

Stop Summer Boredom (for Younger Children)

by Dr. Susan Linn

"I'm soooo bored," sighs eight-year-old Jason as he sits down to lunch. "There's nothing to do."

For many children, summer means long lazy days that are a sharp contrast to the scheduled school year. In theory, parents and children alike look forward to a break from the pressure of homework and after-school activities. But in practice, a sudden wealth of downtime can add friction to families.

Here are ten replies to "I'm bored!" that will help your kids develop the internal resources that are important for a creative, satisfying life.

What to Say

1) "So, you're feeling like there's nothing interesting to do right now?"

It's tempting to jump right in with suggestions for activities. Instead, take a moment to acknowledge your child's feelings. This will go a long way toward helping him see you as a resource rather than an adversary.

2) "If you could do anything, what would you like to do?"

Try to encourage your children to generate ideas for activities. Some of them might be far-fetched or impossible. But by sorting through their preferences, you both may get ideas for things to do.

3) "That's a great idea. We can't do it today, but let's make sure we do on Tuesday."

If your child suggests something that can't be done right away, reinforce the suggestion instead of disregarding it. If you can, set a specific time for doing it, and then make sure that you both follow through.

4) "You're usually so good at thinking of things to do."

Reinforcing a child's sense of competence to generate activities will help him develop a sense of resourcefulness.

5) "Let's think of some things together."

If your child can't think of anything to do, even with your encouragement, it's okay to start making suggestions.

6) "I sure could use some help for a while."

Most young children like to help with household tasks. If you're cooking, sewing, or cleaning, find small jobs that your child can do with you. Even older kids can get into helping, especially if they feel like they're accomplishing something. Special projects, such as reorganizing toy boxes or shelves, can occupy long periods of time — especially when children are encouraged to re-examine lost treasures or reminisce about "the old days."

7) "Remember how we wanted to sort through our old pictures?"

Sorting through family photos is a great activity for children. They love seeing pictures of themselves when they were younger, and are often interested in seeing younger versions of family members. If possible, get a blank picture album for them to fill with pictures.

8) "Want to hose some things down for me?"

Water is soothing and magical for children. Kids can while away long hours hosing, washing, and scrubbing — and keep cool during hot summer days. Let them commandeer the bathtub, the porch, driveway, or backyard for some serious water play.

9) "How about making Grandma a present?"

Keep a stash of art supplies handy, including scissors, glue, stamps, and stickers. Rummaging through boxes of buttons and beads to make collages or jewelry can sometimes occupy children for long periods of time — even longer than it takes to make things.

10) "Let's do something together!"

Sometimes, especially with younger children, cries of boredom are really calls for companionship and attention. Designate some special times for you and your children to do simple, fun things together, such as playing a board game, reading aloud, or taking a walk. Encouraging children to pick the game, select the books you read, or plan your route will help them get in the habit of making their own choices about how they spend their time.

Supplies You'll Need

It's tempting to rely on television and videos to keep kids occupied during the long summer days. But you'll be doing your young children a favor by encouraging them to use simple materials, along with their imaginations and ingenuity, to generate summer fun. Here are the supplies you'll need:

- Art supplies — glue and glitter, construction paper, colored pipe cleaners, markers, colored pencils, scissors, and crayons
- Lemonade, ice, and pitcher — for a lemonade stand
- Blocks — all kinds
- Water — for washing the car and water fights
- A library card — for trips to the library
- Ingredients for baking cookies, cupcakes, or bread
- A deck of cards — for solitaire, two-person games, or even building!
- A collection of grown-up clothes — for dress-up
- Old family photographs

Read more on FamilyEducation:

<http://life.familyeducation.com/summer/parenting/29764.html#ixzz3Zqh3428O>

101 Fun Things for Teens to Do This Summer

By Denise Witmer

Here is a list of fun things for your teen to do this summer. Print it out and give it to your teen the first time they tell you they are bored. Or be proactive and give it to them before they complain about nothing to do. Many of these things can be done either with friends or alone.

