



Suggested Summer Educational Growth Opportunities for Preschool

You might be in search of ways to keep your kids busy this summer as many of you are still working from home and normal summer activities might be on hold due to our social distancing orders. Here are some ideas to help.

Educational Ideas

Math- Download the Khan Academy Kids App on your phone or tablet. Work on counting, shapes, addition, and subtraction.

Reading- Read 20 minutes a day. If you are running out of books you can continue to use <https://www.getepic.com/>. If you don't remember your login info please let me know. You can also check to see if your local library is doing curbside pickup.

Language Arts- Play letter games- feel free to use any off of the lesson plans I sent home over the past few weeks or look ideas up on Pinterest. Leap Frog Letter Factory is a great resource to help them with their letter sounds. Have them write their name once a day and see how much it changes from the first day to the last day of summer.

Let Them Be Bored

Step one in surviving summer as a parent is to let your kids be bored. As kids these days experience ever more scheduled lives, they are left less and less often to their own devices. So, of course, as soon as you let them be, they're bored because they need to learn to play on their own and be creative. In fact, experts say boredom is essential for learning creativity! Number one on your list is also the easiest option: give your kids down time. Provide them with space and time to come up with things to do, and don't immediately fill up their schedules when boredom inevitably strikes. It doesn't get much cheaper than that!

Institute a Chore Chart

You might as well keep your kids busy and get something out of it. If you don't already, now is the time to teach them responsibility with a chore chart. This could include unpaid daily chores like making their beds, feeding the family pet, etc. Or you could step up your game a notch with commission-based paid chores. Just make a list or chart of chores kids can get paid for, including the chores' monetary value. When kids check a chore off the list to your satisfaction, they get paid. Sure, you've got to invest some money in this one. But it's a great way to teach kids responsibility and help them start managing their own money.

Become a Junior Ranger Online

Learn about national parks from the comfort of your own home, and encourage your child to complete online activities and become a Web Ranger. Materials are grouped by age and include cool awards and a membership card.

Create a Craft Station

Got creative kids? Consolidate all of your crafting materials into one place, and let them go to town. Warning: this will get messy! You don't have to go buy a bunch of brand-name craft kits, either. Start collecting things like used printer paper, old crayons, toilet paper rolls, and nature items. Keep these, along with basic supplies like craft paper, scissors, and glue, in the craft area. Let kids go to town on their own, or use social media sites like Pinterest for inspiration on projects they can create.

30 Drawing Prompts for Kids to Work on This Summer

1. Today I feel...
2. One thing I like about myself is...
3. One thing I want to be better at is...
4. I wish...
5. Last night I dreamt...
6. I like to make/build...because...
7. I wonder...
8. Friends are...
9. Draw your brother/sister...
10. To me, family means...
11. Something I look for in a friend is...
12. My favorite color is...these items are my favorite color...
13. A new food I want to try is...
14. Draw your family.
15. Think of a happy memory and draw it.
16. Draw your dad...
17. Draw your mom...
18. Something I like about my brother/sister is...
19. The color _____ makes me think of...
20. If I could travel anywhere in the universe (cost and safety aside), I would go to...
21. One of my favorite summer activities is...
22. What do you like to do together with your family?
23. When I feel sad, something that helps me feel better is...
24. I would like to learn about...
25. My favorite book to read is...
26. Draw yourself.
27. My school looks like...
28. An outdoor activity I really enjoy...
29. If I was a teacher, I would...
30. If I become a mom/dad one day, I will...

Plant a Garden

Get kids out of the house and into a healthy pastime with gardening. Even small kids can help plant corn if you've got room, as it's easy to grow in many U.S. climates. Or talk to your local gardening center about fruits, vegetables, or flowers that are particularly easy to grow in your area. Be sure to give the kids some autonomy over this project, to really let them get involved. They should be able to help choose the plants and the layout. But they should also be responsible for weeding, watering, and other garden maintenance. This is a great skill building activity that can also keep kids busy all summer long.

Create an Activity Bucket

Often times, there's plenty to do around your house, but the kids aren't great at sussing out the next best idea. Write down potential activities on popsicle sticks, and stick them in a jar or bucket. Let the kids choose one activity each day, and make it happen. This could include things like making homemade ice cream, building a bicycle ramp in the back yard, creating a sprinkler out of an old two liter bottle, or building a fort in the living room. Try to come up with ideas using only materials you've got on hand, especially if they're things the kids can do largely unsupervised.

Pick up some Board Games

Board games for kids have come a long way since Candy Land. While the old games are still great, many new games teach skills like resource management, teamwork, and basic strategy skills. You'll need to invest some money up front in these board games, but you can get most kids' games for \$20 or less. And, if your kids end up loving them, it's an investment you won't regret!

Amazon and Target are great places to get kids games. Target often has 10% or 20% off.

Too Many Monkeys

Zingo

Thing Two and Thing One Whirly Fun

Guess Who

HiHo Cheery-O!

