



101 Fun Things To Do With Kids To Enjoy Everyday Family Life

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Introduction

On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you enjoy everyday family life (1 being the least, and 10 the most)?

If you had asked me that question a few years back, I'd have lied. My real answer would have been way too embarrassing to admit.

It's so easy to get lost in the responsibilities of parenting that we forget to actually enjoy the journey!

We've come a long way since. One of the things I've learnt along the way is that if we remember to have fun, our day automatically becomes more enjoyable, *irrespective of how mundane or stressful it may seem on the outside.*

With that in mind, I've put together this guide. It's a grab bag of ideas for turning simple moments in life into fun times. It is classified into separate sections to cover different times of a regular day; the weekends and family traditions. Pick a few ideas that you think might work for your family and give them a shot. Come back in a few days and pick a few more. And do it until you're able to look at a perfectly routine, even boring or stressful situation and automatically find joy in it!

OK, we've got a lot to cover, so let's jump right in -

Start the Day Right



Perhaps the biggest difference to how much you can enjoy the day comes from how you start it off. It changes everything -- from how effective you're at work to how patient you can be at home later in the evening!

So make an effort to wake up 15-30 minutes before your kids, freshen up and be caffeinated, and try some of these tricks so the kids wake up happy and everyone gets out of the door in a great mood!



1 Turn getting ready into a contest.

Instead of nagging or screaming at your kids to wake up and get ready quickly, [pit them against each other, or yourself to see who can be first](#). Award whoever is first an instant reward ("Winner gets to eat breakfast in a special souvenir plate/cup set") or stickers/marbles that they can cash in later (a trip to the dollar store, a board game of their choice that everyone in the family has to play, etc.)

2 Get a creative alarm clock.

My favorite is the [Clocky alarm clock](#) which starts running around the room and you have to chase it down to switch it off. Make it a game among your kids to see who can get to clocky first! Clocky not your style? No problem, here are [20 equally fun and creative alarm clocks](#) including the flying propeller alarm and the target alarm clock shown in the picture.



3 Play the “I need the blanket because...” game.

Each day, wake them up gently and then start tugging at their blanket making up silly stories about why you need the blanket. One day you’ll say “I need these for table cloth, a princess is coming for breakfast”. Next day you’ll say “I need these for making a tent, my house was blown away by a tornado” and so on. Over the course of a few days, just say “I need the blanket because...” and let the voice trail inviting your kids to make up the story. Getting them in on the story weaving is a great way to wake them up and start the day off in amazement at the wonderful magic of their imagination.

4 Play lively wake up songs.

Here’s [a great list from youtube](#) to get you started. Sing along. Bust a few moves. You better have woken up earlier than the kids and *caffeinated* sufficiently to make this happen.



5 Make up goofy wake up songs.

Or cute, sappy ones. Or mix it all up. Keep 'em guessing. Is there a better way to wake up than to an off key rendition of "Wake up sweet pea, I love you. The rooster on a farm sings cock-a-doodle-doo. The sleepy head cow says moo, moo, moo. A happy kitty jumps into my arm and says... mew, mew, mew"

6 Let your dog loose.

Who says you have to be the one waking up the kids everyday? Never do something that your dog can do for you! Stand back and watch the fun.



7 Offer warm robe service.

If you think letting the dogs loose on the kids is mean, maybe you can go the other direction... bribe them with warm robes. On particularly cold mornings, throw their robes in the dryer for a few minutes and whoever gets up immediately gets to wear warm robes. The key [as this mom explains](#) is to not offer re-warm ups!

8 Tickle them gently.

Or trace letters on their back and ask them to guess the word. You can trace their name, or sweet things like "I Love you", "Sunshine" etc to get them up feeling good. [Studies](#) claim that maintaining a ratio of at least 3 positive interactions to each negative interaction can make you happier, improve relationships, become more productive, etc. You may as well start tipping the scales in favor of those positive interactions from the time you wake up.



