

Activity Ideas

These are quick, easy everyday learning activities for children of all ages to do. Many can be done individually but often are more fun to do with a sibling or other family members.

Name Your Time

Our ancestors identified time with what was happening around them. They looked at changes in the moon, stars, sun, and nature. They named time periods after what they experienced.

For example:

- Coast Salish People's word for early fall means "Time when salmon begin to run." Here's a poster with all the names in the [Coast Salish Seasonal Round](https://www.ingridscience.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/seasonal_round_winter_up_vashon-maury_island_heritage_museum_poster_0.jpg). (https://www.ingridscience.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/seasonal_round_winter_up_vashon-maury_island_heritage_museum_poster_0.jpg)
- The Japanese calendar name for late fall means "Maple leaves and ivy turn yellow."
- The Icelandic calendar name for late summer means "Hay business month." Explore more names in the [Five Ancient and Alternative Calendars](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JC5yKSzXHGO) video. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JC5yKSzXHGO>)

Create your own calendar with names that describe what's happening for you during each month. Draw a circle for a personal seasonal round or rename months on a calendar.

Things you might consider for naming each month:

- What the weather is like
- What plants are doing
- What seasonal foods you eat
- What activities you do
- What special occasions happen

Bonus!

Calendars are based on the moon (lunar), sun (solar) or a combination of both (lunisolar).

- Lunar calendars are based on the time it takes for the moon to go through one cycle. The Islamic calendar is a lunar example.
- Solar calendars are based on the time it takes the earth to go once around the sun. Persian and Gregorian calendars are examples.
- Lunisolar calendars are based on both the sun and moon. Examples include Chinese, Hebrew, and Hindu calendars.

Find out more by watching [Why Are There So Many Different Calendars](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaLsuZRj9wg).

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Signs of Seasons

Go outside and look around:

- What do you see that tells you what season it is?
- Does anything feel different from a month ago?
- Are there any sounds or smells that are new?

Pick something outside to check on over the next week (or longer).

Some suggestions:

- a plant
- the sun (time it rises or sets)
- the weather

Record how it is each day by:

- writing a note
- drawing a sketch
- taking a photo

At the end of the week look back at your records. Have there been any changes?

Did you do these observations last month? If so, what has changed?

Bonus Winter Break Activities

Here's a few sites to check out for activities to do over winter break.

[Holiday gratitude activities](#) from Wide Open School.

[Winter craft, wellness and other activities](#) from Kids at Home.

[Festivals, Holidays and Celebrations Quiz](#) from CBC Kids.

[Winter Holidays Quiz](#) from National Geographic Kids.

How to Wear Your Mask

Here's a poster to help you remember how to wear your mask:

<http://elisegravel.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Mask.jpg>

This is a great poster, but it's missing a step!

When you take off your reusable mask, put it directly into a bag.

(This keeps the germs on your mask in the bag, not spreading to other surfaces.)

You might want to draw this missing step and add it to the poster.

Consequence Course

Set up a course to do something. For example, knock an item into a container, push something over, ring a bell, or anything else you can think of.

Gather materials to make the course:

- paper tubes
- construction paper
- cardboard
- toy car track
- dominos
- blocks
- sticks

Things to travel on your course:

- marbles
- balls
- toy cars
- anything that rolls

And things to put the course together:

- masking tape
- cans or other items to hold things in place
- books or boxes to create different heights

Build your course!

Start at the end and build backwards.

It might take some testing and tweaking to get your course to work.

Inspiration

What you're building is known as a 'Rube Goldberg machine'. Use this term to find video examples online. Or to see some Rube Goldberg cartoons.

Night Lights

All you need for stargazing is a clear night and a spot where you can see wide open sky away from lights. A mat or chair to sit on and a blanket to keep warm might be nice too.

You can stargaze from anywhere, but the more sky you can see the better. Here are some suggestions:

- large open field
- on top of a hill
- by a large body of water
- dark sky park (if there's one near you)

Start by looking for the moon:

- What shape is it?
- Over a month, look every 3-5 nights.
 - Take a photo or draw a picture.
 - How many days does it take for the moon to go through all its phases?
- Did you know full moons have names?

