



The coronavirus pandemic isn't cancelling summer, but it *is* changing many of our expectations and plans. Calendars are being wiped clean of summer camps, social gatherings, and organized activities, and many families are balancing work and caring for children at home, among other concerns.

This summer we can all take time to reset and readjust to our new realities, while still finding space to relax and have fun! To help, we've created this Guide that you can use to set summer goals, make plans, and help everyone in your family stay safe, happy, and healthy. Whether you live in the country or a city, are able to venture out, or need to remain mostly indoors, use this Guide to help you come up with ideas for you and your kids to make the most out of this summer.

Virtual Experiences

- **Public libraries:** Many libraries are offering free resources for children of all ages, from virtual story times for toddlers, to creative writing contests for teens. Check out your local library's website and see what they're offering.

Activity Ideas



- **Drive-in movies:** Many drive-in theaters across the country are showing movies to viewers safely in their cars. If your family is unable to make it out to the drive-in, recreate the experience at home. Cars can be constructed out of cardboard and "parked" in front of the home TV. Better yet, you can choose the movie and pause for bathroom breaks! Many online services stream children's movies for free.
- **Go to the "beach:"** Many beaches are open and being monitored by local authorities to help ensure safe social distancing practices. If you are unable to make it to a lake or ocean, you can still have beach day fun in your yard with a lawn sprinkler or small, plastic kiddie pool. No yard? Make sand castles with kinetic sand on your kitchen table or a mat on the floor!
- **Exercise:** Go on a hike, nature walk, bike ride, or stroll around the block. Set up an obstacle course in a yard with hula hoops or use painter's tape on the floor of a basement. Need something calmer? Yoga and Tai Chi can be done outdoors or indoors with the whole family and requires little to no equipment.

Virtual Experiences

- **Schools, summer camps, and gyms:** While many organizations have opted to cancel activities in order to practice safe social distancing, some schools, camps, and fitness centers are offering free online programs and activity ideas. Check out what your child's school is offering, try a new lesson at Khan Academy, or attend a virtual camp at your regional YMCA!
- **National parks, zoos and aquariums:** Nature is still available to us, even at home, thanks to numerous parks, zoos, and aquariums offering livestreams of animals and even Q&A sessions with zoologists, park rangers, marine biologists, and other experts.
- **Museums, music, and theater:** Summer can still be a time for the arts, especially since many performers have stretched their creativity even further to adapt to these pandemic times. Many artists are showcasing their art via their own personal social media accounts, while some theater troupes, concert halls, and museums are offering virtual ways of experiencing art and theater online.

Activity Ideas

- **Play games:** Break out favorite family board games, video games and card games and play! Jazz up game time by creating new rules or your own game pieces. If you have younger children, choose a big board puzzle, blocks, or clay and make a game out of constructing the picture, tower or whatever they can imagine! Also, digital versions of many board or card games now exist on the web, making this a great opportunity to connect with distant friends and family if you can't visit them in person.
- **Get Creative:** Use this time to let the creative juices flow by creating new art! Teens and older children can use smartphones and tablets to take artistic photos or edit videos to share with friends and family. Watercolor paints or finger paints can be used outdoors or indoors to capture still life or an abstract interpretation. Need inspiration? Have your child or teen take an online art class.
- **Read:** Create a summer reading list for or with your kids, or simply set aside time for reading each day. For toddlers it may be a favorite board book, while for teens it may be their favorite blog on a tablet. Try a new book series or author and talk about what you are reading as a family.
- **Try a new hobby:** As the school year ends, many kids will have additional time they can use to learn something new, from cooking or baking to sewing, riding a bike or planting seeds.

Above all, remember to be kind, patient, and flexible. Every season is filled with ups and downs, and for many this summer will be different from most. Listen to your children's hopes for the summer, set reasonable, safe expectations, and remember to take time for yourself as well as your children.