

It is very challenging to balance learning and living at home during such a stressful time. One of the most important things families can do is stick to a routine. Even with small children, planning just a few activities can lend structure to your day. The activities outlined below can easily be incorporated into a family routine to encourage learning and exploration.

Guidance on at-home learning:

Many organizations and non-profits have been compiling activities and resources for families and offer general guidance of learning at home:

- You can find guidance from the **American Academy of Pediatrics** here: <https://healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/Working-and-Learning-from-Home-During-the-COVID-19-Outbreak.aspx>.
- **PBS Kids** has a daily newsletter with programming and activities for families: <https://www.pbs.org/parents/pbskidsdaily?source=email>.
- Finally, **Common Sense Media** has a resource page for quality media for at-home learning: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/resources-for-families-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>. Including **Wide Open School** (<https://wideopenschool.org/>) which highlights quality online learning and teachers who have tips on teaching and learning at home. Many resources can be used offline and they also offer bilingual and English-language learner activities.

Arts and Crafts:

- Hundreds of blogs have compiled lists of homemade and accessible arts and crafts for kids of all ages. Here are some examples of ideas for sensory play and crafts for multiple age groups (<https://www.theempowerededucatoronline.com/learning-activities/>) and ideas for arts and crafts projects by age group (<https://www.whatdowedoallday.com/indoor-activities-for-kids/>). Make a collage with your toddler or string art with your preschooler! Have your kids entertain you with a homemade puppet show!
- With some yarn and cardboard, kids of all ages can **weave on a loom**: <https://www.instructables.com/id/how-to-weave-on-a-cardboard-loom/>
- Many illustrators are leading activities online. A sampling:
 - Illustrator Wendy MacNaughton has been hosting **daily drawing lessons** which are compiled here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMVzRQ6hIb2YdSBUIUjSVKg>. Learn how to draw a dog, a tree, a cat with something on its head, and magic beans!
 - Draw along with children's illustrator Mo Willems and his **Lunchtime Doodles**. All 15 episodes and corresponding downloadable activities are available here: <https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/mo-willems/>

Reading and Storytime:

- Keep up your own **reading routine** at home! Many activities on this list can be combined with reading books about the same topic to enhance kid's experience.
- Have grandparents or other family members **read stories to kids over video chat**.
- Many libraries offer audiobooks or eBooks for check-out. Visit your **local library** website for more information.

- In our region, the **Sacramento Public Library** has Virtual Storytime for young children: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJquzivMwi0&list=PLwtrWI_IBMJu4la3WNCY6jC3AzfE_tPvu
- The **New York Public Library** has also been putting out an online Storytime: <https://www.nypl.org/education/kids/storytime>.
- The **National Emergency Library** is a collection of books supporting emergency remote teaching. You can sign up for a free account for access to thousands of resources for older children, teens, and even adults: <https://archive.org/details/nationalemergencylibrary>.
- **Audible** is offering free audiobooks for kids on their website: <https://stories.audible.com/discovery>

Nature:

If your family can get outside safely while practicing social distancing, there are many materials online to help guide outdoor adventures.

- Try a **nature walk scavenger hunt!** Make a simple scorecard on paper and ask your child to find a leaf, a stick, flowers, a pinecone, something that flies, something that has fur, something that is rough, something smaller than your shoe, something that makes noise, etc.
- The Waldorf Education Site is offering their **100 Days of Nature Walks** for free: <https://earthschooling.info/thebearthinstitute/product/100-days-of-nature-walk-adventures/>

There are also many options for virtually exploring the great outdoors:

- Virtually visit US **National Parks**. Google Arts & Culture has compiled guided visits to Kenai Fjords, Hawai'i Volcanoes, Carlsbad Caverns, Bryce Canyon, and Dry Tortugas National Parks. National Park Rangers bring you inside a volcano, through canyons, and snorkeling with sea turtles: <https://artsandculture.withgoogle.com/en-us/national-parks-service>
- If your child is interested in space, explore Mars with NASA's Curiosity Rover. **Access Mars** uses real data and images collected from the Curiosity Rover to create a 3D experience on the surface of Mars: <https://accessmars.withgoogle.com/>
- The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has many live cams of different bird nests including Barred Owls, Red-tailed Hawks, Savannah Ospreys, and **birdfeeder watch**: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/cornell-lab-feederwatch/>. Talk with your child about birds you might see in your backyard or out on a walk and how they are similar or different than the birds you see in the Cornell birdfeeder watch.
- **National Geographic Kids** offers many ideas for home science experiments, great information and videos about lots of different animals, and "Passport to Space" with "Missions" to different planets in our solar system: <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/>

Getting active:

It can be hard to get your kids enough active time, especially when playgrounds are off-limits! If you can safely be active outside, the nature activities above are great for burning off some energy. Keeping active indoors can be more challenging, but here are a few ideas:

- The nature scavenger hunt outlined above can be adapted for indoors, too. Have your child find something that plays music, something that you use to build, something that keeps you warm, something that measures, etc.
- Build a homemade obstacle course with materials you can find around the house:
<https://community.today.com/parentingteam/post/get-toddlers-active-with-these-indoor-obstacle-course-ideas>
- Make numbers, letters, or shapes on the floor with tape and have your child to run, hop, or skip to the next destination. You can also make a “long jump” with tape or a path through the house to explore.

Exploring Music and Art:

There are many ways to explore art and music from all over the world online.

- **Playtime Playlist** has put together a calendar of live stream shows from various independent children’s musicians from all over the world. Many of the performances include activities and stories and many are in English and Spanish: <http://playtimeplaylist.com/events/?fbclid=IwAR1-AsJxAGRtwLQyKNjEjBGn005Xp5ht-sn7wGGKHftNA6xFK6p3t4SYck>
- Virtually visit hundreds of museums from around the world using the **Google Arts & Culture Collections** (<https://artsandculture.google.com/partner?hl=en>). Some highlights:
 - The British Museum, London: <https://britishmuseum.withgoogle.com/>
 - National Gallery of Art, Washington DC: <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/national-gallery-of-art-washington-dc?hl=en>
 - National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea: <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/national-museum-of-modern-and-contemporary-art-korea?hl=en>
 - Acropolis Museum, Athens, Greece: <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/acropolis-museum?hl=en>
 - Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam: <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/van-gogh-museum?hl=en>
 - Uffizi Gallery, Italy: <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/uffizi-gallery?hl=en>
- Also, **The Louvre Museum** in Paris offers virtual tours of many of their collections including Renaissance paintings, Egyptian antiques and the ancient moat surrounding the Louvre: <https://www.louvre.fr/en/visites-en-ligne>.

We hope these activities and guidance will help your family learn and explore while social distancing!