

## 101+ Ideas To Keep Your Kids Busy During Coronavirus Closures

March 15, 2020 - Tara Haelle

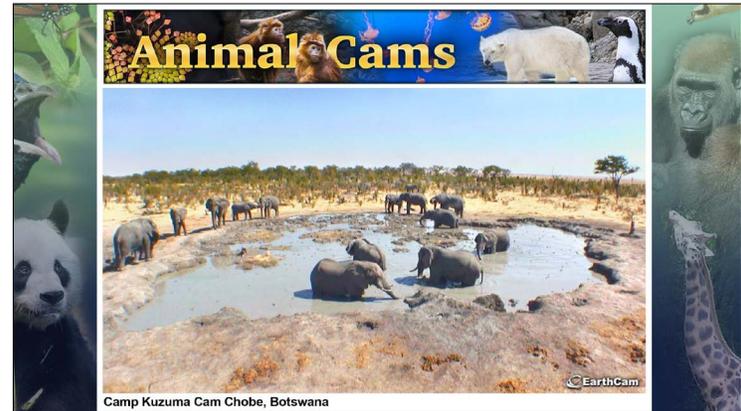
"Not going to lie, 2 more weeks of spring break is terrifying. My kids are already stir crazy!" That's a text message I woke up to a few days ago, when our school district announced on the last day of spring break that school would be cancelled for two more weeks. It was from a co-Cub Scout leader as several of us discussed whether to hold our next planned meeting.

As someone who already works from home and has broken up four dozen fights between my elementary-aged sons this past week, I get it. The next few weeks won't be easy for any of us. For those of us, like me, who are pathologically extraverted, avoiding other people in real life sounds like torture. But even for the biggest introverts among us, having the kids home for several weeks with no camps, open rec centers, no museums, no parks... well, let's say all of us will be building character.

Since even the most creative among us eventually run dry on ideas, I've pulled together a crowd-sourced list of things you can do with your kids (or things you can tell them to do while you hide in your home office or the bathroom). If I've missed anything, send me an email at [COVIDtips@tarahaelle.net](mailto:COVIDtips@tarahaelle.net) and I'll add it to the list.

Some of these require supplies that you may have on hand or can order online. Others don't require any supplies. Some are outdoors (but stay 6-10 feet from other people) and others are indoors. Some require supervision, and others you can keep your children occupied while you work. Many of the activities involve using smartphone apps or the Internet, but they are tied to a specific activity since this post assumes you're looking for ideas besides YouTube, video games and gaming apps. Most of this is directed toward children, but adults may enjoy some of these ideas too.

1. Create a daily schedule together. Use a whiteboard, cardboard or blank printer paper, or print out an online daily calendar template. Take turns being the one who decides what to do during each block of time.
2. Check out this excellent how-to slideshow from content strategist and editorial content manager Anne Miller: [How Not to Lose Our Minds, Hopefully](#) (with a kid at home, while some of us work).
3. Amazing Educational Resources has endless suggestions and links in its open Facebook group.
4. There's a wide range of homeschooling and online learning sites, and many that requires subscriptions are offering discounts, free trials or free credits. Examples include [Scholastic.com/learnathome](https://www.scholastic.com/learnathome), Khan Academy, Outschool and Adventure Academy is offering steep discounts. See this incredible list of others compiled by Amazing Educational Resources.
5. Listen to a real astronaut read you a book from space! (This is so cool. Watch and listen to Ada Twist, Scientist, Mousatronaut (written by astronaut Mark Kelly and read by his brother, Scott Kelly), Astronaut Annie and Max Goes to Mars.
6. Create an "I'm bored" list. Each person lists ideas for what they can do when they get bored. Stick it on the fridge. Use it when you get bored.
7. Board games. Favorites that our family enjoys and that others have recommended: Dixit, Labyrinth, Ticket to Ride, Scrabble, Dragon Race.
8. Make puppets from socks, paper bags or stuffed animals with their stuffing pulled out. Michelee Puppets, a nonprofit in Orlando, has tons of ideas and videos on their website here.
9. Make a comic book. 1.
10. Keep a daily journal.
11. Bake a cake, cupcakes, cookies, etc.
12. Learn to make healthy snacks for after-school.
13. Pick a favorite animal and research it. Create a fact sheet about it.
14. Make and play with salt dough.
15. Make a button spinner.
16. Explore Mars with Curiosity.
17. Lego activity: Make a list of animals and buildings. Write them all down on individual pieces of paper and put them in a box. Each person draws one out and has to build it with Legos.
18. Do a 30-day Lego Challenge. (There are tons of them.)
19. Make your own Knex rubber band cars and race them down the hallway, in the kitchen or on the sidewalk.
20. Explore the arts, history and foreign places with Google Arts & Culture.
21. Visit a museum! Check out these lists at [Mental Floss](#) and [Travel & Leisure](#), or just check out the website of the museum you've always wanted to visit. Many have online exhibits.
22. Take a walk at a nearby park—just stay away from the playground equipment and keep at least 6-10 feet from other people.
23. Make origami animals and objects.
24. Take a virtual tour of the Great Wall of China.
25. Teach each other card games with a standard deck of cards. Make up your own games!