You'll see more stars and planets when the moon is at its darkest (new moon phase). A star chart, night sky map, or stargazing app can help with where to look and what to see.

Some things to look for:

- North Star
- Big Dipper
- Little Dipper
- Orion's Belt
- Milky Way
- Meteor showers
- Venus and other planets
- Satellites and the International Space Station
- Groups of stars that look like something to you.

What did our ancestors see in the night sky?

The constellation names we commonly use come from ancient Middle Eastern, Greek, and Roman cultures. But every culture had their own names and stories for what they saw. Here are some to explore:

- [Why Coyote Howls: A Star Story \(audio story about constellations\)](https://www.lpi.usra.edu/education/skytellers/constellations/preview/)
- [Relearning the Star Stories of Indigenous Peoples](https://www.sciencefriday.com/articles/indigenous-peoples-astronomy/)
- [The Chinese Sky](http://idp.bl.uk/4DCGI/education/astronomy/sky.html)
- [African Mythology](https://www.raritanval.edu/sites/default/files/aa_PDF%20Files/6.x%20Community%20Resource%20s/6.4.5_SD.7.AfricanMythology.pdf)

ABC Me

Create an alphabet about yourself.

For each letter of the alphabet, think of something that's meaningful to you:

- things you like
- activities you do
- places you've been
- people you know
- things you've done

For each letter write a word or sentence. Maybe add a drawing.

For a difficult letter like x, q, or z you could choose a word that contains the letter instead of starting with it.

Create your alphabet as a:

- poster
- booklet
- set of cards (recipe cards work well)
- set of slides (using presentation software)
- poem
- song
- video

If you know someone who's also created an alphabet, get in touch. How are your alphabets similar? In what ways are they different? Did you learn anything new about that person?

Take Ten

Match cards that add up to 10 in this game for one player.

Set Up:

- Remove all face cards and jokers from a deck of cards.
- At the top of a table put down one card face up.
- Below it, put down two cards face up. Both cards overlap the top card (about half horizontally and vertically) but do not touch each other. The three cards make a stepped triangle shape.
- Add a row of three cards below with the same overlap.
- Add a row of four cards below with the same overlap.
- Add a row of five cards below with the same overlap.
- Add a row of six cards below with the same overlap.
- You now have 21 cards face up in a stepped triangle shape.
- Place the remaining cards in a deck to the side.

Goal:

Match two cards whose numbers added together make 10 (e.g. 5 + 5, Ace + 9, 6 + 4).

Only open cards can be matched. (An open card is one not overlapped by another card.)

Once matched, cards are removed from the triangle. To win, remove all the cards from the triangle.

To Play:

- Starting with the last row of open cards, find two cards that make 10.
- Remove the match.
- If no match can be found, take a card from the deck. Match it to an open card in the triangle and remove the card.
- If no match can be made, discard the deck card and draw another. You may only go through the deck once during the game.
- Continue matching open cards from the triangle with each other or a deck card.
- The game ends when no cards are left in the triangle (you win!). Or if all the deck cards have been played and no more matches can be made.

Variations:

- Try subtraction. Match cards with a difference of 2 (e.g. 9 - 7, 5 - 3, 3 - Ace, etc.)
- Try adding to a different number, like 15. To do so match two or three cards.

Two (or more) Players:

Players take turns making a match or taking a card from the deck to make a match. The player's turn continues until no match can be made. At game end, the player with the most matches wins.

or

Each player takes a turn playing the entire triangle on their own. The player with the lowest number of cards left in their triangle wins.

Body Building

Two (or more) people share drawing characters or creatures. Each draw a part of the body without knowing what the other parts look like.

Set up:

- Each person gets a blank piece of paper and a pencil.
- Divide the paper into 4 horizontal sections by folding it in half twice in the same direction.
- Unfold. These are the 4 sections for the drawing.