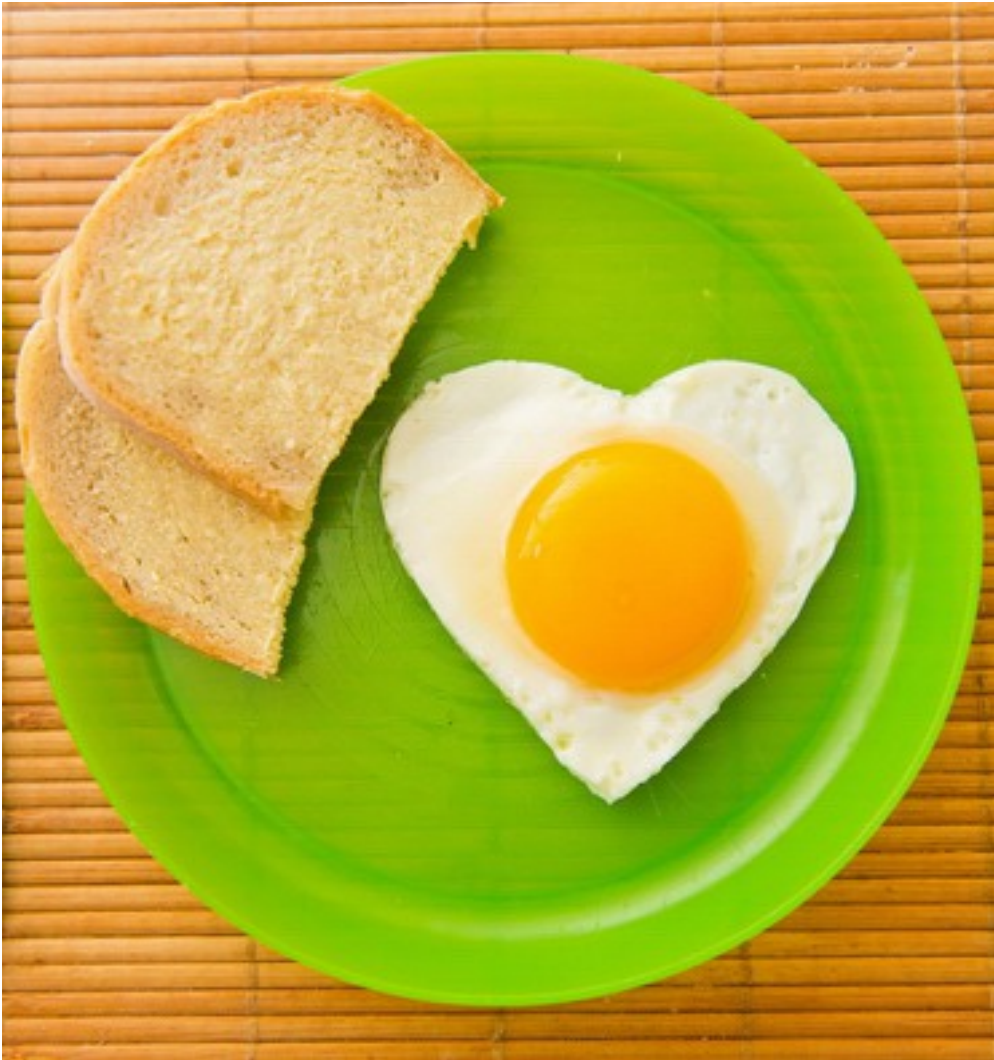
9 Talk softly for a few minutes.

Out of ideas for doing cute things? No problem, just simply sit there for a few minutes to tell them how much they mean to you, or what a wonderful day awaits them when they wake up and so on. It puts you both in a good mood to start the day well, and sure beats the scream/yell until the kids wake up method hands down (while being as effective or more!)

Enjoy Breakfast Time By Throwing in These Twists



Studies have consistently shown that eating breakfast helps in many ways, from reducing the risk of obesity and heart diseases to improving cognitive function. So, make breakfast a priority for your family. Wake up everyone a few minutes earlier if you must, keep things simple and enjoy the few moments together before everyone goes their own way. Here are a few fun things to do with kids at the breakfast table.



10 Make the breakfast look cute.

It doesn't matter if you are just serving toast, cereal, oatmeal or fried eggs... just take a few extra minutes to make it cute.

My daughter's not a big fan of breakfast. But if I take just 2 minutes to cutify the food, it saves me 20 minutes of whining later and we're all in a much better mood.

[Funny Food Art](#) has a ton of great ideas if you need some inspiration to cutify your kids breakfast -- I don't go all out like these folks, but trust me, even a little bit goes a long way!

11 Set up a picnic.

Outdoor or in -- it doesn't really matter. Just the change in pace from everyday will make it fun for everyone! As [Zina from Lasso the Moon](#) says, "Throw out a colorful blanket to eat on, and you're basically the coolest mom ever." I have to agree.



12 Write/doodle while you eat.

[Here](#) and [here](#) are some examples of write-on, wipe-off place mats available on Amazon. I've seen several of these at my local Walmart as well. And of course, you can make your own mats by laminating a sheet of blank paper and using dry-erase markers.

13 Play tic-tac-toe.

My daughter got an [electronic boogie board](#) as a birthday present, and I can't tell you how much more fun (and easier) breakfast now is. We play tic-tac-toe or some other such game where you need to take turns. One turn per bite. Instead of nagging 100 times to "Eaaaat!", I now get to play. Cool, huh?

Of course, you don't need a boogie board - you could do this as easily with some paper and pencil.



14 Turn breakfast into a contest.

Or beat the clock contest, if you have just 1 child. The winner gets to choose what songs you listen to on the way to school, or gets stickers or marbles to cash in later...

15 Play verbal games.

Any car/travel games should work. The favorite ones in our house is Name-Place-Animal-Thing. Here's how you play it: Player 1 says start. Play 2 starts saying the alphabet in his head. Player 1 says stop. Player 2 declares what alphabet he was on. You go around the table with everyone first saying a name that starts with that letter. Next you go around telling a place that starts with that letter and so on. Here's [a great list of simple games](#) that keep your kids busy at at the table.