Race to the Treasure

Snail's Pace Race

River, Roads, and Rails

Busy, Busy Airport

Richard Scarry's Busytown

Jenga

Count Your Chickens

Let's Feed the Very Hungry Caterpillar

Qwirkle

Chickapig

Shelby's Snack Shack Game

Frida's Fruit Fiesta

Start a Small Business

If you want to keep your kids really busy this summer, get them thinking about how to earn, save, and invest money. Young kids can plan for a garage sale late in the summer, spending the summer sorting through clothes and toys they no longer need. Bigger kids can mow lawns or pull weeds for the neighbors, or act as mother's helpers, taking care of little kids while mom is still around.

Backyard Camping

You don't need to hit up the woods to go camping. If you have a tent, set it up in the backyard and sleep outdoors with your kids. You can also let them play in the tent during the day, as long as you don't care about its condition when the day is over. They could turn the tent into a fort, a spaceship, or anything else they imagine.

Marble Ramps

You know those floating noodles most kids take to the pool? Pick up a few at the dollar store and carefully cut them in half. You now have two "tracks" that make perfect ramps for racing marbles.

Paint Tape Racetrack

If you have a roll of paint tape, let your kids make a racetrack (inside or outside) for their cars and other vehicles. They can create any number of patterns and loops with the tape to make their racetrack more intricate, and if you have colored paint tape, that makes it even better. If you don't, kids can draw lane lines on plain paint tape with a marker.

Balloon Ping Pong

This is a wonderful activity for indoors or outdoors because your kids can move around and, thanks to the balloon, it's unlikely they'll break anything.

To play balloon ping pong, all you need are two paper plates, two Popsicle sticks, some duct tape, and a balloon. Make two paddles by taping the Popsicle sticks to the back of the paper plates. Blow up the balloon and then let your kids bat it back and forth. You can create your own rules to make the game more fun, like seeing how many different ways your kids can hit the balloon (e.g., underhand, backward, with one eye closed).

Create Stories and Plays

Creating stories is fun, but don't just count on paper and pens. Talk about characters, dialogue, and action, and act out their story, and record it. My kids loved to put on circus skits or recreate their favorite Bible stories or fairy tales.

Downtime

Little brains need time to relax and recharge, too. Make sure you plan some time into your day for rest. Neither one of my kids will nap for me anymore, but we still have a daily quiet time. They don't have to sleep, but their feet need to be off the floor. They can either look at books or listen to relaxing music.

Do Some Good

You might not have time to volunteer with your kids as often as you'd like, especially if you have very young children. However, that doesn't mean your kids can't learn the value and reward of helping others. There are plenty of ways to do good, both at home and outside the house:

- Make placemats to donate to [Meals on Wheels](#).
- Make a no-sew fleece blanket for [Project Linus](#), a nonprofit that donates homemade blankets to children in need.
- Host a lemonade stand and donate the proceeds to a charity your kids like.
- Grow extra fruit and vegetables in your garden to donate to your local food bank.
- Encourage your children to go through their stuffed animals and choose some to donate to [Stuffed Animals for Emergencies](#). This nonprofit collects stuffed toys that police officers and firefighters can give to children during an emergency or traumatic situation.
- Take your kids to walk dogs at your local animal shelter.
- Bring some plastic gloves and garbage bags to your local park or playground and pick up trash.
- Collect the board games, blankets, and toys your children no longer use and bring them to your local homeless shelter.
- Go through your sports equipment (or organize a drive in your community) to collect used equipment and donate it to [Leveling the Playing Field](#), a nonprofit that provides used equipment to underserved communities and at-risk youth.

Make a Bucket List



Get a large piece of butcher paper or poster board and sit with your family around the table. Come up with some fun things each person would like to do over the summer and write them down on your bucket list. After you are done creating the list, hang it up where you can see it every day. Once or twice a week you can pick something off the list to do and then cross it off. See if you can complete everything. Listed are some ideas to get you started.

Fly a kite.

Collect summer wildflowers and press them in a book.

Drag out an old blanket and read books outside.

Write a letter to a relative or friend.

Go on an early morning nature walk.

Let your kids cook dinner.

Go stargazing.

Put up a tree swing.

Do a family car wash

Create a 4th of July banner to decorate the backyard or house for Independence Day.

Go on a shape hunt around the neighborhood.

Plan a picnic lunch once a week.

Have a dance party in your living room!

Create your own puppets.

Collect rocks – you can also paint them and create a rock garden!

Go cloud watching.

Make your own popsicles.

Hide things in the sandbox and search for the treasure.

Dress up and host a fashion show!

Have a fun tea party.

Get a kiddie pool for the backyard.

Feed ducks at a pond/lake.

Make an ice sensory bin.

Raise caterpillars into butterflies.

Watch fireworks.

Have a water fight.

Make a piñata.

Go on a hike.

Have a cookout.

Attend an online VBS (vacation bible school)