A part of a body will be drawn on each section. Some lines will extend just below the fold, so the next person knows how to connect to the drawing. Starting at the top, the drawing for each section is:

1. Head and neck. Lines for the neck go past the fold.
2. Top of shoulders to belly button with arms stretched out. Lines for the waist go past the fold.
3. Hips to knees. Lines for legs go past the fold.
4. Lower legs and feet.

Draw:

- Each person draws the head and neck at the top of their page. Don't show others what you're drawing.
- Using the fold line, fold that part behind the rest of the paper to hide it.
- Pass the paper to someone else to draw the next part.
- Continue to draw, hide, pass to someone else until the drawing is complete.

Unfold the drawings and discover who/what you've drawn!

Word Scramble

Make a word scramble for someone (the unscrambler):

- Pick a theme.
- Choose 4-6 words that work with the theme. Choose words appropriate for the person your puzzle is for. For example, keep to 3 or 4 letter words for younger unscramblers.
- Write out each word, with letters in a different order.
- Give the puzzle to the unscrambler.

Solve the puzzle:

- Work out what each word is.
- Guess the theme.

Here's one for you to unscramble!

- koa
- fri
- nepi
- dreca

What's the theme?

Inukshuk

An inukshuk is a landmark made from stacked stones. Inuit people make inukshuks by choosing stones that fit well together. Nothing is added to keep them in place. An inukshuk can be any shape or size.

Try building your own inukshuk:

- Collect a variety of stones.
- Look at each shape to see how they might fit together.
- Start stacking!
- How tall can you make your inukshuk?

If you're interested, learn more about inukshuks at: <https://www.cbc.ca/kidscbc2/the-feed/do-you-know-what-an-inukshuk-is>

Old Song, New Words

It's fun to rewrite the words to a familiar song to say something different. If you write a silly song, it's called a parody—an imitation of something with exaggerations to make people laugh. You could also write sincere words that convey a message. Or tell a story.

Think of what you'd like to write about. Any idea you have is a great place to start. Here are some suggestions if you need them:

- what your stay-at-home life is like
- things you do in the summer
- something you enjoy doing
- something you'd like to change
- a problem
- a story
- a thank you for someone or something

Think of songs you know that might fit with your idea.

Rewrite the lyrics. Try and keep the same rhyme scheme.

Sing your new song to someone!

Measure Up

How tall are you?

(If you're unsure, find out! Measure your height in centimeters.)

Gather a tape measure or metre stick, pencil and paper.

Predict:

- Look around you.
- Choose 3-5 items you think will add up to be the same length as you.
- You can choose to use an item's width, length or height.

Measure:

- Make a quick drawing of each item.
- Measure the item. Label the drawing with its measurement.
- Add all the measurements together.

Compare:

- How close is it to your height?

Extras:

- Choose some new items. Can you get closer to your height the second time?
- Draw a picture of yourself made up of the items.

Pattern Picnic

A game for two or more players.

To start each round of play one player, the Pattern Maker, lists something to bring on a picnic.

The items the Pattern Maker lists are part of a pattern (see below for examples).

Everyone takes a turn listing one thing to take until all players can use the pattern.

How to Play

- Pattern Maker: I'm going on a picnic, and I'm going to take _____ .
- Player: Can I bring _____?
- Pattern Maker: Answers 'yes' if it matches the pattern. Or 'no' if it does not.
- Keep playing until every player can answer using the pattern.

Ideas for Patterns

- Similar types of things:
 - same food group, e.g. carrots, peas, beans, kale
 - same colour, e.g. apple, stop sign, ketchup, roses
 - same shape, e.g. ball, hula hoop, orange, plate
 - same location, e.g. toaster, fork, oven mitt (things in a kitchen)
- Patterns in words:
 - each item starts with the same letter, e.g. drum, dandelion, duck
 - each item has the same number of letters, e.g. cake, bird, book
 - each item starts with the same letter as the last letter of the previous item, e.g. apple, eggs, salmon, naan bread, drum
- Patterns in numbers:
 - increase, e.g. 2 apples, 4 chop sticks, 6 blankets
 - decrease, e.g. 100 apples, 96 chop sticks, 92 blankets
 - prime numbers, e.g. 1 egg, 3 dogs, 5 sweaters, 7 friends, 11 olives

Different Day

Adding a little variety to our daily routine can help keep things interesting.

