

Ideas of things to do with your children during a school closure



Relax, you don't need to create school at home.

These are some ideas of things you can do.

Mindfulness

<https://palousemindfulness.com/MBSR/week1.html>

Thanks to Lisa Thomlinson (Horowhenua Learning Support Coordinator)

1. Start with what interests them

Follow their questions and do some research.

For example: how viral DNA works, travel restrictions in WW2, how glue works, making rockets and how to decorate wooden boxes.

2. Focus on connection

Make your aim connecting with your child, rather than getting them to do things. This is a strange and unusual time for everyone. Make time to do special things together. Have a family movie night, turn the lights off, cuddle up under the duvet and watch it all together. Bake a cake and have a tea party. Lay the table and dress up, make it an occasion.

3. Join your child in their activities rather than trying to persuade them to do something else

If they resist all your suggestions, stop making them. Instead, join them in doing what interests them. If that's Lego, then you do Lego too. If it's painting, have a go. If it's video games, ask them if you can play too. Learn how to play Minecraft or Fortnite. You might be surprised at how much you enjoy it.

4. Games, games, games

Games are fun for everyone. If you have board games, go and explore your cupboard and pull out the games you haven't tried for ages.

If you don't, there are multiplayer tablet versions of many favourite games, including Cluedo, Monopoly, Exploding Kittens, Carcassonne, Ticket to Ride, Settlers of Catan and The Game of Life.

5. Explore the full potential of your screens

This is not the time to impose rigid screen time bans. It is the time to exploit all the potential of any devices you may have. Odds are that there are things your smartphones and tablets do which you have never tried. Young kids will enjoy playing with the Calculator app, and it helps them understand numbers and maths. Take photos and edit them, try out filters and special effects. Take videos and make a movie using free video-editing software. Try making a stop motion film, again using free apps. There are many tutorials on YouTube. Make a podcast by recording yourself.

6. Virtual play dates

We're all in this together. Contact your child's friends and ask them if they'd like to hang out over Zoom, WhatsApp or Skype. Younger children often find it hard to know what to say, so suggest an activity. My kids draw, play games or sometimes just go about their lives with a friend to chat to. It doesn't have to be long to make a difference to your day.

7. Read and Listen

Again, start here with what interests them, not with what you think they should be learning. Find new books on the Kindle app if you've read your whole bookcase. Think about the books you loved as a child and try them out on your kids. Audible has a library full of audio books for those who prefer to listen. If anyone hasn't yet discovered Stephen Fry reading Harry Potter, now is the time. Hours and hours of listening joy.



8. Keep Moving

Even if you can't get out, keep active. Try Cosmic Kids Yoga on YouTube. Use exercise programmes on your games console if you have one. Download a circuit training app for your phone. Construct obstacle courses in your front room. Put on some music and dance to it. The

neighbours will understand. Make time for activity every day. If they won't get up off the sofa, you do the dancing and yoga instead.

9. Sing like no one is listening

Singing makes us feel good. Sing songs with your children, even if you think you can't sing. The Quarantine Choir on YouTube has short videos to teach you to sing a song. TheSofaSingers.net meets weekly for people all over the world to sing together over the internet.

Musicals are a good place to start if you want to learn some new songs. You can find many of the songs on Youtube or you can subscribe to Spotify. Songs from The Lion King (in French and English), Emilie Jolie (French), Le Soldat Rose (French), Mary Poppins, Annie and Aladdin are good for younger kids.

For older kids and adolescents, try Hamilton, West Side Story, Les Miserables (in French and English) and Miss Saigon. The stories may lead to questions about the history, so be prepared to explore. The difference between the French and English translations of The Lion King led to many conversations about language in our house.

Be someone from the book

Kids have their own favourite stories and love to live in the world inside the fairy tales or at least meet someone from the story. Try and act like one of the characters from their favourite tales.



Bake

A sweet foodie item attracts kids and makes them happy, better to take care of the sugar rush they get. So, bake them a few stuff, introduce them to new flavours in the world and from around the world. Get them to measure ingredients.