16 Write lunchbox notes.

Pass a stack of post-it notes and a pen so the kids can write cute/funny/sappy lunch box notes to put in each other's lunch boxes while they chow down breakfast. Not only do you keep them sitting at the table, this is a great way to foster connection and closeness among siblings.

17 Set up a gratitude jar or box.

You can place it right in the middle of the breakfast table. During breakfast each day, every person writes a little note of what they are thankful for and drops it in the jar/box. On special days (get creative about picking them!), you dump out all the notes and read them out.

Make it more interesting by setting themes of the day (the winner of any of the morning contests could be the person deciding the theme)... So one day you write notes about each other, next day you write about school, friends, work etc.



18 Offer a custom buffet breakfast.

It's a lot easier than it sounds -- [check out this buffet omelet article](#). When the kids have a choice in what goes into their breakfast they are much more likely to eat it happily.

19 Finally, let the kids prepare the breakfast with you.

It doesn't have to be the buffet omelet. Kids can help no matter what you make - for instance one could pitch in by toasting bread, while the other heats milk and so on. My daughter is a lot more likely to eat *her* breakfast happily on days that she helps me make *my* coffee. Go figure!

NOTE: Any of these could as easily be used at dinner as well! And conversely, many of the things listed in the dinner section will translate to breakfast time with a few slight modifications!

Get Creative with School Lunch



Just because you are not together for lunch does not mean you can't have fun! Follow some of these tips and all of you will enjoy packing those lunch boxes and eating them too!



20 Two words -- Bento Box.

Make it cute. Make it fun. Keep 'em guessing. Keep *yourself* guessing! Here are some great ideas by [Easy Lunch Boxes](#) to get you started.

21 Invest in a few choice tools to make your kids school lunches super cute.

For instance these [sandwich cutters](#) and [boiled egg molds](#) can create pinterest-pretty lunch boxes in mere minutes. And these [edible food color markers](#) ensure that your kids can have the cutest, most adorable lunches ever. Here are some great ways to use your markers -- [school book sandwiches](#), [character boiled eggs](#) and [edible lunch notes](#).



22 Add a funny/sweet note.

I don't do this as often as I'd like, but when I can, I make a doodle on a post-it note and add a few simple words and my daughter absolutely adores it. If you'd rather print them out than make your own, here are [500 free printable lunchbox notes](#) for you.

23 Join your kids for lunch at their school if possible.

Many [schools encourage parents to join kids for lunch](#), and it's a great way to turn an old boring day into a special occasion. So set a date and go eat with your kids at their school.

Squeeze in a Little Bit of Fun in the Evenings After School



Historically this was the time where families hung out and had fun. But these days with both parents working and kids enrolled in several after school activities, fun at this time has become an endangered species. Here are some ideas to squeeze a few fun things to do with kids anyway.



24 Stop at the park on the way home, even if for just 5-10 minutes.

During a particularly tough time a few years back, when my daughter was still in daycare and I worked full-time, I'd bring a snack that she'd eat in the car on the way home and we'd stop at the park for a few minutes. We did it every single day when the weather was good. It's counter-intuitive, but spending just those few minutes at the park made the time at home later flow a whole lot more smoothly.

25 Have an impromptu weekday picnic at the park.

While we are on the topic of a park, if your park is close enough to home, pack up your dinner, a blanket and take it to the park. Kids can play for a bit and then the whole family can enjoy the outdoor dinner event.



26 Enroll in after school activities with your kids.

I have a friend who does not just drop her kids at art class but takes the art class with them. Another one has a chess tutor who teaches chess to the whole family including the parents. And [another that takes the whole family swimming when one of her kids has swim team practice.](#) Find an activity that everyone likes and enroll together.

27 Make an after school date with your kids.

You could have a tennis match or make pretty seasonal crafts. You could go grab an ice cream or go hang out at the community pool. Who says all that has to be done only on weekends?

Remember, if you have more time after school, you can always pick any of the activities listed under “weekends” to do here!

Turn Cooking From Chore Time to Fun Time



We all know that a good home cooked meal is not just easy on the wallet, but good for everyone's health too. But having to cook every day can feel like such a chore! Here are some fun things to do with kids to take the blahs out while you cook -



28 Let kids do homework at the dinner table while you cook.

And, instead of making homework a strict, quiet time, encourage them to ask questions, discuss what they are working on or what happened at school that day. Yes, it will take a little longer for them to finish their work, but if they don't detest it, they may actually enjoy learning! And you'll enjoy having to nag less and see how beautifully they progress.

29 Stick the dinner in the oven to cook, and sit by the homework table to participate.

Or if they are done with homework, play with them for a few minutes. Go out and kick some ball. Blow some bubbles. Chase them around and [rough house](#). The key is to be intentional about snatching those few minutes to be with kids instead of getting sucked into checking your emails or FB updates on your phone for the hundredth time.