Think of things you do every day. Often without much thought. Is there a way to do them differently?

Think of something to try. Here are some suggestions:

- Brush your teeth or hair with the hand you don't normally use.
- Sleep with your head at the other end of your bed.
- Take on a role, e.g. be a waiter and serve dinner to your family.
- Try a new type of something: food, music, dance, etc.
- Wake up earlier and go outside. Close your eyes, notice what you hear, smell and sense.

What did you notice about doing something differently?

Will you try something else tomorrow?

Are you square?

Get a tape measure, pencil and paper and find out!

- Lie on the floor with your feet flat against a wall.
- Place an object at the top of your head (you may want someone to help you).
- Get up and measure the distance between the wall and object.
- Write down this measurement for your height.
- Lie on the floor again with both arms stretched in a straight line (like a 'T').
- Lie so the tips of one hand just touch a wall.
- Place an object at the tips of the other hand.
- Get up and measure.
- Write down the measurement.

How do the two measurements compare?

If they're the same, you form a square!

If this interests you, look up Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man.

Art Pair

2 people work together to do a drawing.

Do with someone in your home or with a friend through video chat.

Here's how:

- One person, the picture holder, makes a simple drawing or finds a picture.
- The challenge is for the other person, the artist, to draw the same picture without seeing it.
- The picture holder describes the picture for the artist as the artist draws.
- The picture holder doesn't look at the artist's work until it's finished.
- The artist may ask questions about the picture.

When the artist is done, compare the two pictures.

Then switch roles and do another picture.

Variation:

- Choose a theme for the picture such as a character, animal, plant, person, etc.
- The picture holder tells the artist the theme but does not describe the drawing.
- The artist asks questions to gain information.
- The picture holder can only answer with a 'yes' or 'no' to the artist's questions.

Up and Up and Up

How long would it take you to do 10 sit-ups?

- Make a guess, then try it!
- How long did it take?
- Can you do 40 sit-ups in four times that time?
- Try it out.

How many sit-ups could you do without stopping?

(In 2016 10-year-old Kyleigh Bass did 2110 sit-ups in 90 minutes!)

Come Fly with Me

Make some paper airplanes!

Try folding different sizes and types of paper.

Use different fold designs.

(If you need some ideas, search 'paper airplanes' online.)

Test to see which fly best:

- furthest
- straightest
- highest

Choose an area and see if you can land your plane there:

- book, towel or pillow placed on the floor
- piece of paper with circles or boxes drawn on it
- part of the floor marked with painter's tape

Challenge:

Try folding a stunt plane that flies in a loop.

Word Play

A game for 2 or more players.

Players take turns saying a word related to a chosen theme (anything of interest to the group could be used). When a word is repeated or doesn't meet the theme the player drops out. The last player remaining wins.

Possible themes:

- plants (or a type of plant e.g. trees)
- animals (or a type of animal, e.g. birds)
- countries
- song titles
- anything that all players know about

A simple task can be added between each turn to give players time to think of a word:

- clapping hands 6-10 times
- jumping up and down 5 times
- bouncing or tossing a ball

Variation:

Instead of a theme, use words with a certain number of letters.

After a player drops out, increase the number of letters in the word.

For example: start with 3 letter words, then 4 letter words, then 5 letter words, etc.

The Big Splash

This is an outside activity.

Get a bucket and fill it half-way with water.

Place the bucket away from anything that can't get wet.

Choose 3 (or more) objects you think will make the biggest splash when thrown into the bucket.

What's important for splash making:

- Size?
- Shape?
- Weight?
- What it's made out of?

Predict which will make the biggest splash and try it out!

