

# 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.

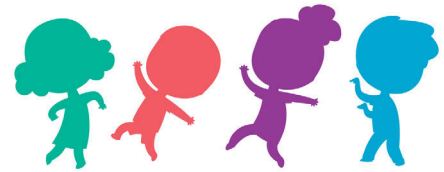
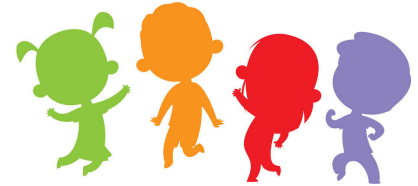
\_\_\_ Play “Name that Tune.” One person hums a tune or says a line from a song and others try to guess the name of the song.

\* \_\_\_ 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 says 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.



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## 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.
- \_\_\_ Play "Hangman." Choose one person to be the "host" who chooses a secret word. Draw a short blank line for each letter in the word. Have players start guessing letters to fill in the blanks. Draw part of the "hangman" for each wrong guess. Whoever guesses the word before the entire hangman is drawn gets to pick the next word.
- \_\_\_ 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.*

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\_\_\_ 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., shuttelfly) 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.



