WIDEOPENSCHOOL
POWERED BY common sense

offline

Brain Breaks and Boosts for Older Kids and Teens

For busy families: Add fun and learning to your day with these easy, screen-free activities—and subtract stress and boredom! Check off the activities as you go to complete them all.

PLAY GAMES

- [ ] **Dictionary**

  Take turns choosing weird words from the dictionary. Have everyone write a pretend definition and try to guess the real one.

- [ ] **Cat Burglar**

  Use tape to create an obstacle course around your home. Pretend to be cat burglars evading the infrared alarm triggers.

- [ ] **Five Best**

  Ask each other to name the five best somethings. Could be sandwiches, cities, or sock lengths. The sky's the limit!

- [ ] **Break the Record**

  Come up with different weird records to break. See who can balance the most cans on their head. Longest burp? Most digits of pi memorized?

- [ ] **1,2,3 Game**

  Count to three and each say a word. Count again, and say another word that connects the two. Keep going until you say the same word.

GET ACTIVE

- [ ] **Plank High Fives**

  Grab a family member and each get in plank position on your elbows. Balance on one forearm, and high-five your partner five times. Then switch sides.

- [ ] **Mop the Floor**

  Help out with household chores, like mopping or vacuuming, for a surprisingly effective workout. Make it fun by listening to your favorite music.

- [ ] **At-Home Olympics**

  Design and create a series of Olympic events in your home. Compete with your family, friends, or just yourself.

- [ ] **Sports or Something Like It**

  Shoot some hoops, kick a ball around, play catch, or just toss a ball as high as you can and try to catch it. The possibilities are endless!

- [ ] **Jack of All Jumps**

  See if you can do 100 jumping jacks in a row by starting with 10 and adding 10 more each day.

CONNECT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

- [ ] **Write a Thank You Note**

  Think about a kind gesture someone did for you recently. Write them a thank note to let them know how much you appreciated it.

- [ ] **Snail Mail**

  Pick a friend or family member and write them a letter the old-fashioned way. Use a pen, paper, envelope, stamp, and your brain—no computer! Make sure to ask them to write back before you drop your letter in the mailbox.

- [ ] **Walk and Talk**

  Take a brisk stroll with a family member or friend.

- [ ] **Call an Elder**

  Call a grandparent, a neighbor, or a friend of the family to check in on them and make their day. Maybe tell them a joke!

- [ ] **Learn a New Card Game**

  Grab a deck of cards, and ask a family member what games they like to play. If they don't know any, look up some online. Choose one that looks fun, go over the rules, and deal!

DREAM AND CREATE

- [ ] **Observe Your World**

  Look out the window at everything you can see. Focus carefully on one or two specific things. Do you notice anything you didn't before?

- [ ] **Start a Journal**

  Grab a notebook and set aside some time to jot down what you did, what you're thinking about, and how you're feeling. If that feels good, keep it up.

- [ ] **Family Fridge Quotables**

  Each week have a family member curate a collage of quotes—from family, friends, or famous people—on your fridge. You can use sticky notes or get creative with your own cutout shapes.

- [ ] **Create a Cardboard Arcade Game**

  Grab some cardboard and any art supplies you have to build a playable game for your family. Think Skee-Ball made out of boxes!

- [ ] **Letter to Future Self**

  Write a letter to the person you'll be in five or 10 years. Tell them what life is like right now. Keep it somewhere safe.

HELP OUT

- [ ] **Make Lunch**

  Ask an adult if you can make lunch for them. Try to make it healthy and delicious. Focus on presentation, too.

- [ ] **Where's the Waiter?**

  Play server for the evening meal. Dress up, carry a white towel, refill water glasses, and clear the plates when everyone's done.

- [ ] **Make a Business Call**

  The next time someone in your house needs information about something, call and ask instead of searching online. Does a certain grocery store deliver? Do they have toilet paper in stock?

- [ ] **Change Sheets**

  Take the sheets off all the beds and put on fresh ones. Bonus points if you wash the dirty sheets, too!

- [ ] **Get Organized**

  Choose an area or an object you use every day—like your bedside table, your desk, or your bag—and straighten it up. Consider donating anything you haven't used in a while.

RELAX AND REFLECT

- [ ] **Five Deep Breaths**

  Sit somewhere quiet and breathe in for a count of four. Hold the breath for four seconds, then let it out for a count of eight. Repeat.

- [ ] **Top Secret Learning**

  Think about something that you know has tons of learning value but may not typically be considered educational. Share your experiences with a family member or teacher.

- [ ] **Spa Day**

  Take some time for self-care. Shower or take a bath. Scrub your feet. Clip your nails. Clean out your ears.

- [ ] **Be Grateful**

  Think of three things you're grateful for. To yourself or someone else, describe exactly why you appreciate these things.

- [ ] **Media Matters**

  Write down your favorite things to watch, read, or listen to. Why do you like each of them? Do they all share a common theme?

ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS