

Activities for OLDER KIDS are in BLUE

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1. **Fly a Kite** - Kites are cheap and kids love them. Stay clear of power lines and enjoy.

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2. **Hangman** - this is a fun way to work on spelling with kids without them realizing it.

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3. **House of Cards** - This isn't easy, but it can be fun. It offers a good opportunity to talk with your child to get them to open up and tell you about their day at school, etc.

4. **Beading** - both boys and girls can have fun with stringing beads.

5. **Macrame** - knotting, weaving, etc crafts are always fun. Search for Macrame on Google.

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6. **Play 500** - Use any kind of ball. The thrower says "I have 50 points up for grabs." or any number he/she wants. Then the person who catches the ball wins those points. First person to 500 wins.

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7. **Pickle** - Set up the two bases about 20 feet apart. Select two kids to be "it", one at each base. The other kids would divide and go to the bases. The game starts by two kids tossing the ball to each other. The object of the game is to time running from one base to the other without being tagged by the ball. If tagged then that new person is it. Any kind of ball is fine.

8. **Marco Polo** - water/swimming game. One person is "It." They keep their eyes closed. They shout "Marco" and then everyone else shouts "Polo." The person who is it tries to tag the other players by hearing where they are. Lots of fun!

9. **The ABC Game** - Great for in cars. Start with finding something that begins with the letter A. First person to shout out an answer get a point. Go all the way to Z. The person with the most points wins.

10. **I Spy** - Another car game. "I spy something Red."
Then everyone has to guess what it is.

11. **Name that Tune** - Hum a song and see if others can guess the name of the song. You can add this variation too: "I can name that song in 5 notes."

12. **Mad-Libs!** - these are so much fun. Rainy day or in a car. This is a great one for learning nouns, verbs, and so on. And it is a riot! You can find free ones online in a pinch.

13. **Conflict Games** - Have children act out with you the difficulties they run into at school. By making it fun you can help kids overcome some of the conflicts that they face. Be creative.

14. **Musical Glasses** - fill glasses with different levels of water. Either tap with a spoon or rub the rim with a wet finger to make sounds. See if you can play some tunes.

15. **Make a Soap Pal** - use needle, thread and a face cloth to sew a soap holder. If you have more fabric you can sew on eyes, nose and smiley mouth too.

16. **Board Games** - Trivial Pursuit for Kids, Life, Clue, Yatzee, Monopoly, Checkers, and Chess are great. Remember how much fun they were? Enjoy them again today with your kids!

17. **Charades** - Think of a word and then act it out to have the rest of the group guess what the word is.

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18. **Pictionary** - You don't need the board game. Just divide into two groups. Even two people could play. You pick a word from the dictionary and then draw pictures and the others try to guess what the word is.

Activities for YOUNG CHILDREN are in GREEN

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1. **Pattern Play** - take different shaped and/or colored objects and line them up in a pattern. (blue block, red block, Blue, red) Then have your child figure out what comes next. Any objects will do. You can also try sound patterns like clapping, tapping, funny noises, and have your child repeat them back. If they can have them make up patterns and you repeat them back.

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2. **Sorting Play - 2 WAYS:** 1) Gather some different objects like blocks, toy cars, stuffed animals, coins, spoons, and ask "How should we sort these?" Then ask if they could be sorted another way. 2) Have children help you with sorting real household items such as sorting laundry, silverware, toys, etc.

3. **Feel and Guess** - Get a bag that you can't see through and put about 10 different objects into it. Anything will do. (spoon, keys, yarn, toys, crayon, watch, remote control, etc.) Each person closes their eyes and takes out one object. They feel it and try to guess what it is.

4. **Ramp Play** - make a simple ramp with a piece of cardboard or even a large book, what ever is handy. Take different objects to see how they go down the ramp. Toy cars, plastic cups, a sock, small toys. Ask child what they think will happen with each. Test it. Talk about why they are different. Have races.

5. **Letter Play & Number Play** - Take index cards and draw the letter. On the back you draw something that begins with that letter. Let the child color it in all the while talking about the letter and the sound it makes. For numbers write the number on one side and then that number of objects on the back such as stars, smiley faces, anything. Let child color. You can do this a few each day. It's hard to do all in one day.

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6. **Tic-Tac-Toe** - little kids love this!

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7. **Reading Books** - You read. Then let the child "read" to you with the pictures. Lots of praise. Your child will be learning to love reading.

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8. **Sing kiddie songs** -Bingo, Intsy Wintsy Spider, Five Little monkeys, Mary Had a Little Lamb, London Bridge, My Bonnie, Old MacDonald, Row Row Row Your Boat, You know all the ones. Use hand signals. Make them up if you need to. Have fun.

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9. **Learning About Money** - teach about the different coins. Ask them what they think. Talk about the difference between spending and saving, and also how we get money.