1. Invent a new type of pizza.
2. Make a music video.
3. Grow a tomato or sunflower plant.
4. Walk barefoot through the grass.
5. Build a sandcastle.
6. Have a wet t-shirt relay race.
7. Picnic at a local park.
8. Make the best ice cream sandwich ever.
9. Have an overnight movie marathon.
10. Play frisbee golf.
11. Have a car wash to fundraise for a club or charity.
12. Grab a blanket, spread it out in the grass and cloud watch.
13. Make a card for a friend.
14. Bike five miles.
15. Catch lightning bugs.
16. Eat the Best Banana Split ever.
17. Take a nap under a shade tree.
18. Go swimming.
19. Have a pool party.
20. Play with water balloons.
21. Make a summer tote bag out of a recycled tank top.
22. Soak in the bathtub with homemade summer bath salts.
23. Sketch a flower that is growing in your yard.
24. Bury a friend in the sand.
25. Babysit and make paper airplanes.
26. Volunteer in a community effort.
27. Go fishing.
28. Sleep in your backyard, under the stars.
29. Create a photo journal.
30. Hike a rail trail.
31. Visit the local library and sign up for the summer reading list. You could win something.
32. Swap a favorite book with a friend and read it.
33. Make a friendship bracelet and send it to your friend.
34. Write a poem
35. Write a song.
36. Write a play.
37. Start your novel.
38. Make a website.
39. Give your Facebook page a summery look.
40. Friend someone famous on your Facebook page.
41. Have an outdoor basketball free-throw contest.
42. Have a watermelon seed spitting contest.
43. Sketch your pet.
44. Make smoothies.
45. Have a high tea, only use iced-teas.
46. Help plan the family vacation.
47. Make a root beer float.

48. Write in your journal, "My Top Ten Favorite Summertime Activities".
49. Make toe ring.
50. Paint your toe nails.
51. Make a barefoot sandal.
52. Make Hawaiian Pizza for your family dinner.
53. Paint your fingernails with bright sparkly polish.
54. Watch the sunrise.
55. Watch the sunset.
56. Get your community's events list for the summer and attend an event.
57. Have a summer clothes fashion show.
58. Create a summer safety poster for the local library.
59. Volunteer to read to children at the library.
60. Learn to grill a hot dog.
61. Learn to grill a hamburger.
62. Learn to grill pizza crust.
63. Eat some fruit with fruit dip.
64. Make a collage out of old magazines.
65. Swing.
66. Skip stones at a lake.
67. Surf/boogie board at the beach.
68. Get a new hairdo.
69. Change something about how you wear your make-up.
70. Decide to pick up one good habit, then pick which one you'll do.
71. Make your own popsicles.
72. Watch last year's hot summer flick.
73. Go to this year's hot summer flick.
74. Make a list of your favorite summertime movies in your journal.
75. Make a summer sun shaped collage out of summer fashion magazines.
76. Make a leaf t-shirt.
77. Make an earring holder out of a branch.
78. Make peach lemonade.
79. Make a CD of your favorite summertime songs.
80. Enjoy a board game marathon on your backyard picnic table or on your back porch.
81. Have a scavenger hunt.
82. Make some summer jewelry.
83. Change something in or add something to your room.(You could clean it too.)
84. Give your dog/pet a bath outside.
85. Take your dog/pet for a walk.
86. Run through a sprinkler.
87. Make a whirlpool in a kids pool or play Ice Cubes and Piggies Game.
88. Visit a flower garden and/or butterfly house.
89. Grow some lavender so you can make your own potpourri.
90. Turn up the music and dance.
91. Go stargazing.
92. Sleep until noon – once.
93. Tie-dye your bed sheets.
94. See some fireworks.
95. See a local baseball game.
96. Play mini-golf.
97. Learn how to hula-hoop.
98. Create a sidewalk mural with chalk, use a tropical theme.
99. Organize your summer sandals and flip-flops.
100. Visit a college.
101. Plan and enjoy a luau.

25 Activities to Keep Kids' Brains Active in Summer

As students set out on summer adventures, send their parents a much-needed "life preserver" -- a list of 25 activities to share and enjoy with their children. These fun activities cover all subjects and grades; there truly is something for everyone. And, if you have your own summer adventurers at home, this list can rescue your kids from the boredom and blahs of rainy summer days. This year, do more than amuse and entertain your kids and hope for the best for your students, keep their minds working all summer long! Included: Twenty-five activities to fight summer boredom and build thinking skills.