30 Have your kids read to you while you cook.

My daughter is in 1st grade and her teacher suggests that she should read 20 minutes each day. So on weekdays, she reads me something of her choice while I cook. Some days, it's mind numbingly boring and I tune out. Some days, I enjoy the sound of her voice as it soothes my day's worries away. And some days, we discuss and debate and argue all the way through dinner :)

31 If your kids are done with the homework, blast some music.

Sing along. Break out a few cool moves and have an impromptu dance party. Kick off stories about "I remember when I heard this song the first time! It was...". Those are the little moments when memories are made and bonding happens!



32 Try a few kitchen science experiments.

[Tinker Lab](#), [Kitchen Pantry Scientist](#), [Steve Spangler Science](#) and [Physics Central](#) are some great sites that list step-by-step instruction for tons of experiment for you to try.

33 Got little ones?

If you're cooking anything with dough, give them some to play with.

And during the little breaks in between cooking, join them in making the messy, fun, dough sculpture masterpieces.



34 Play lemon & spoon race.

We used to play this as kids, and now when my daughter's friends come over for play dates I give them each a spoon and a lemon and have them race against each other. The idea is to go from start line to finish line with the lemon balanced on the spoon held between your teeth without dropping the lemon or touching the spoon. If the lemon falls, you have to go back to the start line and start over. It's a lot of fun (and keeps the kids out of my hair while I cook!)

35 Turn into food bloggers.

[Cook with your kids and blog about it.](#) Or, you cook, they take photos and together you figure out what stories to write in the blog post. It doesn't matter if nobody else reads the blog... the goal here is not to build a popular blog but to simply start out on a new, fun journey that your family can take every single day. And then some day when the kids leave the roost you'll both have a beautifully documented memoir to cling to.



36 Then again, you could just simply cook together and enjoy the process the old fashioned way :)

Blog, shlog. Just cook, eat and have fun! [Here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) are some great ways to find recipes for kid-friendly cooking.

Enjoy a Lovely Dinner Together



There are many studies that show that eating together as a family offers a truck load of benefits in the long run from reducing the likelihood of kids getting into drugs to getting depressed. To us parents though, this can be the most frustrating time of the day. Everyone is tired and the temptation to just lose yourself in front of the television with a TV-Dinner is strong.

Don't give in!

As with everything, you *can* make this a fun time. Give yourself and everyone a lot of grace and try to do as many fun things as possible until you find a few that stick.

Here are some great ideas to get you started - -



37 Play with your food.

We've been told "Don't play with your food" so many times as we grew up that we instantly start nagging our kids for playing with their food. Stop. Think. *Why not?* It's food. It's family time. Kids love to play. So let them. Everyone will enjoy dinner a whole lot more. Besides studies also show that [messy kids who play with their food may be faster learners](#). Just get in the habit of having them clean up after their mess to save your own sanity!

38 Play the restaurant game.

While you cook, keep kids busy preparing a restaurant style menu, place setting with forks/spoons wrapped in paper napkins, a way to take orders and a designated place for them to greet the patrons (you!) . [Here's an endearing article](#) of how Allison at *No Time For Flash Cards* pulled it off!



39 Have fun with dinner games.

There used to be a time when families finished dinner and hung out in the lounge chatting and playing games. That time obviously is long gone. So why now play a few games right at the dinner table? Keep the kids glued to their seats and if you set some ground rules like one-turn-per-bite, you may actually enjoy dinner instead of nagging at them to eat the whole time! Here is an [amazing list of dinner games](#) for all age groups.

40 Have some good old-fashioned conversation.

If you don't already have a habit of sitting together with family and chatting over dinner, it may feel a bit strange at first. In that case, some of these great ideas for conversation starters by the [Family Dinner Project](#), [No Time For Flash Cards](#) or [Six Sisters' Stuff](#) might help.



41 Designate one night of the week as surprise food night.

And cook something unexpected. How about some [pizza cupcakes](#)? Or [BLT pancake sandwiches](#)? Perhaps, [mummy dogs](#) are your things? I bet, [roasted heart potatoes](#) would go perfectly with them. Yummm!

42 Designate an international night.

Pick a country (eg. Mexico) and cook that cuisine that night. Additionally, pick a task that you will do together - for instance, each person has to be able to say one sentence in the language of that country. You could make this a great way to improve your general knowledge as well, by quizzing each other about what the capital of the country is, who the prime minister/president is etc.. Or go ahead, plop a globe/atlas right on the dinner table and let the kids have fun locating the country or some cities within that country while they chow down.



43 Serve breakfast for dinner.

Something incredible happens when you serve breakfast for dinner... kids who protest eating something for breakfast will gobble up the same thing with gusto if you serve it for dinner. I have no idea why, but hey, I'm not complaining. If it works, it's totally an IN thing in my playbook!

44 Plan your next vacation.

We shoot for 1 or 2 big vacations each year. And once every 2 years or so, we take a long trip back home to India. We can plan and talk about these for months leading to the actual travel. Turns out, this is a good thing! [Research shows](#) that planning a vacation actually results in the largest boost in happiness. In the study, vacation anticipation actually boosted happiness for upto *eight* weeks. Might as well milk it for what it's worth!