26. Go through the house looking for broken toys or things that need to be thrown away. Use tape and glue to them into a found-art sculpture art project instead.
27. Take a virtual field trip to Yellowstone National Park's top attractions.
28. Have a contest to see who can pick up the most dishes/clothes/socks/legos/etc laying around the house. The winner gets to pick the next board game.
29. Take a road trip where you don't get out of the car. Play road games along the way.
30. Watch live jellyfish, beluga whales, African penguins, and more at the Georgia Aquarium's webcams.
31. Thank a community hero. Write a letter or make thank you cards for
32. Put together a care package for a US service member serving overseas. Get ideas here and go through an organization or send them via Support Our Troops.
33. Pick a sentence from a book. How many words can you make from the letters in the sentence?
34. Build a house of cards.
35. Check out the Kitchen Pantry Scientist for endless ideas that mix science, fun and the kitchen. For most activities, you'll have most of the supplies already in your house. The woman behind the site, Liz Heinecke, also has a series of highly recommended books: Kitchen Science Lab for Kids, Chemistry for Kids, STEAM Lab for Kids, Star Wars Maker Lab, Outdoor Science Lab for Kids and Kitchen Science for Kids Edible Edition.
36. Do you play Pokemon Go or Wizards Unite? Drive to an area with a lot of Pokestops or Inns and Greenhouses, and play from your car (while safely parked!)
37. Take a hike at a nearby park or forest.
38. Create your own secret code. Write a letter to someone else in the code.
39. Listen to podcasts. A few of our favorites include Story Pirates, WOW in the World, Fun Kids Science Weekly, Story Collider, Brains On! (whose latest is a show on coronavirus), Simon's Science Adventure Stories and Fun Kids Story Quest.
40. Blow bubbles outside.
41. Draw pictures outside with sidewalk chalk.
42. "Paint" a wooden picket fence with water.
43. Watch animals live on live zoo webcams across the world, such as lions, naked mole rats, elephants and pandas. Check out links to several zoos and other virtual field trips here. (Note that some animals may not be visible, so try multiple sites.)
44. Watch wild animals like wolves and puffins on webcams at wildlife refuges and other sites. See top lists from Audubon (some dead links), Outside Magazine and [EarthCam](#).
45. Go tent camping in your backyard.
46. Use FaceTime, Skype, Google Hangouts or another platform to video chat with a friend or relative.
47. Have a virtual party using a video chat platforms. Play party games.
48. Have a paper boat race at a nearby pond.
49. Fish at a nearby pond. (Stay 6-10 feet away from others.)
50. Make your own felt board for them to create scenes, practice spelling or do math problems.
51. Refrigerator magnetic poetry contests.
52. Buy shaving cream and create art outside or on the bathroom wall.
53. Make your own musical instruments. (Search online for hundreds of ideas.)
54. Have a contest to see who reads the most books.
55. Put on a family play.
56. Plan the next family vacation.
57. Collect rocks on a walk. Paint them at home.
58. Start a home garden (indoor or outdoor).
59. Plant marigolds or cooking herbs.
60. Find a dead bee outside. Use a spoon or tweezers to pick it up and investigate it under a magnifying glass or a smartphone app, such as MagLite. If you have a microscope, look at its body parts, such as its eyes, wings or legs. Learn the parts of the bee. Order a bee book or research bees online to learn more.
61. Repeat the above for any insect.
62. Check out e-books and audiobooks from your library through apps such as Libby/Overdrive, Axis 360, Hoopla and cloudLibrary. (Your local library's website should list the apps they use.)
63. If your library doesn't have online books and audiobooks, check out Epic! Books.
64. Check out "A Week of Awesome Afternoon Adventures" on Zoom with Chris Field.
65. Design your own exercise routine. Take turns teaching an "exercise class" to your favorite tunes.
66. Make pickles and jam.
67. Learn a new language. Use an app, such as Duolingo. Make flashcards. Write foreign language vocabulary words on Post-Its and plaster the house with them. (While researching this article, I learned there are also foreign language Magnetic Poetry kits, though they're a bit pricey.) Learn to sing a song in a foreign language. Make a dictionary in the foreign language.
68. Learn three new vocabulary words a day. Turn each word into a painting or other art project. Make flashcards. (I actually practiced my SAT words in high school by taping up flashcards throughout the house.)
69. Watch a favorite movie or cartoon in a different language. (Most DVDs have other language options.)
70. Watch a favorite movie or cartoon on mute and make up your own dialogue.
71. Watch cooking videos online for making food from another country. Try to make the dish.
72. Have an untimed Iron Chef contest with the whole family. Choose an ingredient, and everyone makes a different dish.
73. Write a letter to your grandparents or other relatives or friends. Address the envelope, buy a stamp through the machine at the post office and mail it.