Play hunting

Not the usual bloody shooting that could scare out the kids. Plan a normal scavenger hunt. This could even teach them differentiating a few things and arguably a fun process to learn. It is one of the best things to do when kids say I'm bored.

Dance with them

Turn on the nursery rhymes or just their favourite tracks and start dancing along with them. This will boost their confidence in doing public activities.

Introduce them to new music

Turn on the radio and let the tracks go along; let your kids choose their favourite tracks. They will themselves start humming their favourite melody once they get attached to it.

Build a cushion castle

Kids love to have their own empire and play a role of being a king or queen. Help them build one, put a cushion on one another, let it have a small gate through which they can pass through.

Have camping in your house

Either have them build a tent inside the house or in the garden. Grab a bed sheet and put it on chairs if you are making a tent in the house or are planning to build one in the yard, try to go for some sticks or a directly backpacking tent.

Play with a ball or Frisbee

Throw a ball or a Frisbee and make them catch it. You don't need a place to play this game; you can play it on the ground, in the garden, at your home or even in a swimming pool.

Plantation

Teach them the value of nature and to respect it. Take them for a trip to a garden or help them plant few saplings and nurture it. Explain to them why it is essential to look after that sapling. Doing this will undoubtedly improve your relationship with the kids and make them a better person in life.

10 Go geocaching

Explore nature with them and go on a small hiking trip to the nearby hills. Do geocaching and explore the best out of nature. Doing this activity will help them understand nature up-close and personal.

11 Visit a museum online

Taking them to the museum will expose them to a vast world of knowledge. The models and artefacts there will get their attraction and teach them history, art, and even science in a fun way.

12 Make jewellery

Use macaroni to make jewellery. Pass a thread along them and let them dry. Use funny shapes and if possible try and paint them. Isn't it one hell of creative things to do when bored?

13 Halloween costume

Help them to choose a character for Halloween and to dress up as one.

14 Make key chains

Grab a few mini toys that you got in the “happy meal” or just tie a ribbon to the key ring.

15 Draw

When kids say I’m bored, help them draw cartoons and their favourite characters from their textbooks.

16 Paint their bedroom

Paint their bedroom with their favourite colours. Do some hand printings, colour their hands and even yours play on the walls?

17 Play puzzle

Bring in puzzles and play along with your kids. Help them find the pieces.

18 LEGO

Play with Lego bricks builds a building or war tanks.

19 Clay dough

Make funny animal shapes or a new design, merge colourful dough of clay and give them whatever shapes you want.

20 Play bowling

There are enough plastic bottles at your home, and of course, you have to have a ball if you have got a kid. Set up a bowling arena and play along with them.

21 Paint t-shirts

Do the hand tricks as told to paint walls with t-shirts? Or dye them in funny and attractive colour combinations.

22 Go for bird watching

Get the binoculars, pack your lunch and hit the nursery.

23 Potato sack race

Play potato sack race, have their friends invited and play along with them.

24 Play Jenga

Jenga is one of the best old school games and still appreciated even today. Build the Jenga blocks and try not to bring down the whole structure while removing one block.

25 Draw designs by chalks

Bring in some colourful chalks and draw murals and other designs with the help of them.

26 Make fruit sticks

Pierce through different pieces of fruits. Make assorted flavours and try to have taste differences between them, from sweet to sour.

27 Blow balloon

Even if you don't have a party at your place blow a few colourful balloons just for fun.

28 Spin but don't be dizzy

Spin and keep counting on the number of turns that you take without getting dizzy.

29 Play and learn

Play lily pad leaps and keep learning step by step.

30 Movie

Watch a movie and invite their friends over to watch along. Have some popcorn and juices ready for them.

31 Have a puppet play

Build a stage out of cardboard and invite over a few kids and entertain them for a puppet play.

32 Make puppets

Grab old socks attach toy eyes to them draw faces with the help of markers and taa-daa! Your puppet is ready.