It's summer -- that time of year when teachers bid farewell to students, hoping their gleefully escaping charges don't forget *everything* they've learned during the school year. It's also the time of year when nervous parents take on the challenge of keeping their children physically busy and mentally active during long summer days. To help those efforts, Education World offers 25 ideas that not only reinforce skills taught during the year, but also to entertain students through the summer months. Share these resources with parents to help them and their children make the most of the lazy, hazy days to come!

Many of these activities link to online resources. In most cases, however, the activities can be completed even by those without Internet access. The activities that do require Internet access can be printed and distributed to students before school ends or accessed and printed by parents at most public libraries.

1. Fill in summer's special days and events on the Education World [Coloring Calendar](#) for June, July, or August. Or help children use pencils, drawing paper, and rulers to create, decorate, and fill in their own summer calendars.
2. Teach kids to cook with the step-by-step lessons and recipes at [Cooking With Kids](#). The site also includes measurement reminders, safety tips, and suggestions for involving kids in the cooking process. Or check out your local library or book store for one of the recommended [Heritage Cooking for Kids: Taste History](#) books and try out recipes from Colonial days, the Civil War, and the Lewis and Clark expedition.
3. Make homemade [Bubble Solution](#) and experiment with such unique [Bubble-Blowing Tools](#) as strings, milk containers, and garbage can lids.
4. Read aloud [The Paper Crane](#) by Molly Bang. Then introduce the art of paper folding by printing and following the instructions for [How to Make an Origami Crane](#).
5. Go on a [Light Walk](#), an outing designed to teach kids the properties of light and facts about the sun. Bob Miller of the [Exploratorium](#) explains it all. Can't take an online tour? [Do your own image walk](#) by printing the directions and template found at the site.
6. Create musical instruments from materials found around the house. Need help? Enchanted Learning provides instructions for such [Musical Instruments](#) as a rattle, box guitar, maraca, and rain stick.
7. Cool down by making [Ice Cream in a Bag](#). The simple technique produces delicious ice cream in about 5 minutes. What ice cream varieties will you and your child concoct?
8. Read aloud a selection from [Candlelight Storybooks](#) or your own favorite myths or fairy tales. Discuss the stories with your child. Then invite your child to choose a favorite story, and together make a diorama depicting a pivotal moment in the tale.

9. Catch a firefly and then go to [The Firefly Files](#) online, or read a book, such as [Fireflies](#) by Sally M. Walker, to help your child learn more about them. Then invite your child to complete the Education World [Firefly Facts](#) work sheet. Firefly Facts Answers:
 - Fireflies are really beetles because they have four wings; true flies only have two wings.
 - Most fireflies like warm, humid areas.
 - In the United States, glowing fireflies are found east of the middle of Kansas.
 - Firefly larvae feed mostly on earthworms, snails, and slugs.
 - Scientists believe fireflies use their ability to flash as a warning signal to predators and to attract mates.
10. Print a grid of dots from [Connect the Dots](#) by [Math Cats](#) and invite your child to make an original tessellation.
11. Staple together pieces of plain paper or use a notebook to help your child make a cartoon [flip book](#). Kids draw a sequence of cartoons and simulate motion as they "flip" through the pages. (Note that the first image in the series should be at the bottom of the stack of pages, and the illustrations should progress from bottom to top.) [How to Draw Cartoons](#) or [The Complete Cartooning Course](#) by Steve Edgell, Brad Brooks, and Tim Pilcher, offer simple instructions for drawing cartoon figures.
12. Learn about national parks from the comfort of your own home, and encourage your child to complete online activities and become a [Web Ranger](#). Materials are grouped by age and include cool awards and a membership card.
13. Start a rock collection. [Collecting Rocks](#), a Web site by the U. S. Geological Survey, offers advice to help the novice collector gather, identify, and store neat rock specimens. The Audubon Society Pocket Guide [Familiar Rocks and Minerals North America](#) will help children identify and label the rocks and minerals they find.
14. Plan with your child a family activity day. Decide how much money to spend, and help your child research events and activities in your area and choose an affordable activity the whole family can enjoy. Remind your child to be sure to allow enough time for the activity, and to remember to include food in the day's plan. (The online [Planning a Party](#) guide will help.) Don't forget to bring a camera and take lots of pictures. Your child can mount and label each photo and create a family scrapbook of your special day. You might provide the questions below to help guide your child's thoughts as they plan this special day.
 - Describe the event or activity your family will attend.
 - Will everyone in the family enjoy this activity? Why do you think so?
 - What do you need to arrange ahead of time? Will you need to purchase tickets? Pack a lunch? Make reservations?
 - What supplies or materials will you need?
 - What costs will be involved?
15. Take a virtual [CampusTour](#) of colleges and universities your high school student might be considering. Tour the schools' grounds, look at maps, view videos and photos, and request information about those institutions of higher learning. If you don't have Internet access at home, take your tour at the local library.
16. Have your child follow instructions to [Build the Best Paper Airplane in the World](#). Then ask your child to design an original paper airplane and diagram the steps for constructing it, so another family member can recreate it!
17. Start a family or neighborhood book club. Even a parent and child can form a book club, by reading the same book and chatting about it. For larger groups, check out some online [hints for starting a book club](#).