10. **Properties of Objects** - discuss the properties of different objects: soft, furry, hard, rough, round, cold, warm, etc. Then go on hunts around the house for things with those specific properties.

11. **Role Play** - pretend games are a young child's favorite. Pirates, Firemen, Fairy Princess, etc. You can also use this as a way to start teaching about what to say when confronted with strangers and peer pressure for things like smoking. It's best to start when they are young, not when the peer pressure starts. Take turns playing the "bad guy" or the "tempter." Keep it light hearted and positive.

12. **Silly questions** - take turns asking each other things like "Would you rather be a cat or a dog?" And don't forget to ask why.

13. **What am I?** - For instance you might say "I am big and gray. I have a long trunk and I live in Africa. Who am I?" And so on. It's like 20 questions but easier for little kids.

14. **It Felt Like** -after reading books to your child take it a step further and ask how they think certain characters felt in certain situations. Explore the world of feelings.

15. **Bath Party** - bath paints, bath toys, what could be more fun. Let your child lead the way in this playing adventure.

16. **Bubbles!** - make your own with water and a small amount of dishsoap and/or glycerin. Use straws or funnels for blowing the bubbles.

Activities For ALL AGES are in RED.

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1. **Fun with Cleaning** - Choose either windows (Kids love to squirt spray bottles), dusting, or tidying up. Make it fun with music, incentives (such as hiding money to be found when tidying) or prizes for getting all the windows cleaned.

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2. **Goopy Fun** - mix 1 cup cornstarch and 1/2 cup water in a big bowl. Squish it and it become solid. Let it sit and it turns back into a liquid.

3. **Bean Bag Toss** - mark out squares with masking tape on the floor and make different points for each box. You can use small stuffed animals instead.

4. **Baking** - even young kids can help with pouring or mixing. It might be messier, but that's part of the fun. Kids look cute in aprons too. Get a picture of your little chefs! Search Google for cookie recipes.

5. **Make a pizza from scratch** - Pizza dough is easy to make. Search google for recipe. You'll need flour, yeast, water, olive oil, and salt. Once your dough is made. Add sauce, fresh mozzarella, oregano, and whatever toppings you like!

6. **Make Soup or Stew** - Have your child help you wash the vegetables. You chop. They dump into the pot. They pour in the water or broth. You do the meat if you're using meat. When this soup is ready, watch your kids be more willing to eat the vegetables since they helped make the soup!

7. **Pinecone Birdfeeder** - Tie some string, yarn or several strands of thread to the pinecone. Take a pinecone and smear it with peanut butter. Then roll it in any kind of seeds or nuts. Tie the pinecone to a branch of a tree outside your window. Tip: hand this up in the morning so you can watch the birds come around and feed. If you hand it at night, the squirrels might get it by morning. That can be fun to watch too.

8. **Make Jack-o-Lanterns** - In season, search Google for Jack-o-lantern patterns. You cut the pumpkin. Be careful!!! Kids can help gut the inside and help draw the face pattern. You do the carving. After search Google for pumpkin seed recipe, and yum, you'll have a healthy treat for afterwards.

9. **Play with Blocks** - It is the one toy that kids never outgrow. Join in for the fun. See where your child's imagination will lead.

10. **Dominoes** - Search on google for different ways to play. Or just keep it simple and make up your own rules. Little kids might like building with them. And it's always fun to set up the knock-down pattern.

11. **Let's play cards** - Games like Go Fish, War, and Concentration are easy and fun. For young kids use a small amount of cards when playing concentration. You might want to make up your own with pictures. Just use simple symbols like yellow star, red circle, blue square, etc. For older kids you could try out Rummy. Or search google for more ideas.

12. **Nature Exploration** - Head to the beach, woods, a field, the mountains, whatever is close to you and begin with "Let's listen and explore the mysteries here!" Listen, what do you hear? Look, what do you see? Smallest things, biggest things? Ask lots of questions. Be curious about Everything! Have fun. When you get home lookup things online that were burning questions for you and your kids.

13. **Tent City** - Grab some pillows and sheets and set up a tent in your living room. Bring snacks, play pretend (let child lead the way), play 20 questions, Sing songs, tell stories.

14. **Star Gazing at Night** - ask what patterns they see. Tell them about the constellations you know. What do they think of the stars. What do you think? What's out there? How big is it? Aren't we lucky to have these stars!

15. **Visit the Zoo** - The opportunities for fun, learning, and bonding are endless. Make it fun. Bring snacks and drinks and as always with outings, keep a watch on the kids' and your own energy level. When energy starts to fade, it's time to finish off on a good note and get home to rest.

16. **Collage with Nature** - go outside and collect leaves and flowers from nature that can be made into a collage. Use paint too.