33 Make soda

Make homemade soda by using lemons or other citric fruits or just use the artificially flavoured juices and add soda to it.

34 Play old school games

Funskool has always been making fun and exciting games for kids and even for adults. Play with them bring in a twister or guess who or Uno or even.

35 Take pics

Click a few pics with the camera for the memories.

36 Teach them science at home

Do fun DIY experiments with home-based material. Make a volcano with the help of baking soda, add few drops of red and orange colour to make it look almost real.

37 Watch craft videos

Watch learn along with them some of the crafty DIY items.

38 Have a sports day at your place

Arrange a sports day where all of your little one's friends are invited to have a great day. Arrange few not so tough games for them. Be ready with a first aid kit as there might happen a few small injuries. And don't forget to arrange snacks and juice for the kids.

39 Do hula hoop

Teach the kids the trick of the hula hoop, start doing it by yourself and let them notice the procedure.

40 Get them a disposable camera

Get a starter pack of their future interest, get them a disposable camera and let them see the world through the lenses. Let them take few pics by themselves and see what they admire.

41 Blow few bubbles

Make a homemade bubble mix. Go to your garden and make the biggest one as you can or want.

42 Let them play drums

Turn upside down the buckets or any other home items which might seem like a drum get them the drumsticks and let them enjoy their time playing those beats.

44 Sew soft toys

Grab a pair of socks and fill them up with cotton stuffing, or make a home doll and sew them. Add few more attractive items to it, sew clothes for the doll or a teddy bear.

45 Google maps

Introduce them to the world of the internet through Google maps. Show them the neighbourhood on the screen or take them on a trip of nearby jungle or lakeside.

46 Make a tree house

If you have a big tree in your backyard help them build a tree house or if not, just try to make their secret headquarters where they can plan their future gigs. Decorate it with curtains and lampshades.

47 Make a secret language

Make your own secret language and speak it when someone's around.

48 Do Skype

Introduce them to Skype and FaceTime, make them feel a bit futuristic.

49 Get them a colouring book

Get them a colouring book with animal figures and numbered colours.

50 Shower your pet

Ask for their help while you give a bath to your pets.

51 Race in garden

Race with your kids in the garden and let them win, boost their confidence.

52 Run through sprinklers

Run through sprinklers or slide through them, but be sure to keep a plastic slide through on which you can get some liquid baby soap to make it easier to slide.

53 Construct sundial

Make a DIY sundial, put it out in the porch and let them discover science by themselves.

54 Make goggles

Make goggles that will help them watch the eclipse.

55 Read a poem

Read out loud the nursery rhymes or other poems along with them to make them understand the words at a young age.

56 Teach Manners

Teach them table manners and how to greet people and other kids.

57 Practice juggling

Do few juggling tricks which will surely get their attention and teach it to step by step?

58 Teach them cartwheel

Teach them cartwheel or other body stretching exercises like somersaults and handstands.

59 Start your garden

Start with your own vegetable garden, teach them to plant and plough the veggies and fruits.

60 Origami

Learn origami tricks along with them.

62 Name the flowers

Go to a garden and have them learn the flower names.

63 Write a letter to Santa

Be prepared for Christmas, write a letter to Santa and know what they would like to have for this Christmas.

64 Take them for stargazing

Take the kids to stargaze when getting bored at night and learn the constellations.

65 Search for four leaf clover

See if you find a four-leaf clover in the garden, it's a time-consuming activity and will surely tire them to have a good sleep.

66 Help them make a slogan

Help them make a slogan for their own team.

67 Teach them the scout song

Sit beside them and teach them the song that they sing in scout camps.

68 Make a family tree

Merge family photos show them the tree from grandparents to their cousins.

Khan Academy

<https://www.khanacademy.org>

Especially good for maths and computing for all ages but other subjects at Secondary level. Note this uses the U.S. grade system but it's mostly common material.