18. Hang a white sheet outside at night and shine a light on it. Observe the variety of insects it draws. To identify some of those nighttime visitors, see [The Orders and Selected Families of Insects](#) or read the [National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Insects and Spiders](#).
19. Kids rarely have the opportunity to design their own rooms to best suit their individual needs. Invite your child to devote some thought to ways to improve his or her living space. Explore with your child [Kids' Room Decorating Ideas](#) to find ways your child might individualize his or her room without spending a great deal of money. Then have the child draw the layout of their "new" room. The following questions might guide kids as they consider the possibilities:
 - Other than sleeping, what do you do most often in your room? Play games? Work on a computer? Listen to music? Do homework? Entertain guests?
 - What furniture or other items do you use most often? What do you use least often?
 - What kind of storage do you need? A dresser? A bookcase? A clothes hamper? A desk?
 - What do you like best about your room? What do you like least?
 - How do you want to change your room?
20. Help your child make a set of tangrams with instructions found at the Math Forum's [Constructing Your Own Set of Tangrams](#). Trace the designs on a piece of paper, mix up the tangram pieces, and use them to create jigsaw puzzles.
21. Create a thing of beauty from a lump of coal! With a few common ingredients, you and your child can grow a "Magic Crystal Garden" with pieces of coal. Instructions for the crystal garden can be found at [Joey Green's Mad Scientist Experiments](#).
22. Soar into space (the space in your bedroom, kitchen, or dining room) by constructing Science Bob's [Balloon Rocket](#). This simple science experiment using a balloon, string, straw, and tape, illustrates the use of air pressure to produce movement.
23. Turn plain white carnations or fresh-picked Queen Anne's Lace into dramatic colored creations by [Coloring Flowers](#). Using just food coloring and water, flowers can be changed from white to any tint, usually in just one day. Colors deepen over time, and kids will enjoy modifying the experiment to see what unique combinations they can make.
24. Invite your child to play a Math game and record his or her scores on a sheet set up like the illustration below. Choose a probability game, a timed flashcard activity, an online game from a site such as [FunBrain](#), or another favorite math activity. Then have your child graph the results of the Game Challenge chart. Celebrate your child's effort with a special treat.

Game Title: _____

Round	Kind of Game	Level of Difficulty	Score
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

25. Put old wallpaper and magazine scraps to good use by using them to create [Recycled Paper Beads](#). This easy activity requires very few common materials and keeps kids very busy on rainy days. When they're finished, children can string their beads and give them as gifts or wear them for fun.

Article by Cara Bafile

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Fun Summer Science Projects for Kids

By Courtney Corda and Amy Cowen, Science Buddies



As summer, with its longer days and less structured schedules, gets under way, keep in mind that learning happens all year long. During summer break, children forget some of what they learned during the school year, making it important to balance summer fun with activities that have an educational twist. As you plan art activities, sign up for the library’s summer reading program and plot your family vacation, leave room for plenty of hands-on family science projects.

According to Dr. Sandra Slutz, Lead Staff Scientist at Science Buddies, “summer is the perfect time to encourage kids to ask ‘why’ as they explore science—not on textbook terms but on their own hands-on terms.” This is important at every age, says Slutz. “‘Why’ is the foundation of science, but even more importantly, asking ‘why’ builds critical and creative thinking skills.” Kristi Calcagno, director of the Open Gate Cooperative Nursery School, agrees and encourages parents to explore hands-on science with their children on a daily basis. “The most important thing that children gain from a hands-on science curriculum is support for their natural curiosity,” says Calcagno. “They explore, question and wonder, and by doing so, learn!”