74. Many online sites help you find an international pen pal. Before signing up anywhere, have a discussion about how to be safe online with strangers and make sure the site you're using has safeguards.
75. Do puzzles and wordfinds.
76. Learn a new chore.
77. Have a contest to see who can match the most socks from that basket full of dryer sock orphans.
78. Take an online course at Coursera or EdX.
79. Start your own YouTube channel. Come up with a theme and use a smartphone to record your video. (Again, have a conversation about being safe online first, and use privacy controls as needed.)
80. Do yoga! Plenty of videos on streaming services and online video sites can lead you through a virtual class.
81. Create an outdoor obstacle course. Use old toys or things you find in your garage and google online suggestions for specific obstacles.
82. If you have the food items to do so, cook meals you can freeze and heat up later.
83. Do jigsaw puzzles. Don't have any at home and don't want to spend the money? Then create your own: Draw or paint a picture. Glue it to the cardboard from a box. Print and use an online template to cut out the pieces.
84. Go geocaching! Many smartphone apps and online sites can show you how. Just stay 6-10 feet away from others.
85. Do a household scavenger hunt.
86. Do a local road trip scavenger hunt. Pinterest has loads of ready-to-print ideas.
87. Do a backyard or park scavenger hunt.
88. Fill up a squirt bottle with water and squirt it at cars, trees, backyard objects and each other!
89. Make art from stickers and construction paper.
90. Got a lot of boxes laying around from package deliveries? Make box towers or forts.
91. Who can build the tallest or sturdiest structure from sticks and rocks outside?
92. Play dress-up. (Need a break? Take your favorite outfits out of the closet and then let your kids run wild with what's left.)
93. Hide and seek with objects: One person hides the object in the house, and the others have to find it.
94. Play with your pets.
95. Foster an animal from the local shelter. Use it as an opportunity to see if your children can learn the responsibility to care for a new pet.
96. Practice your instrument, sport skills, choir songs, math or other skills.
97. Learn specific stances and basic positions for karate, Taekwondo or another martial art by following YouTube videos. (Definitely requires supervision.)
98. Create a home movie with your smartphone video.
99. Check out Princess Awesome's Google doc list [here](#).
100. Learn how to draw at Art for Kids Hub on YouTube.
101. Learn about and then practice the Five Tibetan Rites.
102. The Story Pirates podcast includes writing prompts with each episode.
103. Get active and mindful with GoNoodle.
104. Learn to sew. Dozens of online sites and YouTube videos are specifically aimed at teaching kids to sew.
105. Pick a favorite song. Choreograph a dance routine to it.
106. Have Nerf guns or something similar? Have a Nerf battle.
107. Are you a member of Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4H, Campfire or a similar organization? See if there are badges you can work on at home.
108. Start an online blog.
109. Learn about maps and make a map of your neighborhood.
110. Make jewelry. Order a kit online or use materials from around the house.