



Why play?

Play is an essential tool to help families connect, destress, promote brain development and improve dexterity skills. Play is so important to optimal development that it has been recognized by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights as a right of every child. In times of difficulty, play can be attributed to the release of endorphins, the 'feel-good' hormone known to reduce stress, depression and anxiety.

As people are staying home now more than ever before, we want to help your family strengthen its bonds and beat boredom through some good old-fashioned play activities. We have compiled a list of 101 ideas for you and your family to try out while staying at home to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Combine this list with the items found in your Family Fun Kit for at-home fun and laughs!

Here is what you will find in your kit:

1. Deck of Uno cards
2. A tennis ball
3. Set of dice
4. A jump rope
5. Index cards
6. Crayons/pens

At-home Games

1. **Charades**

2. **I Spy with My little Eye** (Something red and small. Who can guess what it is?) The winner gets to be the spy next. You have to choose objects that you can see right now.

3. **Make an obstacle course** of crawling under and over items.

4. **Button, Button, who's got the button?** Use a pebble or any random item. Kids sit in a circle facing inward, each holding their palms tightly together. The kids pass their hands through the person's hand to their left, motioning like they're secretly dropping a button into the other child's hands. Everyone's hands keep doing this motion while only one button is really being passed. The trick is to catch someone passing the real button. If you guess wrong, you're out of the game. If you guess right, both people involved in the passing are out of the game, until the next game starts.

5. **Electricity.** Kids sit in a circle facing inward, holding hands. One person starts the flow of "electricity" in one direction by squeezing their neighbor's hand, who then squeezes his neighbor's hand. The squeezes go down the line, until someone catches a person passing the electricity. The two passers are out of the game, until the next game starts. You could let the kids choose to reverse the pulse too.

6. **Simon Says**

7. **Mother, May I?** Kids stand side by side in a line. You stand several yards away. In turn, you give each child a command like, "Tara, take four

baby steps. Mike, take two giant steps. Grant, take five crawling steps." The child must remember to say "Mother may I?" before obeying your command. If a child forgets to say, "Mother, May I?" s/he returns to the starting line. The first child to reach you wins.

8. **Duck, Duck Goose.** Kids sit in a circle. One child (IT) walks around the outside of the circle, touching each child's head in turn, saying "duck, duck, duck," until he finally says "goose" to one child. The goose runs to chase IT around the circle, trying to touch IT before IT sits in the goose's place on the ground. If IT gets caught, s/he gets to be IT again. If IT sits down first, the goose gets to be IT.

9. **I Have a little Doggie and he won't bite you.** Kids sit in a circle. IT walks around the circle touching each person's head saying "he won't bite you, and he won't bit you..." Until IT says to one child, "But he will bite you!" The "bitten" child chases IT around the circle, trying to touch IT before IT sits down in the "bitten" child's place on the ground. If IT gets caught, s/he gets to be IT again. If IT sits down first, the bitten child gets to be IT.

10. **Musical chairs** (played with one shoe in each spot instead of a chair) The teacher sings instead of using a tape recorder.

11. **Shoe race.** Kids race to a big pile of all their shoes, to find their own, put them on, and run back. You could have two separate races, one for slip-on shoes, and one for tie-on shoes.

12. **Thumb wars.** Two kids join hands with both their thumbs on top. Each thumb tries to push down the other guy's thumb to win.

13. **Rock, Paper, Scissors**

14. **20 Questions.** You think of an object. Kids ask up to 20 Yes/No questions to try to guess what it is. For example, “Is it a person? Is it a place? Is it a thing? Is it big? Is it brown? Is it an animal?” You can only answer yes or no.

15. **Homonyms Game.** Give clues of 2 homonyms and students guess. Example: “I’m thinking of a word that’s a drink and a letter.” (Tea/T). Other ideas: Ant/Aunt, Mail/Male, Heel/Heal, Meet/Meat, Bored/Board, Hole/Whole, Reel/Real, Rose/Rows, Sea/See, Two/Too, Use/Ewes, Way/Weigh.

16. **Name that tune.** You hum a tune they know and the person to guess gets to hum the next tune.

17. **Lie down and let each person tell what a cloud looks like to them.**

18. **Gossip Game:** Everyone lines up, the first person whispers a sentence in the second person’s ear, and so on down the line. By the last person it is fun to see how similar or different the sentence is after passing through that many ears. This is a good object lesson on not gossiping.