Futurelearn

<https://www.futurelearn.com>

Free to access 100s of courses, only pay to upgrade if you need a certificate in your name (own account from age 14+ but younger learners can use a parent account).

Seneca

<https://www.senecalearning.com>

Tons of free revision content. Paid access to higher-level material.

Openlearn

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/>

Free taster courses aimed at those considering Open University, but everyone can access it. Adult level, but some e.g. nature and environment courses could well be of interest to young people.

Blockly

<https://blockly.games>

Learn computer programming skills – fun and free.

Scratch

<https://scratch.mit.edu/explore/projects/games/>

Creative computer programming

Ted Ed

<https://ed.ted.com>

All sorts of engaging educational videos

National Geographic Kids

<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/>

Activities and quizzes for younger kids.

Duolingo

<https://www.duolingo.com>

Learn languages for free. Web or app.

Mystery Science

<https://mysteryscience.com>

Free science lessons

The Kids Should See This

<https://thekidsshouldseethis.com>

Wide range of cool educational videos

Crash Course

<https://thecrashcourse.com>

YouTube videos on many subjects

Crash Course Kids

<https://m.youtube.com/user/crashcoursekids>

As above for a younger audience

Crest Awards

<https://www.crestawards.org>

Science awards you can complete from home.

iDEA Awards

<https://idea.org.uk>

Digital enterprise award scheme you can complete online.

Paw Print Badges

<https://www.pawprintbadges.co.uk>

Free challenge packs and other downloads. Many activities can be completed indoors. Badges cost but are optional.

Tinkercad

<https://www.tinkercad.com>

All kinds of making.

Prodigy Maths

<https://www.prodigygame.com>

Is in U.S. grades, but good for UK Primary age.

CBeebies Radio

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/radio>

Listening activities for the younger ones.

Nature Detectives

<https://naturedetectives.woodlandtrust.org.uk>

A lot of these can be done in a garden, or if you can get to a remote forest location!

Oxford Owl for Home

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/>

Lots of free resources for Primary age

Big History Project

<https://www.bighistoryproject.com/home>

Aimed at Secondary age. Multidisciplinary activities.

Geography Games

<https://world-geography-games.com/world.html>

Geography gaming!

Blue Peter Badges

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/joinin/about-blue-peter-badges>

If you have a stamp and a nearby post box.

The Artful Parent

<https://www.facebook.com/artfulparent/>

Good, free art activities

Red Ted Art

<https://www.redtedart.com>

Easy arts and crafts for little ones

The Imagination Tree

<https://theimaginationtree.com>

Creative art and craft activities for the very youngest.

Toy Theater

<https://toytheater.com/>

Educational online games

DK Find Out

<https://www.dkfindout.com/uk>

Activities and quizzes

Twinkl

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk>

This is more for printouts, and usually at a fee, but they are offering a month of free access to parents in the event of school closures.

How to play teacher at home

[Scholastic Learn at Home](#)

The huge children's book and educational publisher offers daily lessons, with four learning experiences, tailored to individual grade levels from pre-K to sixth grade. Topics include nature, robotics, American history, and music, along with e-books and videos to help introduce the topics and keep them entertaining. Free with online registration.

[Khan Academy](#)

This non-profit has been helping students of all ages around the world to learn online, in subjects as far-ranging as AP chemistry, 2nd grade math, art history, and storytelling. Students earn progress points as they move through the detailed lessons in this deep curriculum that has been educating learners for years before the coronavirus crisis. Free with online registration, though donations are encouraged.

[Lesley University's Centre for Mathematics Achievement](#)

Math educators at our own Lesley University have teamed up with the Kentucky Centre of Mathematics to create a vast list of resources that will educate and engage kids from preschool through 5th grade. It's a Google Doc packed with links to activities, online games, printable worksheets, and even educational songs. Obviously, a labour of love by these educators, this is your one-stop list to making your child's school days at home fun and fulfilling. Even better, almost all of the activities are free, with the exception of a couple online games.