17. **Collage with Magazines** - cut out pictures from old magazines and make some cool collages. Hang them up when done. For older kids you could try doing mosaic collages with pictures of different colors. For creative ideas search google for "collage ideas" or "mosaic collage crafts."

18. **Painting!** - finger paints, brush paints, any kind. The only key here is to completely let your child express his/herself freely. Don't guide too much except for instruction on how to use the paints. Have fun!

19. **Coloring** - both crayons and magic markers are so much fun. Both free drawing and coloring books. The possibilities are endless.

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20. **Sidewalk Chalk** - pictures, letters, numbers, hopscotch games, tracing hands etc. Lots of fun!

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21. **Visit the Library** - Suggestion: stay clear of the computers. Explain ahead of time that the visit is about finding some great books. You can read to your child right there in the library and let them pick out a ton of books to borrow. Try to go once a week or every other week.

22. **Go to the Park** - to make this different you might want to try a new park for a change. Take a drive and explore a new park. Bring healthy snack and water.

23. **Go to the Beach** - sandcastles, swimming, playing ball or frisbee, taking a walk. The beach or a lake is a wonderful place to bond and chat the day away with your kids.

24. **Crafts** - some fun projects to look up on Google: paper mache projects, cut & paste with construction paper, etc. Search for others based upon the materials you know you have already.

25. **Create a Chart** - Use this method for encouraging any behavior you're trying to work on with a child from potty training to (older kids) putting on their seatbelts when they get in the car. Let the child make the chart with you. Let them decorate it. Their involvement raises the excitement level and ensures success.

26. **Play Catch** - with little kids, you can start with catching stuffed animals that are easier for them to grab onto, then graduate to an actual ball.

27. **Jumping games** - jumping jacks, jumprope, hopscotch, etc.

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28. **Mother May I** - an old favorite. Everyone asks “Mother” may they take so many steps. The idea is to take big steps. The first person to touch Mother wins.

29. **Tag/Chase Games** - always fun and good exercise for everyone involved! Try this website for several variations of chasing games:
http://www.gameskidsplay.net/games/chasing_games/index.htm

30. **Hide and Seek** - (indoors for little kids)

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31. **Stamping** - use all kinds of objects with paint to make different patterns, like sponges, string, leaves, forks, and more. Or you can make stamps with potatoes. Older kids can use a spoon or other non-sharp object to carve out a picture on the potato. Never let a child use a knife even with supervision.

32. **Paper Airplanes!** - Do a Google search to find instructions on making different kinds of paper airplanes and then see which ones fly the best! Try this site for free instructions:
www.paperairplanes.co.uk/planes.php. If you want a book, I recommend The Gliding Flight by John Collins.

33. **Tea Party** - cookies and decaf tea! What fun! Maybe the kids can even dress up in mommy and daddy's clothes!

34. **Dress Up** - Let's put on mommy and daddy's clothes and play pretend. You be the kid. Let your kid show you how they see you! See what it's like to be them. This can be really funny and eye opening!

35. **Dance Fever** - have a mini dance party.

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36. **Put on a Mini Play** - either use a story you all know or make one up.

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37. **Volunteer** - How about a visit to a local nursing home? Or maybe you could take an elderly neighbor on an outing with you, say to a bookstore or coffeeshop. Helping others is always a positive experience.

38. **Visit a museum** - science, natural history, art. Go for a drive and enjoy the day together learning.

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39. **Painting Rocks** - Find some nice rocks. Paint with acrylic paints. Paint pictures and let them dry. If you want a shiny surface you can put a coat of clear acrylic nail polish over the paint once it has dried.

40. **Have a Limbo Dance** - This is best if you have a few people. Get a rope or a bar that two people can hold and each person has a chance dancing under it. Keep lowering the bar and see who wins. Play some fun steel drum or Caribbean music if you can find it. Or any kind of dancy music will do.

41. **Make Me Smile** - Players form a circle with one player in the middle. The middle person approaches each player in the circle and ask, "Honey, do you love me?" The person being questioned must answer, "Honey, I love you but I just can't smile." If s/he does smile or laugh, s/he becomes "it" and the previous middle person joins the circle. Decide whether you want to allow light tickling or just funny faces.

42. **Red Light Green Light 123** - Person who is "it" says "Red Light Green Light 123" with their back to the rest of the players. "It" person then turns around and everyone has to FREEZE. Anyone who is caught still moving by It person has to go back to the start. First person to tag It person wins.

43. **Write a Story** - Use any combination of paper, pens, crayons, photos, collage, to write and draw a simple story. This is something you can build on over time. It doesn't have to all be done in one setting. Who knows maybe you can even publish this story. How about on a website?! Just use free blogging platform Blogger.com to post a new page each day.

44. **Plant some flowers, vegetables or herbs** - you can use an empty egg carton to start or buy some little starter containers. Once they are big enough, transplant them outside. It's fun to grow your own plants!