



Home Activities for Families: Ideas to Help Keep Kids of All Ages Occupied and Entertained

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Borrow materials via mail order clearinghouse or public library

- Early Intervention Clearinghouse: <https://forms.illinois.edu/sec/6136106>
- Resource lists of activities from the EI Clearinghouse: <https://illinoisearlylearning.org/reslists/trying-times/>
- List of Illinois Public Libraries with address/phone number: <https://publiclibraries.com/state/illinois/>

Visit websites with activities

- **Disney Family** website <https://family.disney.com/activities/> – Activities for all ages.
- PBS - **PBS KIDS for Parents** offers information, activities, and tips for parents, including this resource on "**How to Talk to Your Kids About Coronavirus**": <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-coronavirus>
- Sign up for PBS new weekday newsletter that offers tips and activities: <http://public.pbs.org/PBSKIDSDaily?source=psparents>
- PBS KIDS has a variety of free resources to support families: The **PBS KIDS 24/7** channel offers anytime access to trusted educational series for kids ages 2-8 (check local listings).
- The **PBS KIDS Video app** is available on mobile, tablet, and connected TV devices and offers **on-demand educational videos**, and a live stream of the PBS KIDS 24/7 channel. **No subscription required.**
- The **PBS KIDS Games app** has nearly **200 educational games**, which can be downloaded for offline play anytime, anywhere. Learn more about these and PBS KIDS' other apps [HERE](#).
- **PBS KIDS for Parents** offers information, activities, and tips for parents, including this resource on "**How to Talk to Your Kids About Coronavirus.**"

Review health information

- **The Healthy Bodies Toolkit**: Vanderbilt University provides a Healthy Bodies Toolkit online for free in English and Spanish. Click on the underlined title above. This book comes with strategies on how to guide children and adolescents in learning more about their bodies and changes. The toolkit comes with a few learning activities to work on as well!
- **Visuals to Print**: Vanderbilt University also offers a few free visuals that you can print from home!
- **HealthyChildren.Org** sponsored by American Academy of Pediatrics
 - https://healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx#.Xm_G4Dp2W34.email (English)
 - https://healthychildren.org/spanish/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/paginas/2019-novel-coronavirus.aspx#.xm_g4dp2w34.email (Español)

Print out and read Social Stories

- **I Can Practice Healthy Choices**:
https://mcusercontent.com/bcffed4c260c459f193587644/files/5e8da4b6-3b62-45e0-8e8d-53d710fdc6b3/Practice_Healthy_Choices.pdf
- **I Can Stay Healthy by Staying Home from School**:
https://mcusercontent.com/bcffed4c260c459f193587644/files/49c5fba8-8509-4a79-a072-2825eae69ef3/Staying_Home_from_School_Social.pdf

Read articles that have helpful ideas

- **How to Keep Kids Busy** from **This Simple Balance** offers the following ideas: <https://www.thissimplebalance.com/how-to-keep-kids-busy/>
 - Morning Family Service (a.k.a. chores)
 - Outside Time
 - Board Games
 - Rotating the toys.
 - Set aside time for reading aloud & reading every day (audio books work!).

- Using Audible yet, you can usually get two free audiobooks when there is a free trial. **Sign up for Audible [HERE](#).**
- Write a short story
- Make playdough in several colors
- Make things using recycled materials
- Build their own video games & animations **using SRATCH from MIT** (totally free!!) <https://scratch.mit.edu/>
- Construct a fort or teepee outside, to be used multiple days in a row
- Anything from **5-minutes crafts**

Create an art center

- Pull out or stock up on some basic art supplies and let them create. Include:
 - White Paper
 - Colored Paper
 - Watercolor Paper
 - Colored Pencils
 - Markers
 - Pastels
 - Watercolors
 - Glue Sticks

Get your kids involved in food and meal prep, and baking

- www.AccessibleChef.com – A website that offers visual recipes for people with disabilities
- *7 Tips for Working from Home with Kids*
<https://www.thissimplebalance.com/working-from-home-with-kids/>
- *20 Indoor Activities to Keep Kids Busy During the Coronavirus Crisis* -
<https://www.mommynearest.com/article/20-indoor-activities-to-keep-kids-busy-during-the-coronavirus-crisis>

1. Bake muffins. They're easy enough for toddlers to help with and are best enjoyed straight out of the oven, which checks the instant gratification box. Bonus points if you can sneak a fruit or veggie into the batter.

2. Create a scavenger hunt. Give the kids the first clue, which will lead them to the next clue and so on. At the end have some sort of "treasure" for them to find, or a treat such as a coupon for an ice cream sundae, which they can cash in that evening.

- 3. Play a board game.** Even better: introduce your children to a [classic](#) from your own childhood. Sorry or Game of Life, anyone?
- 4. Complete a puzzle.** This is a great way to encourage teamwork. Have the whole family work together to complete a puzzle—say 1,000 a pieces!
- 5. Write a story.** Have older kids pen a tale, then ask them to illustrate it. Younger kids can draw a picture of their favorite thing to do.
- 6. Make slime.** If you haven't already banned slime from your home, whip up a fluffy version with this [recipe](#).
- 7. Put on a show.** Have your kids come up with a script and costumes. Then grab a seat on the couch and watch the performance.
- 8. Or make a movie.** Let your kids use your phone (for filming purposes only) and have them act out a story with their toys (dolls or Lego people make especially good characters.) Send the finished product to your family and friends.
- 9. Make pizza.** Buy some dough or use this [easy recipe](#) to make your own. Then, let everyone choose their own toppings and declare it Pizza Night.
- 10. Play cards.** You likely already have a deck on hand and there are endless games for kids of all ages. Start out with Crazy Eights or Concentration for younger kids and let the older ones play Rummy or poker.
- 11. Make playdough.** It's super [easy](#) and the cooking process will engage the kids even further.
- 12. Look at old photographs.** Get out your old photo albums and have fun reminiscing with your kids. Or if most of your photos are digital, let your kids help you organize them into photo books.
- 13. Create an indoor obstacle course.** Put away the breakables and turn your living room, playroom and/or basement into the set of *American Ninja Warrior*. (Or simply grab some tennis balls and have your kids toss them into a toy bin while climbing over the couch.)

14. Convince them to clean. Tidying up a room is much more appealing if you can make a game out of it. Give them a space to clean, set a timer, and offer a reward for the fastest or most thorough job. (Watching them scurry around while sitting on the couch with a cup of coffee is optional.)

15. Let them go swimming. In the bathtub that is. Put on bathing suits, fill up the tub, toss in some toys and let them splash around.

16. Have an indoor picnic. Let your kids choose the menu, pack a basket and set up a blanket on your living room floor.

17. Set up a spa day. Cut up some cucumber slices for your eyes, give everyone a robe (or comfy pajamas), and spend a few hours lounging around the house. Make a DIY face mask, give each other mani/pedis, and sip hot chocolate or tea.

18. Go bowling. Set up a makeshift one in your basement by lining up empty plastic bottles and using a tennis ball to knock them down.

19. Make friendship bracelets. Whether you use beads, embroidery floss or soda can tabs, friendship bracelets are super fun (and time-consuming) to make.

20. Sing karaoke. Don't have a karaoke machine? Just pull up the lyrics on your computer and go to town!

The Arc of Illinois offers this list of possible activities / resources as a public service. No endorsement/recommendation of an activity, program, organization or website is implied by inclusion in this list.