



8 Ways to Keep Kids Busy and Learning Over the Holidays

www.kidsacademy.mobi

During summer, kids have a plethora of activities to keep them busy while they're away from school. In fact, outdoor activities can take up the bulk of summertime fun, from sports, swimming, to vacations, and more! But in the winter when the weather is frigid and icy, the options can be few and far between. All too often, children end up spending the time indoors playing video games or watching TV, neither of which are the least bit helpful or educational.



So, what can a parent do to keep the kids busy and learning throughout the winter break from school? Fortunately, there are many indoor options to pursue when the weather outside is less than favorable. Review the following ideas and learn how to keep kids busy during the holidays!

Keeping Kids Busy with Holiday Learning Experiences

Arrange a Holiday Book Swap

Do you have a circle of mom friends with similarly aged kids? Even if you don't, contact parents of children in your child's class, or join a messaging board in your community to meet others. Or better yet, contact your local library to see if a book swap or a related event is scheduled this month.

Once you have a small circle of other parents, it's a sure bet that all of you have access to various holiday books. Set up a holiday book swap, where you meet with other parents to swap winter-themed book for your kids. You can also make this a playdate where kids trade books to read and discuss with their friends, depending on their age. Use your creativity to make this event any way you wish, but no matter what you decide to do, you can ensure that your little learner will continue reading over the break!

Prepare Thank-You Notes for Gifts

The main highlight of every child's Christmas morning is opening the gifts from Santa, family, and friends. Since you already know that gifts will be opened, now would be a great time to prepare thank-you notes ahead of time!

To get them started, plan for DIY cards made from construction paper or cardstock bought from your local craft store. Help your child choose designs and decorate the front of the cards. If you prefer to wait until after the gifts are received to personalize the cards, just leave them blank inside and finish them after the big day. After all, there will be at least another week between Christmas and New Year's that your child will spend outside of the classroom!

[There's sure to be downtime between any learning activity over the long holiday break. Fill that time with exciting learning games, videos, and more from Kids Academy! Subscribe to our Talented and Gifted app and try it out for free!](#)

Write Holiday Stories or Poems

No matter if your child loves to write, or just needs more practice writing original stories or poems are great ways to continue your child's ELA growth over the winter holiday. But don't assume that by giving kids a pencil and paper that they'll enthusiastically get to work! Instead, try the following ideas with your child to see what works the best:

Create a collection of holiday poems based upon their favorite things, like the song "My Favorite Things" from The Sound of Music, which is often played during the holiday

season. Help your child make a list of their favorite things and create a poem about each!



Watch on [YouTube](#)

- Look outside the window. Is it snowing? Raining? Is it a cold sunny day? Create a poem about the weather outside your window.
- To play off the above idea, task your child with writing an original short story and use the weather or time of day as the setting for their plot.
- Choose a Christmas or winter symbol, like Santa Clause, Reindeer, snowflakes, etc. Write a story that utilizes the symbol within the conflict of the story.
- Think of a favorite holiday character, like Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer, or Frosty the Snowman. Write a story using that character as the main protagonist.
- For younger children, try the above ideas, but instead of writing out the words, task your child with creating a picture book. Help him or her draw pictures to tell their stories!

Regardless of which ideas you choose from the above list, you will know that your child is reviewing critical language arts skills. Take it a step further and talk about the elements of a story, or poetry!

Host a Christmas Movie Marathon in PJ's

If you're snowed in from a blizzard, or just have exhausted other options, host a Christmas movie marathon in your own living room! Besides, who doesn't love a good Netflix movie in the warmth of their own home?

To make this idea more educational, pick movies that have a clear plotline that can easily be followed by little learners. Get ready for the marathon by lighting the fireplace, dressing in jammies and warming up some hot chocolate and popcorn. While watching, take a few breaks and review comprehension by asking a few questions about the setting, characters, symbols, or the conflict. To make this subtle and less like work, simply ask these questions when the movie is paused before and after bathroom or snack breaks!

Create a Holiday-Themed DIY Invention Box

Activate your child's creativity by making them a DIY invention box and allowing your kids to create anything they want with the objects you put inside!

To get started, find a wooden or cardboard box to use as the invention box. Decorate it with holiday garland, stickers, glitter, or anything your kids would find sparkly and bright! Fill the box with a wide variety of craft supplies, and feel free to find those that are red, green, white, silver, or gold. Try to find the items below to fill the box:

- Pipe cleaners
- Pom poms
- Ribbon
- Craft sticks
- Rubber Bands
- Faux feathers
- Buttons and googly eyes
- Yarn
- Construction paper
- Glitter glue pens
- Finger or acrylic paints
- Toilet paper or towel rolls
- Cardboard pieces

Whatever craft supplies you have laying around the house can go in the box! When your child creates an "invention", encourage him or her to create a sculpture, object, wreath, or musical instrument with the supplies. Use the paper to make masterpiece holiday artwork drawings!

Make a Blanket or Box Fort in the Living Room

If you're looking for STEM things to do for your active, hands-on learner, look no further than helping your child to create a classic blanket or box fort! Put his or her engineering skills to the test by designing a plan for an indoor fort. Plan to use tables, chairs, blankets, or whatever it is you have in your house to support the structure. Help your child create a blueprint before beginning and discuss plans before putting them into place.

Finally, when it's time to begin, watch as your child follows their written plans to construct the fort. Feel free to join in the building fun and spend some time inside the fort with your child! Watch a movie or use it to camp out in your living room for an extra special treat!

Prepare and Perform Homemade Pageant or Puppet Show

To practice storytelling and the dramatic arts, encourage your children to put on a show for your family members at your holiday gatherings! Before Christmas, instruct your kids to create a storyline for a play or puppet show. They can write their own original story, or they can reproduce a movie, play, or even Jesus' birth story. Instruct kids to write their lines on paper to practice. Additionally, plan costumes based on the clothes you have available, or create puppets using craft supplies you already have around your home. Don't forget to encourage performers to practice their presentation before the big day!

At your family celebration, allow your children to perform for all to see. Don't forget to congratulate all participants on a job well done!

Make an Indoor Snowman

Not enough snow outside to make a snowman? Maybe you live in the South where snow doesn't really fall. No need to worry, because snowmen can be made inside the house using common supplies!

All you'll need is a shallow box or a large box lid, a full can of shaving cream, and plenty of cornstarch. Add about two containers of cornstarch to the empty box and spread it around. On top, empty the entire can of shaving cream, and mix it all up using your hands to create "snow".

Find random craft objects around the house to use as decorations for your snowman. Try to find buttons, small twigs, yarn, etc. to place on the snowman. When ready, using the "snow", form a few balls to create the snowman itself, and decorate it using the craft supplies!