45 Designate a dress-up dinner night.

Get some more mileage out of your Halloween costumes. Or wear your clothes backwards (shirts with button on the back, dresses with zipper on the front and so on). Or everyone dresses in the same color. Or pull out that 80's outfit from your closet. Go crazy and have fun!

46 Have a dessert party.

Who doesn't like dessert? So instead of feeling guilty about eating it, make it an integral part of your dinner. Have a few relatively healthy dessert options ready in your fridge/freezer (my brain refuses to think of fruit as dessert, but my daughter can dive into a bowl of berries with the same gusto as she dives into a bowl of ice cream -- "healthy dessert" is apparently not an oxymoron) and make it a point for everyone to spend a few minutes after dinner relishing the dessert before moving on to the cleanup phase.

Pay Attention to Your Nightly Wind Down Routine



Bedtime can be the most precious time of the day as you and your kids wind down for a good nights rest. Or a battle field where endless power struggles play out night after night. No matter where you are on the spectrum right now, by just putting a few of these tips diligently into practice, you can tip the scales in favor of more and more peaceful bed times. Here we go -



47 Watch TV together.

There's a lot of backlash against TV but in moderation, it's actually not a bad way to spend time together as a family. I remember when I was a child and we had just one channel on television. All of us flocked around the TV for whatever the day's show was, followed by a recap of the day's news headlines. We'd then trigger the night time routine of brushing teeth and reading a bit before crashing for the night. Good times!

48 Snuggle up and read a book together.

The trick here is (a) pick books that both your kids love and don't bore you to tears, and (b) make sure it's a series so it's easy to find your next book when one is done.

Until my daughter was 4 or so, we loved [Berenstain Bears](#) and [Dr. Seuss](#) books. I think around 4 we started reading the [Magic Tree House](#) series. We did read a few other books in the middle, but if it wasn't for these series, I doubt we'd have sustained the reading routine for so long.



49 Star gazing.

If you know the constellations, explain it to your kids. If you don't, learn right alongside them. If you're not interested, just enjoy the beauty of the night sky. You really can't go wrong while [star gazing with kids](#). The quietness of this activity and the majestic vastness of the night sky is just what you need to wind down for a peaceful night.

50 Say a nightly gratitude prayer.

This is a great way to end the day on a high note. In our own personal journey, I see [this simple habit as the key for the turnaround](#) from a lot of turmoil to a place of calm and contentment. It can be the same prayer you repeat each night, or you could make something up every night based on how your day was. The key is to take a few minutes to feel the gratitude.



51 Sing a lullaby.

Or for that matter, or any soothing song. Again the trick here is to find something that not only your kids love and find soothing, but something that helps you unwind as well -- after all, you'll be singing/humming these tunes thousands of times! I sing for my daughter all kinds of songs in English (which she understands) as well as my native language (which she doesn't understand), in my off key tune, but we both love it :)

52 Bedtime yoga with kids.

I didn't even know something like this exists, but apparently it does -- you learn something new every day! Here are [5 yoga poses to help your kids go to sleep and stay asleep](#).



53 Call up faraway relatives (grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins).

I have a friend who has established a routine of skyping grandparents back home in India every single night before the kids go to bed. It is such a great way for her and the kids to unwind for the night, while letting the grandparents start the day with a wonderful chat with grand kids (thanks to time difference)!

54 Create a family journal.

This could be a simple notebook or an ornate diary. The idea is for each one to write down a few sentences into it each night. You can do it themed (eg, “Gratitude” journal or “what I learned today” journal) or follow a free flow format. While it serves the nice purpose of letting you connect with the kids and establish nice bedtime routine now, a few decades later, it will become a cherished chronicle of your family history.

Yaay! for Weekends!



Finally! This is where most of us have some time to spare. At least in theory. Let's put it to good use! Here are some fun things to do with kids on weekends and other spare time -



55 Invite friends over or visit friends.

Yes, weekends are a great time to spend some quality time with your family. That doesn't mean you should restrict it to just family events though! Go ahead, bake a batch of your famous grandma's recipe cookies, and invite friends to come sample them. Or go out to visit them -- birthdays, anniversaries and 'just because' are all perfectly good excuses to hang out!

56 Decorate your home together.

Go rummage at a yard sale. Replace all the old photographs in those frames that you haven't touched since your first kid was 5 months old, with newer updated ones. Catalog and organize the book closet / kitchen pantry. Put together a pin board or a chalk board that you add cute/funny messages to. You just have to look around your house... the opportunity to tinker are virtually endless.



57 Do DIY projects with your kids.

Another great way to create memories, while having fun, is to do DIY projects together. If the kids are young, keep it simple. As they get older, challenge yourself to take on more and more complicated projects. We've started with the simple (and free!) kids DIY workshops at [Lowe's](#) and [Home Depot](#) -- it's fun and education for both the kids and non-DIY parents (like me!)

58 Put together scrapbooks.

If you lean more towards crafts, weekends are a great time to consolidate the memories through the week (and over the years) by taking on the scrapbooking hobby. I'm particularly in love with the [ideas shared by Ali Edwards](#).

And if messing around with all the paper, cutters, stamps and ink pads isn't your thing, it's time to peek into the wonderful world of [digital scrapbooking](#).



59 Paint your kids room.

Have you watched [Randy Pausch's Last Lecture](#)? (If you haven't you should -- it's really very inspiring). The part where he shows slides of his boyhood bedroom with paintings of submarine and quadratic formula really stuck with me. As Randy says "And anybody who is out there who is a parent, if your kids want to paint their bedroom, as a favor to me let them do it. It'll be OK. Don't worry about resale value on the house."

60 Make crafts from old newspapers/magazines.

If I stack all the old magazines I've hoarded over the years, I think it will probably be 2 stories high. Luckily, while researching for this article, I found a few incredible lists of beautiful (and easy) projects you can do with old newspapers and magazines. [Here](#) and [here](#) are the ones I love and plan to try with my daughter.



61 Have a backyard campout.

Who says you have to drive out a hundred miles to campout? Grab your tent and pitch it right in your backyard and [have a backyard campout](#) any time you feel like it! While you are at it, invite a few friends and get a backyard BBQ going. Ah, fun!

62 Go for a dinner and a movie.

There is a reason this is a classic - it's easy, fun and something every one of every age can enjoy. And if it's a movie under the stars at your local park, even better! A few months after the movie *Frozen* came out, our community screened it at the park. All the little girls in the community were there singing right alongside Elsa and Anna at the top of their voices – what a blast we had!



63 Designate a game night.

Order some pizza and settle in for some healthy competitive ribbing and jousting. Here is a [wonderful list of family games](#) to get started.

64 Create a family time capsule.

The idea is simple - each family member contributes one or two items. You pack them all in an airtight container, seal it and date it to be opened some time in the future. You can then bury it in your backyard, save it in the attic or hide it some place where you won't be tempted to open it. You can do this as a one-time activity or turn into with a family tradition -- for instance every year on new year's day (or your child's birthday) you create and bury a new time capsule and you open them all on the eve of their wedding.

Here are some [great ideas for creating a time capsule](#).



65 Designate one day of the weekend as freezer cooking day.

Involve your kids and cook up a few meals that you can stash away in the freezer so you will have free time on weekdays to play with them and everyone can still eat healthy home-cooked food. You can do this for breakfasts, lunches or dinner!

66 Prepare to run a marathon together.

Every weekend head out with your kids and train for a marathon. You train for the actual marathon, your kids incrementally complete the marathon by logging how much they run with you each weekend (similar to the [Marathon Kids](#) program). Will you be in shape to run your 26.2 miles by the time they log their incremental 26.2 miles?



67 Start a kitchen garden.

One of the best ways to get kids to enjoy healthy food is to let them take pride in growing and harvesting their own food. You don't need a huge patch of land to do this either - a small planter on the window sill will do just as well. Here is a wonderful guide of [age-by-age projects to introduce your little ones to the wonderful world of gardening.](#)

68 Volunteer with your kids.

Research shows that [volunteering can increase happiness, decrease depression and help you live longer.](#) So start volunteering together as a family. Look at your local church, school or community boards for opportunity or find them through wonderful sites like [PBS Kids Family Guide to Volunteering](#), [Kids Care Clubs](#) and [DoSomething.Org.](#)



69 Start an ant farm.

I came across this [ant farm activity kit](#) while looking for a gift for one of my daughter's friends. Just take a look at all the reviews and you'll see why I think it's such a fun weekend activity for everyone!

70 Start a backyard wildlife habitat.

Better yet, take it one step further and raise nature loving kids by creating a wildlife habitat right in your backyard. [Here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) are great resources that will give you all the basic information you need to turn your backyard into a sanctuary for birds and butterflies!



71 De-clutter your house

A fun way to do this is to play the [minimalist game](#). The idea is simple -- the first weekend, every member of the family picks 1 item to give away. On the second weekend, everyone gathers 2 items to giveaway. On the 3rd weekend, everyone gathers 3 items to give away and so on. Who can go the longest? Who can be the most charitable? Who can be the most minimalist in your family?

72 Host a garage sale.

Alternately, you can keep boxing the items from your minimalist game and then one weekend, the whole family gets together and organizes a [garage sale](#). Maybe the proceeds can go to your vacation fund. Or you can have an impromptu family outing. Or it can be a part of the college fund. I'm sure you'll figure something out :)



73 Attend religious and cultural gatherings.

A family that plays (and prays) together, stays together. Religious and cultural gatherings are a great fun way to do both. Not only do you get to socialize with people, your kids will have a chance to meet other kids with similar religious/cultural background. It is a great way to have some fun together as a family.

74 Go on an exploration trip.

Start off the weekend with a wonderful nature walk. Or a city exploration. Or a museum visit. Or a foodie tour. What will you discover together? Another option is to go on a scavenger hunt. Can you spot a nest, a yellow leaf and a snail shell during your nature walk? How many Thai restaurants do you know in your city? How many exhibits can you find in the museum that start with the same letter as each of your kid's names?



75 Take a long drive.

Arm yourself with some wonderful [travel games](#), pack a few snacks/drinks and off you go. You can start with a fixed destination in mind, or just drive out with no destination at all -- either way, it's all good!

76 Produce a show for your next family gathering.

It can be something traditional like the nativity play. Or, you can write the whole production yourself. Stay open. Be creative. Encourage impromptu changes. The hilarity and the fun that ensues will be well worth it. These are the stories your kids will be telling *their* kids and grandkids for years to come. Go for it!



77 Start a collection.

Rocks, stamps, [moldaramas](#) - let your imagination run wild. When my elder sister was little, she started collecting labels from matchboxes. Slowly, my younger sister and I joined her in looking for the new and rare matchbox labels. The hobby grew so much, that when distant relatives visited us, they would bring for us unusual, uncommon matchbox labels that they found during their times. It was an amazing experience!

78 Play online/video/arcade games.

In moderation, it's all good. At home, if you can play on a Wii or an Xbox One or a PS4 where you get some exercise too, more power to you! And while choosing arcades, if possible, pick the ones that have a component of physical exercise too – for instance, we have one close to our house with a climbing wall and a putt-putt golf course which are perfect ways to wind up an evening of mindless arcade games.



79 Put together a monster jigsaw puzzle.

Old fashioned, but good nevertheless. When my daughter and I put together puzzles, we leave them around for a while, and keep adding new ones to the "gallery". When we are through with all her puzzles, she creates "tickets" and holds a showing for all of us. It's fun to watch her be a guide and walk us through her puzzles. If you have older kids, take on some serious challenges ([1000 piece puzzles](#) anyone?) -- when your puzzle is completed, get it framed and start the tradition of going out for a big puzzle framing celebration dinner!

80 Create a Pinterest board.

Pick any theme the whole family is interested in and curate pictures to put together cute pins for your family board.



81 Have fun with water balloons.

They are not just for fights anymore -- here are [10 great ideas for water balloons](#). Don't like filling and tying all those balloons? Here's a cool gadget for you to fill [100 of them in under a minute!](#)

82 Go shopping.

I'm not a big fan of shopping, but my daughter and I love an occasional shopping trip together. I assign my daughter a budget -- anywhere from \$2 to \$5 -- and we go to the dollar store. There are no rules, she can get *anything* she wants as long as she stays within budget. It's amazing for me to watch my daughter build her willpower muscle as she reasons and resists her way to the exact number of items to buy.

Create Family Traditions Everyone Will Remember



Family traditions are the cement that hold a family together, give strength to relationships and help create memories that last forever. These traditions may be something big, like the annual holiday party that involves extended family and friends for which the whole family chips in and prepares. Or something small like special heart shaped pancakes without fail every year on your kids' birthday. These are some of the most fun things to do with kids and help create deep connection that neither distance, time or teenage madness can break!



83 Embrace April Fool's Day

When my daughter was young, I played a simple prank on my husband one April Fool's Day and she was so enamored by it that it's now become a tradition. I love this list of [April Fool's day pranks](#) for some great ideas.

84 Practice a secret handshake.

It can be something cool or goofy. My daughter loves [this one](#) from the movie parent trap :) But my favorite story is this one from the blog [Art of Manliness](#) – “This family had the tradition of squeezing each other's hands three times to signal the three words “I love you.” On the day the daughter got married, the father squeezed her hand three times as he walked her down the aisle. Only she knew that this was happening, a tiny personal ritual lodged invisibly within one of the grandest and most public, and she says it was one of the most moving moments of her life.”



85 Create a giving tradition.

Bake and elaborately ice a batch of cookies, cupcakes or cake on the 1st weekend of every month and take it to a local old age home, or orphanage, or soup kitchen. A few weeks before Christmas and birthdays, collect all the old toys and stuff and give away a few. Sort your candy loot on the day after Halloween and [put aside a box to send to the troops.](#)

86 Create an old fashioned connection tradition.

Remember those cards and letters we used to send before everyone started using the Internet? Turns out a lot of the folks in the older generation miss that. A lot. So, buy a dozen postcards or greeting cards and have your kids send them out to their grand parents each month -- handwritten notes, envelope, stamps and all!



87 Create a birthday tradition.

Designate a birthday hat or birthday badge that the birthday person in the family wears from waking up to sun down. Make special breakfast. Order a cake, sing the birthday song and blow out the candles while making a secret wish. It doesn't matter what the exact tradition is -- as long as you repeat it year after year, on each of your kid's birthdays, they will remember it for years to come.

88 Commit to an annual themed trip.

We went on a Disney Cruise last year and I was amazed to meet a young couple who was there without any kids. It turns out both of them came from families where Disney trips was a family tradition. So, they were there not just to create new memories, but to share their old memories with each other! Disney not your style? No problem -- go on a [family camping trip](#), an annual thanksgiving feast at grandma's, skiing, fishing – the possibilities are endless!



