

22 activities for parents and children during UK-wide lockdown

The outbreak of coronavirus means millions of people will have plenty of time on their hands during the lockdown period. Keeping children's bodies moving and brains active is essential, particularly when they are not at school during the coronavirus pandemic. Finding new ways to keep youngsters occupied will also help take the pressure off parents and carers while schools are closed during the UK-wide lockdown.

With a creative mind, there are countless forms of entertainment that can be done at little to no cost - you won't even need to go further than your own garden.

Here are 22 ways to keep the kids entertained outdoors while at home.

1. Grow things

Growing is possible for anyone, even for those without a huge garden or a vegetable patch. Planting seeds in soil is a fun activity in itself but it will also create a long term project. It will provide children with responsibility over the following weeks because they will need to make sure the plants receive all the elements they need to survive. Choose fast-growing plants, such as sunflowers, so the children can watch them grow.

2. Spot night time wildlife

If you can fit it in before their bedtime, taking your children on an evening adventure could be exciting. You don't even need to go further than your garden - but getting a last bit of movement in could make bedtime that bit easier for parents. If you're lucky, you might spot a bat or owl flying above or catch a badger or hedgehog before it disappears into the bushes.

3. 'Bake' with mud

Water and mud are the only ingredients you need to make mud cakes. Kids will love getting their hands dirty and it is bound to keep them occupied for hours.

4. Look for shapes in the clouds

If you're exhausted from running around after your kids all day, this could be the perfect way to give yourself a break. On a sunny day, it could be an enjoyable activity for parents and children alike.

5. Make a nature documentary

Use a real or imaginary camera to direct an Attenborough-style documentary - who knows what you might come across!

6. Make magic potions

Create some magic using ingredients that can be found around the house. Baking soda, vinegar, washing up liquid, food colouring and some glitter is all you need to create a fizzing potion. The children can also decide what magic power the potion will give to those who (pretend to) drink it.

7. Treasure hunt

With a little planning, send your kids on a treasure hunt around the garden. Stain a homemade map with coffee and scorch the edges to make it extra effective.

8. Make handprint garden stepping stones

Get your hands on some cement mix and a mould and create something that can be kept forever. When your children become adults, it will be nice for them to look back at how tiny their hands were.

9. Paint rocks

Any painting activity will do but change things up by painting rocks to transform them into animals such as ladybirds or tortoises.

10. Make a birdfeeder

There are plenty of ways to make a birdfeeder using items that can be found around the house. Coating a pinecone with a mixture of butter and seeds and hanging it on a tree using string is one easy option.

11. Water Fight

Water balloons, water guns or sponges are all that are needed for a lot of fun on a warm day.

12. Leaf rubbing

Use leaves found around your garden to make art. Place the leaves under a sheet of coloured A3 paper and rub wax crayons over each leaf until you can see the impression emerge.

13. Obstacle course

Use objects from around the house like skipping ropes, boxes and hula-hoops, and an egg and spoon to create a course. Building the course will be a fun project in itself.

14. Picnic in the garden

When the sun is out, take a blanket outside and some healthy finger foods to make sure you get your daily dose of vitamin D. It could even be worth bringing out the barbeque.

15. Wash the car

Some soap and sponges could make what is a chore for you, a fun activity for children.

16. Scavenger hunt

Give the kids a list of items to find in nature, such as mushrooms, feathers, birds nests and badger setts.

17. Tie-dye shirts

You don't need to buy a kit for this, you just need some Sharpie pens, rubbing alcohol and a spare plain t-shirt.

18. Homemade bubbles

Instead of buying bubbles from the shop, make it into an arts and crafts project. Bubble solution can be made from as little as warm water, sugar and dish soap. You can also make a DIY bubble wand using pipe cleaners and beads.

19. Paint the driveway

Use shop-bought or homemade chalk - made of cornflour, water and food colouring to create temporary art on the driveway or pavement.

20. Stargazing

There are plenty of apps available for iPhones and Android devices to help you identify planets, stars and constellations on a clear night. Or, if you don't need the aid of these, simply take the children into the garden before bedtime and pass on your knowledge

21. Baking

Admittedly, flour appears to be at a premium amid the waning panic-buying frenzy, but baking cakes and loaves of bread are fun, educational and wholesome.

22. Decorating eggs

Either hard-boiled or hand-blown, there are plenty of tips on how to decorate eggs this Easter online