[Scratch](#)

Over the past several years, this educational app produced by the Lifelong Kindergarten group at the MIT Media Lab has been using visual cues, basic math, and simple commands to teach kids about coding, and has grown exponentially in popularity in Boston-area schools. Kids can use these elements to create animated movies, but by creating them using increasingly elaborate steps, they're not only having fun being creative but getting an early leap forward into their technological education. Scratch is for kids ages 8 to 16, and its simpler edition, Scratch Jr., is geared to those ages 5 to 7. Free, but donations are encouraged.

Get a jump start on spring cleaning

Cue up the kids' favourite playlist, because there's a whole lot of time for tidying ahead. Here are eight boredom-busting projects that are just as productive for you as they are enjoyable for youngsters.

Craft Supply Testing

Lay all paints and markers out in a large pile along with sheets of paper and have the kiddos doodle and create while also sorting out unusable, dried up markers and paints into a pile to be tossed.

Chore Chart Masterpiece Making

Now that you know which markers are in good shape, have the kids use them to create their own chore charts with your help. This will help you both prioritize what needs to be tackled when and learn what they'd most like to help out with establishing an encouraging system. Pro tip: Nothing maintains good habits quite like sticker rewards.

Skating for Dust Bunnies

Have dusting sheets on hand? Now's the time to use 'em, and have some fun with them too. Put a cloth under each foot and dance and skate all around the house picking up dust along the way. (Don't miss those often-overlooked corners!)

Fridge Scavenger Hunt

There are two things most kids are captivated by: scavenger hunts and anything that the rest of us find, well, squeam-inducing. Have them pull on some rubber gloves, and scour the refrigerator for items that are past their expiration dates. If you haven't done this in a while, they'll be sure to make some fascinating discoveries towards the back of shelves. And you'll free up plenty of room for your big grocery store haul.

Loose Change Treasure Chase

When the kids are ready for another scavenging mission, give them a small bag or jar and send them off on a search around the house for loose change. Tell them they can keep the spoils and they'll be flipping over couch cushions in record time.

Beat the Clock

Pick a room in the house and have the little ones pick up and put back in place any items left on the floor or on chairs or countertops. The

catch: Set a timer and challenge them to tidy the entire room within the allotted period.

Sock Matching Spree

Never have the time to pair up the family's clean socks? Have kids sort through drawers or piles of fresh laundry with the task of reuniting them with their other halves.

Closet Clean-Out

With a new season comes the perfect time to sort through last year's spring and summer clothes. Ask the kids to put on a solo fashion show with the clothes and shoes in their dressers and closets, trying them on and sorting them into piles to keep and donate. If this task was a breeze, have them sort through dress-up clothing and toys next.

Virtual tours

- **Roman fort**

http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/romanfort/en/learning_zone/teachers_resources.html

- **Museums from around the world** - Virtual, online tours

<https://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours>

- **Access to 500 Museums & Art Galleries** - Free, online

<https://artsandculture.google.com/partner?hl=en>

- **How to explore London's top museums at home**

<https://mumsdotravel.com/2020/03/how-to-explore-londons-top-museums-from-home/>

- **Future Learn** - Explore the architecture and history of Rome, walking around a 3D digital model of the ancient city, with this free online course.

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/rome/8/register?return=b5vf4pil>

- **Virtual Tours** - Virtual online tours - including zoos, landmarks in foreign countries, etc.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SvldgTx9djKO6SjyvPDsoGIkgE3iExmi3qh2KRRku_w/preview?fbclid=IwAR2IN47dK-NtjWUJUPchpdxJSS_kvqLn2kTa_Oa3g1WWvEIZGiEEZ1J4KoQ&pru=AAABcQQzAQc*_j_OXW40DQiYeT7z8bagfiA

- **Aquarium** – Georgia aquarium allowing you to tour under the sea

<https://www.narcity.com/things-to-do/us/ga/atlanta/georgia-aquarium-has-live-cameras-that-let-you-explore-from-home>

- **Virtual farm trips** - American dairy association

<http://origin.americandairy.com/news-and-events/dairy-diary/virtual-farm-tours-while-your-stuck-at-home.stml>

- **Virtual field trips** - Created for children, but they look great for adults too!