- Drop each object into the bucket in the same way.
- Note the splash.
- Re-fill your bucket to the same level before testing the next object.

What object made the biggest splash?

Was your prediction correct?

What is it about that object that made it the winner?

Quiz Master

Make a quiz game for your family or friends.

Create question cards:

- Get a piece of paper and fold it in half once vertically and 2 times horizontally.
- Unfold and cut on the fold lines to make cards (or use recipe cards).
- Write your questions on one side and the answer on the other side.
- Make at least 8 cards, more are better.
- You may want to use themes for your questions: music, science, stories, sports, history, entertainment, geography, or whatever interests you.

Play:

Since you know all the answers, you'll be Quiz Master!

- Invite 2 teams to play (in person or online). A team can be one person or a group of people.
- You choose how to deliver the questions:
 - teams take turns answering questions or
 - teams compete to answer the question by making a noise
- If a team answers incorrectly, the other team can try to answer.
- Keep score, one point for each correct answer.
- After all the questions have been asked, announce the winner!

Earth Day! (April 22)

Today we celebrate our planet and think about why it's important to care for it.

What can we do to make things better for the earth and the people, animals and plants that live here?

Make a list of 3 (or more!) things **you** can do to help.

Share your ideas in one of these ways:

- create a poster
- have a conversation with someone
- write a song, poem or speech

Live your ideas:

- make a plan for recording the times you work on something on your list
- after a week or two revisit your plan
 - How many times did you do something on your list?
 - How did it go?
 - Any adjustments to make to the plan?
 - Are there more ideas to add to the list?

More ways to recognize Earth Day:

- do an outdoor activity (see the Resources section of this website for ideas)
- read about Greta Thunberg and her accomplishments

On a Roll

A game for 2 or more players using dice, pencil and paper.

Goal: Be the first to get exactly 100 (don't go over) and then back to exactly 0.

How: Use numbers from dice rolls and basic math operations: add, subtract, multiply and divide.

To start:

- Each player rolls the dice, to get their first total. The player with the largest number goes first.

To play:

- Player rolls the dice. (e.g. 4)
- The player uses their total (e.g. 6) and the new number in a math operation. (e.g. 6×4)
- The player calculates their new total. (e.g. 24)
- Next player's turn.

Play is repeated until a player reaches exactly 100 (don't go over) and then back to exactly 0.

A turn is lost if a player can't use their numbers (would go over 100 or under 0).

Variations:

- Play on your own trying to reduce the number of turns it takes you to complete the task.
- Use 2 dice so you have 3 numbers to play with in your equations.
- Use 3 (or more!) dice so you have more numbers to use in your equations.
- For early math players, limit to addition and subtraction and play to 50 and back.

Earth Art

Create a design outside using only natural materials.

Find a clear area of ground to work on that won't disrupt any plants or animals.

Make your image:

- move the earth with your hands making shapes and patterns
- maybe arrange some found items such as pebbles, twigs and leaves (use what you find already on the ground, avoid picking from growing plants)

When finished, you might consider:

- taking a photo
- visiting a few days later, has it changed?
- visiting after a rainy day, how is it different?

Dictionary Game

A game to play (in person or online) with 3 or more players.

Gather some pencils, paper and a dictionary (book or online).

Each player takes a turn being Word Keeper:

1. The Word Keeper finds a word in the dictionary and reads it out to all players.
2. Each player writes down a definition for the word and passes it to the Word Keeper.
3. The Word Keeper writes down the correct definition.
4. The Word Keeper reads out all the definitions.
5. Each player guesses which they think is the correct definition (you can't choose your own).
6. Players receive a point if they pick the correct definition or if another player chooses their definition.
7. Another player becomes the Word Keeper and the steps are repeated.

A complete round is finished when every player has had a turn being Word Keeper.

The number of rounds to play is up to you!

Writer's Block

Think about what you'd like to write: a descriptive sentence, message to someone, poem? Instead of starting with a blank page, start with a page full of text.

