

Beat the boredom, keep minds active

Summer is officially here and it is time for your children to rest after the hectic, structured pace of the school year.

But it is important to keep their bodies and their minds stimulated.

What can you do to keep your kids busy, yet allow them to enjoy the summer months?

Maybe teach your children some of the outdoor games you enjoyed as a child. The goal is to have fun and to avoid hours in front of the TV or computer. Your entire family will benefit as you laugh together and get in some physical activity.

The following ideas are just a few ways to beat summer boredom:

SPONGE TOSS

Soak sponges and have children toss them into buckets placed at various distances.

CHARADES

What am I? Write down various animals that are familiar to your children. Place the names into a can or bag. Have your children pick one and act it out. Everyone else tries to guess the animal. If your children are too young to read, you could use animal pictures.

RED LIGHT/GREEN LIGHT

One person is chosen to be the leader. The other children and adults stand in a line about 30 feet away from the leader. The leader yells out green light and turns away from the group. The others try to sneak their way toward the leader. When the leader yells red light, he turns to face the others. If the leader catches anyone moving ahead, that person returns to the starting line. The first person to the leader becomes the new leader.

PORT AND STARBOARD

The family members imagine themselves on a ship. The Captain gives out orders to his mates on board. The mates respond with physical actions as follows:

- Captains' coming—salute
- Stand at ease—hands behind back
- All hands on deck—kneeling position
- Hit the deck—lying flat on the floor
- Submarine—lying on back one leg in the air
- Port—run to the left side
- Starboard—run to the right side
- Dinner—one person is kneeling to form a table and another person kneels to form a chair, and the third person sits on the chair

NEWSPAPER RACES

Two newspaper sheets are given to each

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PARENTING POINTS

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player. Each player must race to a designated spot and back again stepping only on her newspapers. She steps on one, lays the other in front of her, steps on it, and then lays the first one ahead of her, etc.

FROZEN TAG

Players scatter in a designated area in the yard or park. One or two players are IT. When the others are touched by IT, they freeze. A frozen person may become unfrozen if another player crawls through their legs. The object is to try to unfreeze people as fast as they are frozen. If someone is frozen three times, they then become an IT.

The following examples are ways to exercise one of the most important parts of the body—the brain.

WHAT'S MISSING

Have a tray with a number of different objects (pens, crayons, small toys, etc.). Have the children study it for 30 seconds, then cover it up and remove one article. Rearrange the objects, and show the children again. The first child to guess what is missing gets to organize the tray for the next time.

WHO AM I?

Each person has pinned on his or her back a picture or name of a famous person. By asking the other people yes or no, he or she must figure out who is on his or her back.

WHAT IS IT?

Put a variety of fruits and vegetable into bags. Put the bags out and write a number on each bag. Have your child feel inside each bag, one at a time. They could name, draw a picture, or write the name of the fruit or veggie they think is inside the bag. Older children could also write down words that describe what they feel.

Don't forget some of the obvious, but sometimes forgotten choices for summer activities. Dig out the Frisbees, skates, bikes, and hula hoops. Teach your children how to play hopscotch. On hot days, it's more fun to run when it's through a nice, cold sprinkler.

Summer offers endless opportunities for your family to get the required amount of exercise for good health. Adults need at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week.

Ideally children need to be physically active at least 60 minutes or more each day.

Plan activities to make sure your kids are up and moving each and every day.