<http://origin.americandairy.com/news-and-events/dairy-diary/virtual-farm-tours-while-your-stuck-at-home.stml>

Online learning

- **BBC languages** - Learn languages online free

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/>

- **Creative courses** - Free online study

<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-10-free-online-courses-help-jumpstart-creativity>

- **A range of short, free online courses**

<https://www.futurelearn.com/search?q=free+courses>

- **Cambridge University Press** - ALL 700 textbooks are currently available FREE in HTML format

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/what-we-publish/textbooks>

- **Periodic videos** - Science-related YouTube videos

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtESv1e7ntJaLJYKIO1FoYw>

- **Infobase databases and video streaming collections** - Username: **JCS_Distance** and Password: **learning** to access:

- **Modern World History**
- **Ancient and Medieval History**
- **Science Online**
- **Bloom's Literature**
- **World Religions**

<https://jconlineresources.org/free-access-march-april-2020/>

Geography and nature

- **National Geographic**

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/>

- **Tutorful** - Top Geography websites, YouTube videos, and resources

<https://tutorful.co.uk/blog/learning-geography-useful-websites-and-resources-that-will-rock-your-world#BestGeographyYouTubeChannels>

- **Project Noah** – Global site where you can view and share wildlife

<https://tutorful.co.uk/blog/learning-geography-useful-websites-and-resources-that-will-rock-your-world#BestGeographyYouTubeChannels>

- **Online film festival** - Resistance in the Rainforest

https://pulitzercenter.org/event/online-environmental-film-festival-resistance-rainforest?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter&utm_campaign=OnlineEFFFilmFestival

Music

*Check the location/time zones of live-streamed concerts to calculate the UK start time. **Time Zone calculator**

- **Concerts online** - Various concerts held without audiences to stream online for people having to stay at home - **list of live streaming concerts**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/13/arts/music/coronavirus-pandemic-music-streaming.html>

- **Announcements/lists** - of worldwide performances being streamed

<https://www.wkar.org/post/list-live-streaming-concerts#stream/0>

- **Celebrities performing** on social media

<https://www.vulture.com/2020/03/coronavirus-lizzo-celebrities-play-music-under-quarantine.html>

- **Facebook Virtual Choir** - Duet with a choir online

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/560884704783731/?ref=share>

Arts and culture

- **Google Arts and culture** - Learn something new every day!

<https://artsandculture.google.com/>

- **British Museum** - Free videos

<https://www.youtube.com/user/britishmuseum>

- **BBC Radio 4** - The History of the world – podcasts

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00nrtd2/episodes/downloads>

Literature online

- **Gutenberg** - Download free books, e.g. Shakespear, Edgar Allen Poe, Frankenstein, etc.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00nrtd2/episodes/downloads>

- **Solomon Kingsnorth** - Books in PDF, Word and audiobook format - Alice in Wonderland / Wind in the Willows / The Railway Children / The Jungle Book / Peter Pan / Black Beauty

<https://www.researchify.co.uk/audiobooks.html>

- **Read great literature online** - Free Ebooks, poetry, classic literature

<https://readgreatliterature.com/how-to-find-great-literature-online-for-free/>

- **Read Free Literature** - also includes study guides

<https://readgreatliterature.com/how-to-find-great-literature-online-for-free/>

- **Open Library Access** – Free

<https://openlibrary.org/>

- **Audible stories** - Free during this period

<https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>

Entertainment

- **Expeditions App**- Free virtual Reality Augmentation app for all ages, to take virtual trips around the world to hundreds of destinations.

https://edu.google.com/products/vr-ar/expeditions/?modal_active=none

- **Podcasts** - Free to download

<https://tunein.com/podcasts/>

- **Board Game arena** - Play board games online free

<https://en.boardgamearena.com/>