89 Sleep in late on weekends.

And fix a special breakfast or better yet, head out for brunch. This is my kind of tradition :) I'm a night owl forced by the reality of life to be a morning lark. I avenge this injustice by sleeping in late on Saturdays. If you are an early bird, ignore the sleeping in part. The special breakfast and brunch idea are still good...

90 Full moon walks.

Roughly about once every month, the moon shines in all its full glory. Make an event out of it, by heading out for a walk with the family either before dinner or after. Better yet, pack that dinner and have a full moon picnic in the park. While growing up, we used to carry our dinner to the terrace to eat "in the moonlight". It is still one of my fondest memories!



91 Take an annual family photo.

Extra brownie points if you can add a fun twist to it... our friends have a colleague whose family goes all out on Halloween and takes a picture. We don't know this family, but boy, we feel like we do simply because our friends share those pictures with us every year! If it's so much fun for us to follow, can you imagine how much fun it must be for the family?

And here's another - these [4 sisters got their photos taken each year](#) for 40 years! I so wish my sister's and I had done this!

92 The annual height check.

You know the markings on the wall where you track their height? The excitement and the happiness on your kids face as they see the line inching up each year? Your bittersweet joy at seeing your kids grow up so fast? Now imagine those lines with dates next to them that are exactly one year apart. It's as good as any tradition can get!



93 Celebrate a designated Random Act of Kindness Day.

Mark one day of the week/month as an intentional RAOK day. Put it on the calendar and remind each other in the morning to find ways to be intentional about kindness. And in the evening (perhaps at the dinner table?) have everyone share and discuss their RAOK.

94 Create consistent Holiday traditions.

Pull out the Christmas decorations from the attic and start decorating during the Thanksgiving break. Dye eggs and have an egg hunt on Easter. Carve a pumpkin and go trick-or-treating on Halloween etc. Pick one of the vacations and go on a themed vacation each year. Record your memories in photobooks that you can look back on. The more consistent the tradition, the more joy you will derive out of it as the years pass!



95 Start a burn-your-regrets New Year's tradition.

Usher in the New Year by having each person write the regrets they had for the past year on a sheet of paper, crumpling it and throwing it into the fireplace as they toast for the New Year and a new start. It'll serve both a fun family tradition and can be cathartic for letting go of things that didn't quite work out and be in a better place to start the New Year right.

96 Say grace at the dinner table.

You don't have to be a religious person to create a tradition of grace and gratitude at the dinner table! You can do it the traditional way by holding hands and giving thanks for the food on the table, or turn it into a tradition of going around the table as you eat and everyone recounts the one thing in their day that they are grateful for.



97 Organize family Olympics.

When you have extended family gatherings, organize family Olympics. You could have traditional competitions like tennis and football. Or wacky ones like who can burp the loudest. Either ways, the healthy competition and camaraderie is bound to be fertile grounds for fond memories!

98 Throw a start of summer BBQ party and/or end of summer pool party.

You'll not just be the coolest parents, you'll also be very popular among your friends :)



99 Start an elf on the shelf tradition.

This is a relatively new tradition based on a 2005 children's picture book [Elf on the Shelf: A Christmas Tradition](#), that has captured the hearts of many people. Here are two very different lists of what you can do with the elf - [one for ambitions parents](#) and [one for slacker parents](#). Not a fan of the Elf on the Shelf? Try the kindness elves instead!

100 Start a tooth fairy tradition.

It doesn't matter if your tooth fairy just leaves a quarter under the pillow or a set of clues that sends your kids on an elaborate treasure hunt. As long as she remembers to visit them, it's all good. (Our tooth fairy actually forgot to visit the first time, but since then, she's got her act together :)).



101 SMILE when you see your kids.

This is a long list. I am tired. I'm trying to think of one last thing to add to this list that will help me wind it up with a punch. My daughter walks in. I'm lost in thought. Unthinking, and out of habit, I smile at her. Her face lights up. And the look of joy on her face lights me up. Everything is fine with the world just the way it is.

It wasn't always like this. There was a time when I'd be too busy to acknowledge her. Or I'd start barking orders the moment I saw her. That was the time I'd have lied to you if you asked me how much I enjoyed everyday family life.

Brene Brown has [simple, yet powerful advice for parents](#) that I've taken to heart -- make sure your face shows your kids what's deep within your heart and not the trivial, transient things that are on your mind at the moment. Sometimes you smile because you are happy to see your kids. Other times, like in my case here, you do it because you've turned it into a habit. And the habit reminds you how happy you are to see your kids.

Either way it's all good!

For more inspiration and resources like this guide, join our community of like-minded parents at [AFineParent.Com](https://www.afineparent.com) . We believe that Great Parents are Made, Not Born. We're passionate about becoming better people, and better parents. [Sign up for free to join us!](https://www.afineparent.com)