player who gets the definition correct. A point is awarded to each player who created a definition that received a vote. If no one guesses votes for the correct definition, the person selecting the word is awarded two points. Decide on the point total to declare the winner (e.g., play to 20.)

___ Have a treasure hunt where you write down clues on slips of paper that lead children to a "treasure."

___ Have a scavenger hunt where you make a list and have children compete to collect the most items.

___ Have an impromptu camp out using sheets or blankets to make tents over furniture.

___ Play "Guess the Object." Select an object and hand it to a child under a cloth while her eyes are closed. She feels the object to determine what she is holding. When she guesses correctly, offer another object to guess. If she has difficulty, give clues or allow her to ask questions about what they feel.

___ Play "Guess the Person." Give one word to describe a family member or friend. Ask the child to guess who it is. If the child guesses wrong, give another word that describes that person and then allow for another guess. Continue this process until the child guesses correctly.

___ Play Pictionary. Create a list of objects and put them on slips of paper. Divide family members into teams. Draw a slip. Without words, draw the object (no letters). Give your team 1 minute to guess. If they get it wrong, the other team has one turn to guess. If they get it correct, they get the point. The play then moves to the other team. Play 6 rounds. The team with the most correct guesses wins.

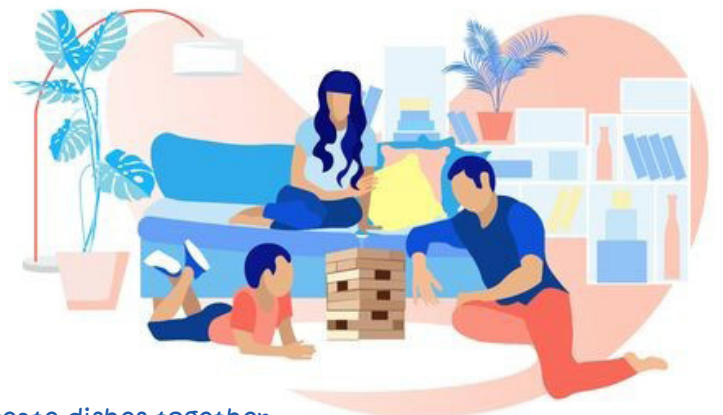
___ Put together puzzles.

___ Play battery powered games.

___ Play musical instruments or create musical instruments.

___ Use all of the leggos in the house to build something as a family. Be sure to use ALL the leggos.

___ Cook or bake together. Share family recipes and create dishes together. Making cookies together is always fun for children of all ages.



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Simple Activities for Children and Adolescents

Activities that involve screen time:

- ___ Take a virtual tour of a famous museum through Google Arts and Culture or download the museum's app.
- ___ Watch a live Cam from a popular zoo or aquarium and see what the animals are doing.
- ___ Watch a live Cam of a national park - see old faithful go off; see if there is snow at Glacier National Park.
- ___ Look up a science experiment that uses household stuff.
- ___ Use an online photo store (e.g., shuttefly) to create a scrapbook from your last family vacation.
- ___ Visit PBS.org or National Geographic Kids for games and fun videos/stories.
- ___ Play video games with friends.
- ___ Watch your favorite family movie.
- ___ Do a movie scavenger hunt. Write down a list of regular everyday items. The list can be as long as you like. As the family watches the movie, people can either mark off the scene where the item is found or shout out when they see an item on the list. Every item found gets a point. Person with most points at the end of the movie wins.



Simple Activities for Children and Adolescents

Activities that are Calming or for quiet time:

- Take a nap or lay down to rest.
- Turn off TV and all electronics.
- Listen to calming music.
- Read a book.
- Do yoga.
- Use online resources to practice mindfulness, Find some ideas are at <https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-for-children-kids-activities/>
- Do breathing exercises. One strategy is for them to slowly breath in their favorite color (and all the good they think of when thinking of their favorite color) and breath out the gray (worry, fear, yuck feelings).
- Take a bath or shower.
- Pet your dog or cat.
- Go for a walk.
- Take a coloring break.
- Blow bubbles.



Simple Activities for Children and Adolescents

Talk to your children about other games or activities they would like to add to the list:

List any supplies you may need to gather to do the activities your children like:
