

## Outside Activities for taming summer boredom

1. **Do a night-time safari of your garden.** Let the kids stay up late as a treat and as the light begins to fade head out into the garden armed with torches and binoculars (real or homemade). Investigate any noises you hear whether it be birds putting themselves to sleep or mysterious gurgling coming from the down pipes as the dishwasher does its final rinse. Finish up by lying on a rug and looking at the stars.

2. **Make sailboats and race them.** Put water in a plastic kid's pool and race your handmade sailboats. Use only the natural wind power to make them go and see who makes it to the finish line first!

3. **Go on a playground crawl in your town.** Treat it like a mini Olympics and see if the children can beat their personal best at making it across the monkey bars, or conquering the big kids' slide. Pack morning tea for the first playground you visit and follow it up with lunch at another.

4. **Make a swing for the backyard.** Rope, old tyre, tree. Simple as that.

5. **Jump rope.** This is fun for one child or a group of children. Learn a few songs and games to play for group jump roping, and try to see how many jumps each person can make before making a mistake.

6. **Puddle jumping.** Nothing is more fun than getting to play outside when it's raining. Summer rainstorms don't always mean you have to head inside- put on bathing suits and rain boots and stomp in the puddles!

7. **Have your own drive-in movie.** On a clear, dry night, bring the television set outdoors and let the kids watch a movie on blankets under the stars. For added fun, invite the neighbourhood kids to drive-in on their bicycles to enjoy the movie, too. Don't forget the popcorn!

8. **Plant a container garden.** Many vegetables and herbs can be grown indoors or out inside containers. Let your children pick some varieties to grow and tend to them throughout the summer. It may even convince them to eat a vegetable if they know they grew it!

9. **Target squirting.** Set plastic cups on the top of a fence, deck railing, or balanced on kids heads and let other children squirt them off with water guns or plastic water bottles. You can create points by writing on the plastic cups and keep score or just see who's the fastest to knock over the cups.

10. **Car wash.** Arm your kids with the hose, a bucket, soap and some sponges and set them to work washing the family car (and each other). You could let them hang a sign around town advertising their car wash service, as well.

11. **Dirt restaurant.** Kids love to play restaurant, and who doesn't love to play in the dirt? Send the kids outside with plastic cups and plastic spoons, a few dollar store dishes and see what kind of gourmet meals they come up with. They can make salads from leaves and flower petals, mud pies, and tree bark chicken. The kids can take turns making meals, being waiters and restaurant patrons.

12. **Water balloons.** An always fun, but often forgotten activity, water balloons are easy to make and cheap! Fill some balloons with water and play water balloon toss- start kids standing close together and each time the balloon is caught without breaking everyone takes a step back!

13. **Go for a hike, walk or bike ride.** Pack a picnic lunch and plenty of fluids and enjoy some exercise. Kit yourselves out with backpacks and boots so you really feel like explorers. Keep the kids enthused by pointing out the flora and fauna (get them to make up amusing names if you can't put your finger on the correct one) and if you're planning on walking back the same way, build little towers of stones or sticks to chart your progress on the return trip.



14. **Decorate everyone's bikes.** Use streamers, tinsel left over from Christmas, flags and flowers. Pretend your family is a team in a grand cycle race like the Tour de France and ride a lap of honour around the neighbourhood.
15. **Have a sand writing competition at the beach.** Get everyone to make their mark by writing their names on the sand using a stick (the prize goes to the person who writes their name the biggest, or whose name lasts the longest as the tide comes in).
16. **Oversized painting.** Tape several large sheets of paper together on the backside, and flip them over on the lawn. Fill a few containers with different colours of finger paints, and give the kids a box of strange items to make their painting with. Try: spaghetti strainer, a balloon, a mop head, sponges, rain boots and any other objects you see lying around!
17. **Bubbles.** Just about every kid enjoys bubbles! Create your own bubble solution with dishwashing liquid, water, and a teaspoon of sugar. Pour into a shallow container with a wide open mouth and then use odd objects to create your bubbles. String, rubber bands, the spaghetti strainer, straws, slotted spoons and anything else you can think of make some fun bubbles!
18. **Bubble art.** When the kids tired of making bubbles, add a few drops of food colouring to the bubble solution and have them blow bubbles that pop onto white paper. The result will be an artistic masterpiece made from the rainbow coloured bubbles!
19. **Sand art.** Use food colouring to colour sand in zip lock bags. Pour the sand on paper plates to dry before using. Once dry, glue to paper to make cards and art; or fill plastic containers with your sand art creations.
20. **Frozen picnic.** Cool down with watermelon, grapes and even toffee pops. Delicious after an hour on ice.
21. **Make a sandbox.** For whatever reason, kids like playing in the dirt! You can make an inexpensive sandbox by filling a kid size plastic pool with clean dirt you dig up from your yard, or from sand you purchase from the store. Fill with plastic trucks and plastic cups and let the kids go to town.
22. **Sidewalk Chalk.** Drawing on the ground is always fun. You can let the kids make pictures or draw a whole town, or use it to make hopscotch and other games to play on the sidewalk.
23. **Create race car track.** If you have miniature cars (hot wheels and others), it can be tons of fun to create elaborate race tracks in the dirt, complete with jumps, water pits and crash areas.
24. **Water games.** You can let the kids run through the sprinklers, wade in a kiddie pool, spray each other with the hose, or play with a bucket full of water and plastic cups. They'll be creative with it; or they'll just get each other wet but either way they'll have fun doing it.
25. **Treat the birds in your garden.** Make a simple bird feeder by rolling a pinecone in peanut butter, then in bird seed. Hang it from a tree and sit back and watch the birds feast around your handiwork.
26. **Have a bug race.** Encourage everyone to find a caterpillar, ant or worm (whatever your garden offers up in the way of wildlife) and see whose bug makes it first from one leaf to the next.
27. **Organise a bike parade.** Gather as many neighbourhood kids as you can, and have everyone decorate their bikes like parade floats. Parade around the driveways or through a bike path.
28. **Have a campout.** You don't have to actually go anywhere to go "camping". Pitch a tent in the backyard.
29. **Scavenger Hunt.** Create a list of 20 or more things that can be found naturally outside in your area, things like pinecones, specific flowers, nuts, etc. Send the kids on a scavenger hunt to try and collect one of each item on the list. This can be done as a group effort, or each child can compete with the other to see who can find the most objects, the fastest.
30. **Rehearse a special performance.** Make tickets so that the neighbours, or Grandma and Grandpa can come over and be entertained. Let the age and interests of your kids determine what they do – let them take the lead. The budding ballerina can dress up in her tutu and twirl across the stage, while a red nose and face paint turns the family practical joker into a clown. A group of kids might want to perform their own version of a classic fairy tale or favourite family story book. Just make sure there's plenty of hearty applause at the end of the performance!