

Simple Kids Activities & Routines

Use school/childcare as the framework and honor what had been your child's routine:

- When are they used to having breakfast? Snack? Lunch?
- When is recess?
- Break the day into small chunks much like school does with subjects.
- If your child has assigned schoolwork, do they work best in the morning or afternoon?

Dedicate time for play

Child-led play is *huge* for kids. When a child is imagining, creating, building or inventing, they are doing some serious learning.

In your new daily schedule, have a few 15- to 30-minute blocks (more or less time depending on your child's age and play development) of dedicated child-led play. The more a child plays, the more they *learn* to play.

A few tips for effective playtime:

- **Weed out the unused and broken toys:** If it's hard to find the good toys, it's hard to find the good play.
- **Move the "open-ended toys" to the front:** Toys with lights and batteries that sing, and talk won't hook your child into play as well as simple toys (think toys from your childhood – blocks, cars, dolls, kitchens...).

Schedule in some easy indoor activities

As you plan your schedule, think of places where an activity might be helpful to transition from one-time block to the next, like after snack time or before dinner.

- **Box Road** – Flatten out a box and draw a road in marker. Add blocks, trucks and other toys for kids to build a city.
- **Toy-Washing Bin** – Let your kids wash their plastic toys. Add tear-free bubbles, sponges, towels and other supplies.
- **Trash Art** – Find some recycled materials and let your kids paint them. Kids love painting random objects and making beautiful creations from them.
- **Building**- Build a fort with blankets, pillows, and anything that can help those creative live minds explore some imaginative play. Or evening building small crafts with recyclable items such as wooden sticks, straws, toothpicks, etc.
- **Holiday Crafts**- think of any upcoming holidays that you would like for you and your child to get a head start on.

- **Sticky Match-Up** – Draw shapes, letters, numbers, words or math problems on sticky notes and hide them around the house for your child to find. Then have the child match them up on a “key” that hangs on the wall.

Build in reading

Put in reading blocks. Based on the age of your child, you can do anything between 5-15-minute blocks of reading either with your child, independently, or as a family.

Outside Time

If you have a backyard, let the kids run around there. Outdoor time has lots of benefits for kids – and a key one for you: If they burn off steam, they may be more tired and willing to go to sleep at night.

Make a screen time routine

If you choose to have screens available to your kids while school is closed, use them wisely, as a parenting tool.

To keep your kids from “over-indulging” on screens:

- **Make screen time predictable:** have a set time in the schedule so children know when to expect screen time (like while you make breakfast or before nap time) and for how long.
- **Turn it off:** Follow through when the scheduled time for screens is over, and don’t leave TV on as background noise. If the house feels too quiet, turn on some music instead.

References:

<https://artfulparent.com/simple-kids-activities/>

<https://time.com/5803373/coronavirus-kids-at-home-activities/>

Resources:

<https://www.zerotothree.org/>

<https://www.todayparent.com/toddler/20-fun-indoor-games/>

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/>