



SCHOOL'S OUT!

Brain-Building Activities for Out-of-School Time

Summertime, school breaks, extended child care closures... when school is out and children are home, how can you keep them learning and having fun?

MAKE A PLAN

It can be helpful to have a loose plan for out-of-school time. Your plan might include a daily schedule or how many days per week you'd like to do a special activity. Consider these tips:

Use what you know about your child to map out your days or weeks. Do they need regular social interaction or rest time each day? Are they an early riser or do they like to sleep in? Do they enjoy running errands or lose interest quickly?

Prioritize getting outside as often as possible. Time in nature can help children build confidence, creativity, and problem-solving skills.

Include plenty of time for unstructured play when children can come up with their own fun using their imagination.

It's ok to keep it simple. The best memories often involve simple things, like jumping in puddles, blowing bubbles with friends, or enjoying freeze pops on the front stoop.

Set aside time each day to read books, together or solo.



BE FLEXIBLE

While having some structure to your days can be very helpful for many children and adults, flexibility is important. Flexibility can look like deciding to pack up and go someplace fun at the last minute, or it could mean staying home and resting instead of doing an activity you had planned. Out-of-school time should be about spending time together and creating space for your child to learn and have fun. All these things can be done at home or out and about, as long as you're together.



CREATE A LIST OF ACTIVITY IDEAS

A good variety of activities can help you fill a week or a whole summer. Some activities might be in your regular rotation, while others may be special occasions only.

Think of nearby activities your child enjoys (ex. swimming, splash parks, playgrounds, the zoo, museums, hiking trails, sports games).

Visit local places your child has never been to before. Talk about how the place helps the community and come up with questions to ask people that work there. Check out local factories, unique shops, farms, community gardens, the fire station, the post office, etc.

Let your child try a new skill that you or another trusted person could teach them, like playing a musical instrument, fishing, knitting, or watercolor painting.

Volunteer in your community or have a service day. Sort canned goods at a food pantry, bake cookies for neighbors, or dust for an elderly friend.

Come up with rainy day activities for when the weather doesn't allow you to get outside. Have a board/card game day, set up an indoor obstacle course, or build an indoor blanket fort.



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TIP

4-5
YEARS

Today's To-Do

Talk back and forth with your child about the plans for the day. Maybe you can chat about what you're having for breakfast.

- **Where** are they going for the day?
- **What** might you **do together**?
- Or what are you **both** excited to do today?

Brainy Background™

There is no better way to learn how to plan than practicing. Giving your child a chance to think about the day ahead helps them use what they already know in new and flexible ways.

Visit [WeAreBrainBuilders.org](https://www.WeAreBrainBuilders.org) for more brain-building tips to make the most of everyday moments with your child.