

Winter Break Activities that Reinforce Kids' Learning at Home

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What can parents do with their kids during winter break this year with persistent COVID-19 pandemic recreational challenges? The teaching strategies featured in *Student-Engaged Assessment* (Rowman & Littlefield: 2020) can be adapted to reinforce learning at home during the pandemic winter break.

Parents can support their children's learning with relevant and engaging family play and household projects. Parents can help their kids (1) define an academic goal when organizing a family activity, and (2) show their learning through games, family projects, writing, illustrations, videos, performing arts activities, and pictures of completed projects. Children can reflect on what they learned while completing an activity and share their project with parents and

teachers.

Winter Learning Activities

Here are some activities that parents can share with their kids during the COVID-19 winter shutdowns:

Play games, keep score, read directions, and teach friends and family members how to play a new game.

Modify game rules to meet the needs of younger siblings and friends.

Play games online with friends and pair off as teams.

Create culturally relevant holiday decorations for the home.

Design holiday cards, thank you notes, and greeting cards for the new year that can be sent to family members and friends.

Write thank you notes and/or illustrate how to play with a new holiday toy or gift.

Watch YouTube videos to learn how to draw a holiday character or winter scene.

Create talent shows, show magic tricks, tell jokes, direct a play, sing a song, play music, or dance in a holiday family show.

Bake and cook festive holiday meals. Select and modify recipes, adjust the quantity for cooking and baking, and organize a shopping list of ingredients required for baking and cooking.

Organize a family outing to a local park.

Research the best way to get to the park and determine the cost for gas, park fees, and food. Plan a budget for the day and organize a family

picnic.

Consider COVID-19 safety concerns.

Participate in community service activities.

Write letters to seniors, military personnel, and other lonely community members.

Make gifts for seniors and military personnel.

Collect reusable toys and clothing for various holiday collections in the community.

Confirm COVID-19 restrictions with community agencies and provide financial donations when preferred.

Hike at a local park and collect trash per COVID-19 safety guidance.

Care for younger siblings while parents work and organize daily camp activities at home.

Create a family history book by researching the family's history online and interview older relatives.

Collect old pictures that can be inserted or scanned into family history books.

Assemble family cookbooks with recipes provided by relatives.

Create a photo album for each child highlighting memorable activities and notes about special events.

Assemble family vacation photo albums with research on historical landmarks and write stories about fun adventures.

Develop a family budget for 2021 that may include weekly food expenses, basic needs, a savings plan, and money for fun. Middle school and older kids can receive an annual allowance for clothing and elementary school kids can be given a weekly

allowance for completing various household responsibilities.

Balance a checkbook. Older kids can research cell phone plans, automobile insurance and care budgets, college savings plans, and annual family vacation budgets.

Help teens research how to invest in secure savings plans to support college funds.

Have teens volunteer virtually with nonprofit organizations in their community to provide database management services, mentorship activities, and community services for isolated adults and teens.

Encourage teens to assist teachers with creating relevant classroom lessons on reading, writing, math, science, and social studies that can be used for younger students. Teens can teach teachers how to use various computer applications.

Have teens create a family or community vegetable garden with year-round planning and gardening. They can also support various home and building projects (i.e. painting, yard work, cleaning and organizing, managing the laundry, paying bills, servicing and washing automobiles).

Enjoy this beautiful time of year as we enrich children's playtime fun with a variety of learning opportunities!

Happy holidays!

Mary Ann

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