Ways to keep kids entertained

Source: David Weisenhorn, senior extension specialist for parenting and adolescence education

There is no doubt that we are all running out of ideas on how to keep our children entertained. This past year has been exceptionally challenging to find ways to entertain kids, but even during normal summers, you are going to have increased chances of hearing “I’m bored,” since your children no longer have schoolwork to keep them busy.

As parents, it can be a struggle to offer fun activities for our kids, so let them come up with some. Ask them to make a list of their favorite activities. Presenting it as a challenge can help some children respond. Have them write their ideas on paper, so when they say, “I’m bored,” you can have them revisit the list to find something to do.

Begin by helping them brainstorm activities by categories. For example, identify indoor activities, outdoor activities, activities by room, things to do solo or with friends/siblings, everyday events and seasonal activities, etc.

Another idea is to plan the week. Just like meal planning, develop a daily theme that is unique. Have your child go back through their activity list. Choose the exercises that excite them the most or see if a few will go together to fill an afternoon. For example, during a “Movement Monday” your kids could go on a treasure hunt, bike through the neighborhood or explore nature during a walk through the woods. Go on a story walk and pretend to be characters in the book. Are you pirates on the open sea searching for lost treasure, or maybe a mermaid searching for the perfect rock on which to soak up the sun and sing a song? Return home to read a book or perform a nature show that explores the natural world.

Don’t worry if the weather is not perfect. There are a ton of free things to do online to keep your kids entertained and engaged in learning while indoors. Some websites with free, fun and educational content include PBS Kids, National Geographic Kids, Khan Academy and Smithsonian Institute. Your children can even learn a new language for free through https://www.duolingo.com/. You can also find websites like https://www.gonoodle.com/, which offers more than 300 dance and yoga videos to get kids moving.

More information on raising healthy families is available at the (COUNTY NAME) office of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

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