

Activities by Age

Things to do with your kids that don't require planning

STILL DAD

Toddlers: Ages 2 to 4

INDOOR

- Build and knock over block towers
- Sensory bin (rice, dried beans, water)
- Finger painting on newspaper
- Read the same book 17 times in a row
- Play pretend kitchen or store

OUTDOOR

- Sidewalk chalk on any flat surface
- Water play: bucket, hose, kiddie pool
- Chase bubbles you blow
- Explore a sandbox or dirt pile
- Walk anywhere slowly: they find everything interesting

NOTES

- Attention span is 5–15 min per activity
- They want you present more than entertained
- Narrate what you're doing: it builds language

RAINY DAY GO-TO

Fill the bathtub with toys and let them splash for an hour. Zero prep.

Early Kids: Ages 5 to 7

INDOOR

- Board games: Candy Land, Chutes and Ladders, Uno
- Draw or trace characters from their favorite shows
- Build with LEGO or Duplo
- Bake something simple together
- Make a fort out of couch cushions

OUTDOOR

- Bike riding with you alongside
- Catch, kickball, or soccer in any open space
- Bug hunting with a magnifying glass
- Splash pad or playground
- Scavenger hunt in the neighborhood

NOTES

- Starting to enjoy rules and winning
- Creative play is still huge
- They want your undivided attention

RAINY DAY GO-TO

Make a blanket fort with flashlights and tell stories inside it.

Mid Kids: Ages 8 to 11

INDOOR

- Strategy board games: Catan Jr., Ticket to Ride
- Watch a movie series together (pick one they'll love)
- Cook a real meal together
- Science experiments with kitchen stuff
- Card games: Go Fish, War, Rummy

OUTDOOR

- Throw a football or frisbee
- Hike a trail: any trail, any length
- Fishing (cheap and slow in a good way)
- Shoot hoops at the park
- Bike to somewhere and get food

NOTES

- Conversations happen during activities
- They want to feel capable: give them real tasks
- Screen time is a negotiation, not a ban

RAINY DAY GO-TO

Start a puzzle together: leave it out and add pieces over several days.

Tweens: Ages 12 to 14

INDOOR

- Play a video game they like: let them be the expert
- Watch a show they're into, no commentary
- Cook something ambitious together
- Trivia or game nights with snacks
- Start a project: model, craft, something

OUTDOOR

- Drive somewhere new: exploring is enough
- Disc golf: cheap, accessible, fun
- Mini golf, bowling, or arcades
- Pick up basketball at the park
- Kayak, paddleboard, or canoe rental

NOTES

- Don't force conversation: let it happen
- Side-by-side activities work better than face-to-face
- They're watching how you handle things

RAINY DAY GO-TO

Long car drive with a playlist they control and no destination.

Teens: Ages 15 and Up

INDOOR

- Watch something together they've been recommending
- Cook a meal from scratch: they can actually help now
- Work on a car, project, or fix something around the house
- Play cards for money (low stakes, teaches math)

OUTDOOR

- Driving lessons (huge for your relationship)
- Hike or run together
- Go to a live event: concert, game, local show
- Road trip, even a short one

NOTES

- Presence matters more than activities
- Ask questions, give opinions only when asked
- Reliability is everything at this age

RAINY DAY GO-TO

Order food, put phones down, and just talk. It works if you don't force it.

The best activity is the one you actually show up for. They remember that you were there long after they forget what you did.