

MAKING THE SHIFT TO SUMMER

Guidance for Families from the Digital Wellness Lab
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Boston Children's Hospital
Digital Wellness Lab

Where the world comes for answers

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As the weather warms, in-person and offline schooling comes to an end, and more and more people become fully vaccinated, many of us are left wondering about how best to spend the summer months.

While some family members may be excitedly planning the next sun-soaked adventure, others may be worried about socializing in-person, or confused about what activities are safe for them to do. As we head into summer, it is important to recognize that all of us are in a transitional time, coming out of lockdowns and mask-mandates to times of activity and togetherness.

Sit down with your family and review the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines about vaccinations and what activities are safe for your family to participate in. Talk about concerns your child or teen

has about the summer, and discuss ways to address their fears and anxieties. Create a summer routine the whole family can agree on (compromises will be necessary), including bedtimes and morning routines. Many of us experienced big disruptions to our routines throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and can use the summer months to reset and get into healthy sleep, eating, and activity habits—this will also help children transition from summer to fall and the start of school.

Finally, create a summer fun list of activities or projects that your family wants to do or accomplish. Use this guide to help get the conversation started by checking out the fun activity ideas below. Remember that some children and teens may need more alone time than usual this summer, so make sure to suggest a variety of activities including a mix of outdoor and indoor ideas as well as suggestions that can be for one person or a group. Continue to check in with your family and the progress you make on the bucket list—you can always make changes to your list to help make the most of summer for you and your family!



Indoor Activities

Whether the heat has your family seeking activities indoors to take advantage of air conditioning, or whether a child needs some solo-time in their room, choose from these ideas that can be done indoors:

- Learn how to play a new musical instrument, or practice a favorite one. Plan a 'concert date' to share with family and friends, or make a solo-goal to learn a specific piece of music.
- Paint, whether with finger paints on a window, or acrylic paints on a canvas. Teens can share their artwork on social media, or have an end-of-summer 'gallery' exhibit for friends!
- Break out the board games or play a card game of solitaire. Try to set and break records, or have family tournament time with games that everyone enjoys.
- Start a new book series. Whether getting recommendations from school teachers or local libraries, escape into a new literary adventure or learn something new!
- Perfect a choreographed family dance and get creative with editing through a camera or app. Not into dancing? Create a comic strip using a stuffed animal or pictures of pets. Share creations with friends via social media or text.
- Challenge close family members or faraway friends to build new virtual worlds, learn a new e-sport, or play on everyone's favorite gaming platform.



Outdoor Activities

After over a year of socially distancing and staying inside, your family may be eager to get outdoors. Choose from these activities meant to encourage exploration, spend time in nature, and connect with others in-person:

- Do a day or sleep-away camp. Many community groups offer fun activity camps during the day, while other sleep-away camps offer wilderness or other adventures away from home.
- Visit the beach. Whether a lake or ocean, bring sand shovels, kites, or just a towel and enjoy some fun in the sun and water. Don't forget the sunscreen!
- Pack a picnic and find the perfect spot to eat and be with friends. This can be at a local park, in a backyard as a teddy bear picnic, or an entirely new picnic spot discovered together.
- Get out into nature, whether by visiting a playground, going for a bike ride, kayaking, or walking a local hiking trail. Invite friends or family to come along, and make it a goal to talk and catch-up.
- Make a goal to visit specific sites in your state, such as historic statues, monuments, natural wonders, or even all of the ice cream shops in your area. Make video diaries or take pictures to share with others on social media.
- Create or join a summer sports team, from pick-up basketball, tee-ball, or even neighborhood tournaments of capture-the-flag. Meet new people in your community, or reconnect with friends who also want to play.