Integrating science into your daily summer “do” list is a lot easier than you think. Often, the trick is simply to realize that science surrounds us. Almost every activity has a science angle, something small that your children can explore or that you can share. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

Explore Outdoors

There is a limitless supply of fun, easy and readily available (and free!) things to do outdoors that encourage children to compare, observe, explore and experiment. From overturning large rocks after a rainstorm to reveal wiggly earthworms to making [gigantic bubbles](#), warm summer days brim with science potential. Frogs, lizards, butterflies, caterpillars, nests, and ponds all invite observation of habitats and ecosystems. Set up multiple [bird feeders](#), each with different types of seed, and see what happens. On hot days, make rainbows with a sprinkler, tumble ice cream in a coffee can, or create [sun prints](#). In an open space, [kites](#), frisbees, and paper airplanes all use basic principles of flight. One plane flies far, and the other doesn’t? Ask why!

Explore the Kitchen

The kitchen is another easily accessible place that invites all kinds of family science investigations. Baking or cooking with your children reinforces math and reading skills and encourages science questions. What happens when you mix those two ingredients together? Why do you need baking soda in those cookies? How does Jell-O stay together? Do all fruits have the same number of seeds? Food science can be fun, but not all recipes for kitchen science are to eat. Add a bit of food coloring to the water in a vase of white carnations for a colorful example of capillary action or oil, water and Alka-Seltzer for a homemade [lava lamp](#). Mix up batches of [silly putty](#), [salt dough](#), or [homemade chalk](#). Reuse empty glass jars to grow and compare salt- and sugar-based crystals on a string. Seal a slice of bread in another jar and use a microscope to watch what grows over the next few days. Ask why!

Grow Something

Indoors or out, letting your kids grow their own flowers, herbs, or vegetables creates a long-term learning activity that encourages monitoring and observation. Plant seeds in an empty egg carton or grow a houseplant in water from a carrot, pineapple, radish, or last night's avocado pit. Do all plants need soil? Ask why!

Build Something

When kids build with blocks, Legos, or tinker-style toys, they can compare structures, think about the relationship between height and stability and investigate what stands and what falls. Assemble a [marble-run](#) kit from an assortment of household items, including toilet paper holders, plastic funnels, small train track pieces, cardboard, and lots of tape. If you are at the beach, experiment with sand castle building. Do you need water? Ask why!

Enjoy the Night

Stay up a bit later on a clear summer night and spend time looking at the stars and pointing out constellations. Locate Venus and talk to your kids about the planets. If fireflies are in your area, catching some at twilight in jars (with holes in the lids) is a wonderful way to observe bioluminescence. Some organisms glow. Ask why!

Put science on the calendar The sprawl of days may seem vast at the beginning of summer, but summer break always unfolds faster than expected. Keep your good intentions on track by penciling "science" in on your family calendar. Dedicate one morning or afternoon a week to science exploration, plan a special trip to a science museum, or make up science-inspired days like "[Ooblek Day](#)" and turn them into celebrations.

Think Outside the Box

Don't let what you remember of "classroom science" be the ruler against which you measure what counts as a meaningful at-home science activity for your children. Your most innovative ideas might turn out to be the most memorable and rewarding moments of the summer. For example, plan a scavenger hunt: hand out a science-inspired list of crazy things to find and turn the kids loose. Scavenger hunts are perfect for the park, beach, camping, or on vacation. Things to seek: feathers, shells, rocks, pine cones, and leaves. Include a ruler and make size part of the requirements, or include a pencil and an index card and make an on-location sketch worth extra points!

Incorporating science activities into your summer benefits your children *and* your family. For Tina Lanese, Science Buddies Vice President, summer break offers the chance to explore areas of science with her kids without worrying about homework or after-school schedules.

"Summer offers an unparalleled chance to create at-home science learning moments," says Lanese. "That these activities can also be fun and afford moments of family togetherness is a plus." No matter what science you explore with your children, be sure to enjoy the moments of "*why*!"