Here's how:

- find a page from a magazine or newspaper with more words than pictures
- get a dark coloured marker
- start at the top of the page and read down until you find your first word
- draw a box around it with the marker
- read on to find your second word
- draw a box around it
- keep reading through the article until you've found and boxed all the words you need
- block out the rest of the text with the marker
- You're done!

What do you think about this approach to writing?

Plant a Seed

Now is the perfect time to think about growing vegetables. Do a bit of research on what to plant, where to grow it and how to care for it.

Where?

If you don't have a garden, many vegetables can be grown in a planter in a sunny location. A planter can be made from many things, e.g. a large yogurt container or milk jug. Just punch a few holes in the bottom to let water drain out.

What?

These are easy to grow. Check how deep their roots go if you're using a planter:

- lettuce
- spinach
- swiss chard
- radishes
- green onions
- herbs

How?

All vegetables need good soil, regular watering and sun. Check the seed package for more information.

My Current Life

Create a poster, infographic, or comic of your daily life at home. Use drawings and words to show your routines.

You could include ways you:

- stay connected with friends and family
- do schoolwork and chores
- keep healthy
- help out
- have fun

When you're finished, discuss your drawing with someone.

Clue to Clue

Make a clue hunt for someone in your home.

Create a series of clues. Each clue gives hints about where the next clue is hidden.

The final clue leads to a small prize (a congratulations message, drawing, or treat).

Here's what to do:

- Decide where to hide each clue and what order to put them in.
- Write each clue. You may want to include drawings.
- Here are different ways to write a clue:
 - Direct: "It's in a cold spot."
 - Voice of the clue: "Come find me, it's cold in here!"
 - Rhyming: "It's dark inside and airtight.
Open the door to give me light!"
- Hide the clues and prize.
- Start the hunt! (Give someone the first clue.)

PS Did you guess the example clues were for a fridge?

Obstacle Course

Make an obstacle course indoors or outdoors.

Things you might include:

- objects to move around
- surfaces to step on to avoid the ground
- different ways of moving through different parts of the course
 - hands and knees
 - hopping
 - somersaulting
 - balancing
- a map to show how to go through the course

Once the course is built, you might:

- share it with a family member
- go through it in different ways, maybe backwards
- act as a character (superhero, animal, ?) when going through it

How many folds?

How many times can you fold a piece of paper in half?

- Make a guess.
- Fold a piece of paper in half as many times as you can.
- How close was your guess?
- Could you make more folds if the paper was thinner? Larger?
- Try it and see.

How many jumping jacks can you do?

Set a timer for one minute and start jumping!

- How many did you do?
(Kapil Kumar from India holds the world record of 103!)
- Try again, can you improve your score?
- If you practice every day, will you get faster?

Thank You Art

Gather some materials:

- different coloured paper
- old magazines, newspapers or flyers
- anything else you think might work
- glue and scissors
- markers, crayons and maybe some paint

Think of someone who's done something nice for you or others.

Make a drawing, collage or painting to show how you feel about what they did.

Add some words if you'd like to.

If you can't give the finished art to them in person, maybe take a photo to send to them.

The Alphabet Game

Everyone takes a turn completing this phrase, working through the alphabet:

My name is _____, my friend is _____, and we make/sell/build/grow _____.

For _____, use words that start with the same letter, for example:

Player 1: My name is Alastair, my friend is Aamir, and we grow apples.

Player 2: My name is Beth, my friend is Brandon, and we make bannock.

Player 3: My name is Carly, my friend is Cass, and we sell cinnamon buns.

What does 2 metres look like?

Get a tape measure or ruler and measure out 2 metres on the floor.

- Mark the distance with tape or placed objects.

Things you might want to try. (Guess first, then do it!)

- How many steps does it take to go 2 metres?
- How many hops?
- If someone stands at either end can you reach each other?
How much closer do you have to move to touch?
- Is 2 metres a good amount of space for physical distancing*?

*Physical distancing is the amount of space we need to keep between us and others when we're outside our home.