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At-Home Activities



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## 26 Things to Do at Home with Kids During the COVID-19 Outbreak



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With schools closing across the country in lieu of the COVID-19 pandemic, we find ourselves in a strange situation.

As parents, we're usually prepared for the occasional [snow day](#) and [summer breaks](#), with [childcare](#) and [camps](#) rearranged in advance. But the indefinite closure of schools and non-essential businesses is causing some stress among parents.

That's why we've come up with a list of the best ways to ease the stress and chaos that comes with social distancing.

# 1. Maintain a Structured Schedule

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Your kids are used to structure at school, so try to maintain a loose schedule each day. Keep the mornings the same as if they were going to school, then arrange some plans for the rest of day. [Jessica McHale Photography](#) produced a perfect schedule to help those who are slightly at a loss for where to start. Remember: this is not a snow day, nor is it a vacation.

# 2. Use Online Educational Resources

Some schools are providing resources for parents, but others aren't. Luckily, there are a ton of great resources online. [Amazing Educational Resources](#) has laid out some of the best, and is updating their lesson plans regularly, and [Scholastic](#) has fantastic [online classes](#) targeted at specific age groups starting at pre-K.

# 3. Learn a New Language

Use this time to learn a new language with your kids (and then plan to visit a destination where you can practice your new skills once it's safe to travel again!). [Rosetta Stone](#) is completely online-based with 24 languages from which to choose.

## 4. Teach Your Kids Life Skills

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Some of the [best lessons in life are learned outside of the classroom](#). Why not use this time to teach the kids how to change a tire or do a load of laundry? You could also teach your own etiquette class, demonstrating the proper manners to use on everything from receiving an event invitation to dining at a restaurant.

## 5. “Visit” Iconic Landmarks

You may have had to cancel a trip, but that doesn’t mean you can’t experience the world from your home. It can be as simple as using Google maps to “walk” around neighborhoods throughout the world. [Trafalgar Square](#), anyone? Or maybe the [Great Wall of China](#)? [Great Sphinx in Egypt](#)? [Yellowstone National Park](#) and [Colonial Williamsburg](#) also offer virtual tours!

## 6. Virtually Tour a National Park

It’s not nearly as rewarding as visiting in real life, but virtually touring a national park is a fun way to pass the time—and a great way to help you and the kids choose your next [national park vacation](#). You can virtually tour Yellowstone National Park, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Dry Tortugas National Park in Florida, Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah, Carlsbad Caverns National Park in New Mexico, and Kenai Fjords National Park in Alaska.

## 7. Take a Virtual Museum Tour

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Several museums offer online tours, including the [Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History](#) in Washington, D.C.; [The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum](#) in Cooperstown, New York; [The British Museum](#) and [The National History Museum](#) in London; [The Van Gogh Museum](#) in Amsterdam; and [The Louvre](#) in Paris.

## 8. Go on a Digital Safari

[Explore.org](#) has loads of wildlife webcams. (As I was researching, I was distracted for a solid 10 minutes staring at giraffes eating, a [family of zebras drinking](#), and [fish swimming in a coral reef](#) at an aquarium.) The site also offers videos about various animals when the animals aren't in front of the cameras. Zoos such as the [San Diego Zoo](#) and [Memphis Zoo](#) also have [live webcams](#), and the Cincinnati Zoo is now offering a series of [Home Safari Facebook Live](#) sessions at 3 p.m. ET on weekdays.

## 9. Check Out Virtual Rides at Disney Parks

[Go on a virtual ride at Disney World, Disneyland and beyond!](#) Head to YouTube for “rides” on [Space Mountain](#), [Mickey and Minnie's Runaway Railway](#), and more.

## 10. Take a College Tour

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Do you have a high schooler who has started to look at colleges? Several colleges have [online tours](#). Sit them down with the website and a [college guide book](#) to start narrowing down their choices.

## 11. Break Out the Board Games

There's never been a better time to break out [Monopoly](#) and [Scrabble](#)! Looking for some new [board games](#) to add to your collection? These are the year's [best family board games](#).

## 12. Catch Up on Movies and TV Shows

While we encourage you to continue educating your kids, it's also a great time to take advantage of no play dates, no parties, no extra-curricular activities, and just chill.

Check out our suggestions for some of the [best family TV shows to watch right now](#). Between [Disney+](#), [Netflix](#), [Hulu](#), and [Amazon Prime](#), and with early released films for both [young kids](#) and [older kids and adults](#), the options are endless.

## 13. See a Broadway Show

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[Broadway](#) has gone dark, but [that doesn't mean you can't see a live show!](#) [Amazon Prime Video](#) and [Vudu](#) offer select shows, and [Broadway HD](#) offers all of the classics. Film adaptations of musicals, such as [Shrek the Musical](#) and [Jersey Boys](#), can also be streamed on select platforms.