19. **Chain story:** Someone makes up a beginning to a story. Then each person takes a turn making up a part to the story to add on.

20. **Lip Reading Game:** In teams of two, ask the kids to “lip” to each other their favorite food, color, favorite anything else you tell them to.

21. **Sit in a circle.** In unison, all hit knees, clap, and snap to a beat. On each child’s turn on the snap part of the beat, they name one item that

begins with the letter of the alphabet that lands on them. The first child uses A, like “apple,” second uses B, like “boat,” so on.

22. **Hold a backwards spelling bee.** You say a word, they say the word, then say it backwards, and then spell it backwards.

23. **Mirror, Mirror.** Two kids stand facing each other. One follows the movements of the other just like a mirror.

24. **Have the kids lay on the ground next to each other to form letters to spell a word.** You could start by giving them a word, then let them take turns thinking of a word, and letting you guess what the word is after they’ve worked out how to arrange themselves on the ground.

25. **Hokey Pokey**

26. **Braille.** One child slowly writes a word on the other child’s back with her finger, and the front child tries to guess what was written.

Drawing Activities: to do with paper and pencils, chalk on the sidewalk, drawing in the dirt, or a dry erase board.

1. **Hang Man**

2. **Tic Tac Toe**

3. **Connect the dots.** Make lots of dots in rows and columns on the page. Two kids take turns drawing one line at a time to connect two dots. When a player draws the last line to make a square, s/he writes his/her initial in that square. At the end of the game, the player with the most initials wins.

4. **Trace three different textures** rubbing the side of your pencil lead on different items without leaving your seat.
5. **Draw combinations of two or three different animals.** For example, draw an animal that was part lion and part lamb.
6. **Hold your pencil between your toes** and draw a picture.
7. **Make a “Cootie Catcher”** (square piece of paper folded to make a game that you open and close, with info. hidden inside the flaps.)
8. **Draw a picture drawing only with dots,** no lines.
9. **Draw a picture with your non-dominant hand.**
10. **Pictionary**

Games with Balls

1. **Flies and Grounders.** Two players toss a ball back and forth. Catching a ball in the air is worth 2 points. Fielding a grounder is worth 1 point. Each player tries to fool the other player about whether a flyer or grounder is coming. If a ball is thrown so badly as to not be catchable, the receiving player gets another chance. Play continues until a certain score is reached or until players get tired of the game.
2. **Crack up.** The game requires a large soft ball and five or so players. “It” has the ball and throws it at other players. The player being thrown at can either dodge the ball or catch it. If the player is hit, he loses a point. If the player catches the ball, “It” loses a point. If the ball is not caught, any player can grab the ball and become “It”. When a player loses 5 points, they are out of the game. The game continues until

there is only 1 player left and that player is the winner.

3. **Hit the Bat.** The game is played with a ball and a bat (or stick). One person bats, and everyone else scatters fielding distance away. The batter tosses the ball up and hits it. He then places the bat crosswise on the ground in front of him. The person who fields the ball can run toward the batter until the bat is placed on the ground. The fielder then rolls the ball at the bat. When the ball hits the bat, it pops up. If the batter does not catch the ball, the fielder is up to bat. If the batter does catch the ball, or if the fielder misses the bat, the batter keeps hitting.

4. **Spud.** The game is played with a soft playground ball. Before beginning the game, the limits of the playing area should be defined so that players can't run too far away. The player selected as “It” counts to 10 while the other players run away, then freeze on 10. “It” is allowed to take 4 giant steps towards any one player before trying to hit them with the ball. If the player is hit, they get an S and becomes “It”. If the player who is “It” misses, they get an S. When a player gets all 4 letters, spelling SPUD, they are out of the game. The winner is the last to be eliminated.

5. **Run Down.** This game is played with 2 bases placed about 10 feet apart. 2 players are selected to be “It”. Each stands on a base, and they toss a soft ball back and forth. The other players divide up between the 2 bases and take turns trying to steal a base—that is, run from one base to the other without getting tagged. A player who is tagged becomes “It”.

Using a deck of Uno cards, you could play a bunch of different games.

1. **Uno**

2. **Spaz Uno**

3. **Memory**

4. **Younger kids can sort the cards by colors**, by numbers, put them in order from 0 to 10, or say what a 2 and a 3 next to each other make, a 23.

