

# Brain Breaks and Boosts for Older Kids and Teens

For busy families: Add fun and learning to your day with these easy, screen-free activities—and subtract stress and boredom! Check off the activities as you go to complete them all.

## PLAY GAMES

### Dictionary

Take turns choosing weird words from the dictionary. Have everyone write a pretend definition and try to guess the real one.

### Cat Burglar

Use tape to create an obstacle course around your home. Pretend to be cat burglars evading the infrared alarm triggers.

### Five Best

Ask each other to name the five best somethings. Could be sandwiches, cities, or sock lengths. The sky's the limit!

### Break the Record

Come up with different weird records to break. See who can balance the most cans on their head. Longest burp? Most digits of pi memorized?

### 1,2,3 Game

Count to three and each say a word. Count again, and say another word that connects the two. Keep going until you say the same word.

## GET ACTIVE

### Plank High Fives

Grab a family member and each get in plank position on your elbows. Balance on one forearm, and high-five your partner five times. Then switch sides.

### Mop the Floor

Help out with household chores, like mopping or vacuuming, for a surprisingly effective workout. Make it fun by listening to your favorite music.

### At-Home Olympics

Design and create a series of Olympic events in your home. Compete with your family, friends, or just yourself.

### Sports or Something Like It

Shoot some hoops, kick a ball around, play catch, or just toss a ball as high as you can and try to catch it. The possibilities are endless!

### **Jack of All Jumps**

See if you can do 100 jumping jacks in a row by starting with 10 and adding 10 more each day.

## **CONNECT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY**

### **Write a Thank You Note**

Think about a kind gesture someone did for you recently. Write them a thank note to let them know how much you appreciated it.

### **Snail Mail**

Pick a friend or family member and write them a letter the old-fashioned way. Use a pen, paper, envelope, stamp, and your brain—no computer! Make sure to ask them to write back before you drop your letter in the mailbox.

### **Walk and Talk**

Take a brisk stroll with a family member or friend.

### **Call an Elder**

Call a grandparent, a neighbor, or a friend of the family to check in on them and make their day. Maybe tell them a joke!

### **Learn a New Card Game**

Grab a deck of cards, and ask a family member what games they like to play. If they don't know any, look up some online. Choose one that looks fun, go over the rules, and deal!

## **DREAM AND CREATE**

### **Observe Your World**

Look out the window at everything you can see. Focus carefully on one or two specific things. Do you notice anything you didn't before?

### **Start a Journal**

Grab a notebook and set aside some time to jot down what you did, what you're thinking about, and how you're feeling. If that feels good, keep it up.

### **Family Fridge Quotables**

Each week have a family member curate a collage of quotes—from family, friends, or famous people—on your fridge. You can use sticky notes or get creative with your own cutout shapes.

### **Create a Cardboard Arcade Game**

Grab some cardboard and any art supplies you have to build a playable game for your family. Think Skee-Ball made out of boxes!

### **Letter to Future Self**

Write a letter to the person you'll be in five or 10 years. Tell them what life is like right now. Keep it somewhere safe.

## HELP OUT

- Make Lunch**  
Ask an adult if you can make lunch for them. Try to make it healthy and delicious. Focus on presentation, too.
- Where's the Waiter?**  
Play server for the evening meal. Dress up, carry a white towel, refill water glasses, and clear the plates when everyone's done.
- Make a Business Call**  
The next time someone in your house needs information about something, call and ask instead of searching online. Does a certain grocery store deliver? Do they have toilet paper in stock?

- Change Sheets**  
Take the sheets off all the beds and put on fresh ones. Bonus points if you wash the dirty sheets, too!
- Get Organized**  
Choose an area or an object you use every day—like your bedside table, your desk, or your bag—and straighten it up. Consider donating anything you haven't used in a while.

## RELAX AND REFLECT

- Five Deep Breaths**  
Sit somewhere quiet and breathe in for a count of four. Hold the breath for four seconds, then let it out for a count of eight. Repeat.
- Top Secret Learning**  
Think about something that you know has tons of learning value but may not typically be considered educational. Share your experiences with a family member or teacher.
- Spa Day**  
Take some time for self-care. Shower or take a bath. Scrub your feet. Clip your nails. Clean out your ears.
- Be Grateful**  
Think of three things you're grateful for. To yourself or someone else, describe exactly why you appreciate these things.
- Media Matters**  
Write down your favorite things to watch, read, or listen to. Why do you like each of them? Do they all share a common theme?

# ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS

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