## 14. Have a Virtual Movie Party

Did you know Netflix has a service called [Netflix Party](#)? A Chrome extension for desktop and laptop computers, Netflix Party allows you to watch movies and enjoy a group chat with friends and family.

## 15. Discover Your Family's History

[Ancestry.com](#) always starts with a free trial, so now may be the perfect time to sign up. Your kids will be amazed to see their grandparents' and great grandparents' names listed on the old censuses, and who knows what else you might discover?! You can also [tour Ellis Island](#) and get an idea of how your ancestors may have arrived in the US.

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Take advantage of the downtime and read some new [books](#). Slot some family reading time into your schedule; if you have kids who aren't quite ready for chapter books, pick a series to start together as a family. [Harry Potter](#) is always a favorite, and if you don't want to read aloud, [Audible](#) has thousands of books to choose from (including the [entire Harry Potter series](#))! With a [Kindle](#), you can download books in an instant and get started immediately!

## 17. Get Moving

While social distancing means avoiding large crowds, it doesn't mean you can't get outside. Head to a local trail for a walk, or just let the kids run around in your backyard. If it's too cold or rainy, there are loads of online exercise videos to try. The [GoNoodle App](#) uses screen time to create move time. [Amazon Prime](#) has plenty of videos as well, like [Cosmic Kids Yoga Adventures](#) and [Musical PE for You and Me](#). Speaking of music, a dance party is a great way to get kids moving, too. Ask [Alexa](#) (or whatever you use for music) to play some [dance music](#), and have everyone in the family show off their best moves!

## 18. Play with Arts and Crafts

Time to take out the [art supplies](#) or that [handprint mold](#) grandma gave the kids for Christmas! It can be as basic as [crayons](#), [paint](#), and [paper](#), or something a little more involved like this [Grow and Glow Terrarium kit](#) or this [make-your-own-wind-chime-kit](#). It may be time to break out a [sensory table](#) for the younger kids if [finger painting](#) gets tiring.

## 19. Start a Band

Creating music is also a great way for kids to get their creative juices flowing. [Musical instrument sets](#) allow them to discover several types of instruments, or if you've got a real performer, a [keyboard with a microphone](#) may just be the start of their musical career. x



## 20. Try a New Recipe

With restaurants closing, you may get sick of cooking, so why not take this time to teach your kids how to cook and bake? You can teach them some family recipes, or have older kids try a new recipe from a [kids' cookbook](#).

## 21. Try a Science Experiment

Ever try [taping](#) two [soda bottles](#) together, one with dyed water in it, turning the one with the water upside down, and shaking it in a circular motion to create a whirlpool? There are tons of [science experiments](#) for kids. [Science Buddies](#) has some great ideas online.

## 22. Clean/Organize/Rearrange

If your kid has been bugging you to rearrange his/her room, now is the time to let them do it. Stores such as [Amazon](#), [Target](#) and [Walmart](#) have everything you need for a room makeover, and everything can be shipped straight to your door! It can be as simple as picking out some new [curtains](#), an [area rug](#), [lamp](#), or some other new [accessories](#) to freshen up a room. If you've been putting off organizing your toddler's bedroom or playroom, have them help. Let them decide where things go, what gets put away and what stays out on display. Find some cute [storage bins](#) and start organizing away!

## 23. Build Your Bucket List

Since you're probably not [traveling during the COVID-19 outbreak](#), why not use this time to build your bucket list? Get started with our [bucket list picks](#) for [national parks](#), [theme parks](#), [all-inclusive resorts](#) and beyond.

## 24. Organize a Neighborhood Scavenger Hunt

Plan a scavenger hunt in your own home, or better yet, organize a neighborhood-wide scavenger hunt. Many U.S. communities have organized teddy bear scavenger hunts, placing [teddy bears](#) in their windows for children to spot as they walk or ride by.

## 25. Play Video Games as a Family

Want to be the coolest parents ever? Challenge your kids to a [video game](#)! These are our [favorite multiplayer video games for families](#).

## 26. Don't Forget About You

While it's important to make sure your kids are getting the structure, stimulus and support they need (as well as reassurance that everything will be okay), you can't forget about taking care of yourself and the other adults in the house.

If you're working from home, create a space where you can get your work done. If you don't have an extra room with a door, try a [room divider](#), or hang up a [sheet](#) for privacy. Make sure your kids know you need some quiet time to get work done, then break out your [noise-canceling headphones](#) so you can concentrate without distraction.

Also make sure every one in the house has some time to themselves. Being in close quarters with family for an undetermined amount of time can be trying on everyone. Even if it's something as simple as taking a long bath (with the right [bubble bath](#), of course) or shower, take time to relax and breathe. We're all going to get through this!

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