5. **Simple patterns like red 1, yellow 2, red 2, —.**

6. **Medium age kids can add, subtract, multiply, divide.**

7. **Krypto** is where each player is given five number cards and one number card is in the middle. Each player must add, subtract, multiply, and/or divide all five of their cards to get it to equal the number in the middle.

8. **Snap**

9. **Go Fish**

10. **War**

11. **See who can throw their card the furthest**

12. **Build card houses**

13. **Flip Ten** is like Memory with math skills. Kids line up cards in rows of 5. Then, they flip 2 cards over. If the sum of the 2 cards equals 10, they keep the cards and replace the cards with 2 more from the deck. The game ends when there are no more matches left. A match includes 6 and 4, 7 and 3, 5 and 5. Whoever has the most cards wins the game! Note: you can change the game and give a different sum each time they play.

Dice Games

1. **Bunco**: roll 3 dice, scoring the result. Highest number wins.

2. **Cho-chan**: very simple Japanese game. 6 dice are rolled and the results kept secret. Players bet on whether the sum on the dice is odd or even.

3. **Farkle**: roll 6 dice, banking any that can score (generally any 5,1 or 3 of a kind). You can end your turn and score what you have banked or re-roll the non-banked dice. If you ever roll dice and can't bank any of them, you lose everything you have banked and pass your turn.

4. **Hazard**: pick a number from 5 to 9 and try to roll it. If you roll the number you win. If you roll 2,3,11 or 12, you may lose, depending on which number you picked. Otherwise, try to roll the same number you just rolled again, before rolling the number that you originally picked.

5. **Liar's Dice**: the game of betting on the sum rolled. Each player rolls several dice, looks at his own, and covers them. Players then bet, in turn, on how many dice have how high a face value, with each player having to either call or up the values on their turn. At a call, the calling player wins if the previous player was incorrect; otherwise, the previous player wins.

6. **Mexico**: all players roll the dice with the lowest rolling player tossing the stakes into the pot. Continue until all but one player is eliminated. That player takes the pot.

7. **Pig**: roll a single die banking your roll each time. Pass the die and score what you have banked whenever you want. If you roll a 1, you lose what you have banked and pass the die.

8. **Grand Hazard**: players bet on the outcome of the dice (similar to Roulette), with payouts according to the chances of the roll.

9. **Shut the Box:** this game often uses a wooden contraption to keep score. Players roll 2 dice, marking off any combination of numbers 2-9 (or 10) that add up to the total rolled on the dice. Continue rolling until you cannot mark any unmarked number for a given roll. End your turn and score the numbers marked.

10. **Yahtzee:** each player has a grid of dice values, each box of which scores a certain number of points, Roll the dice, re-rolling any dice up to 2 times. Score any box that you want to which the dice correspond, but that you have not already scored. If you cannot match you roll to any box, score a 0 in any unscored box of your choice. The game ends when all boxes are filled, with the highest total score winning.

Jump Rope Games

1. **Jump rope marathon.** Keep track of numbers of jumps reached. Players try to beat their OWN highest number by the end of the day or week.

2. **Jump rope water splash.** Give each player a cup full of water. While 2 players twirl a large jump rope, jumpers one by one are to attempt 3 consecutive jumps. They are to do this while holding into their cup of water and trying not to let any water spill. The player with the most

water left is the winner. You can keep playing until only 1 person has water left in their cup.

3. **Jump rope relay.** Need one jump rope per team. Divide group into several small groups. The first player of each group runs to their jump rope which is placed about 30 meters away from each group. The first team to finish is the winner.

4. **Extension Play:** jump backwards 5 times; jump 5 times on your left leg (or right leg); jump rope and say the multiplication table of 5's. Do this until you get to 50; say one number each time your jump.

5. **Double Dutch:** 2 people holding each side of the rope, but the trick is to use 2 ropes instead of 1. Those who are swinging the rope would swing the rope in their left hand to the left and the rope in the right hand to the right. Players jump into the double ropes. As participants become more skilled, the player jumping usually does tricks and that may involve gymnastics or break dancing and can also incorporate fancy foot movements.

Jump Rope Rhymes

Visit <https://www.care.com/c/stories/3968/11-catchy-jump-rope-rhymes/en-ie/> for fun games and rhymes!