

# Holiday Survival Guide for School Age kids



# HOLIDAY SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR SCHOOL-AGE KIDS (5–12 YEARS)

## 1. Little Scientists & Inventors

- **"Scientist Day": Dive into simple, exciting experiments!**
  - Volcanoes: Baking soda and vinegar eruptions (add dish soap for extra foam!).
  - Rainbows: Skittles or M&Ms with a little water on a plate.
  - Slime Making: Experiment with different recipes (borax-free options available!).
  - Floating & Sinking: Test various household objects in a tub of water.
  - DIY Lava Lamps: Oil, water, food coloring, and an effervescent tablet.
  - Crystal Growing: Simple salt or sugar crystal experiments.
  - *Tip:* Google "easy science experiments for kids" for endless ideas.
- **Lego Challenge:** Set a theme (e.g., "Build a futuristic city," "Design a magical creature," "Create a vehicle that flies and swims") and let their imagination soar. You can even time them for an extra challenge!
- **DIY Construction:** Use cardboard boxes, toilet paper rolls, and tape to build forts, robots, or even a small car.

## 2. Creative Storytellers & Artists (Imagination & Expression!)

- **DIY Storybook:** Encourage them to write and illustrate their own story. Provide paper, crayons, markers, and staples to bind it into a book. They can even read it aloud to the family!
- **Art & Craft Extravaganza:**
  - Hand Crafts: Paper plate animals, pipe cleaner sculptures, pom-pom creatures.
  - Colouring & Painting: Provide various mediums (crayons, pencils, watercolors, acrylics) and different types of paper.
  - Nature Collage: Collect leaves, flowers, twigs, and small pebbles during an outdoor walk, then arrange and glue them onto paper or cardboard.
  - Recycled Art: Use empty cereal boxes, plastic bottles, bottle caps, and other recyclables to create sculptures or robots.
- **Puppet Show:** Encourage them to create puppets (from socks, paper bags, or drawings on sticks) and then write and perform their own mini-plays, perhaps reenacting funny school or family scenarios.

## 3. Active Explorers & Gamesters (Energy Burners & Fun!)

- **Obstacle Course:** Set up an indoor or outdoor course using pillows to climb over, hula hoops to step through, chairs to crawl under, and timed races for friendly competition.
- **Dance Party:** Put on their favourite music (or yours!) and just dance! Try "freeze dance" or even attempt to learn some popular TikTok trends together.



- **Scavenger Hunt:** Create an indoor or outdoor scavenger hunt with simple riddles or picture clues leading to a small "treasure" (like a snack or a new pencil).
- **Mini-Olympics:** Organize backyard games like sack races (use pillowcases!), ball toss, egg and spoon race. Create DIY medals from cardboard and foil for the winners (and participants!).
- **Bike Riding / Scooter Adventures:** Explore local parks, cycle paths, or quiet streets.
- **Activity Centres:** Plan trips to indoor trampolining parks, swimming pools, or water parks for a big energy release.
- **Outdoor Adventures:** Go for walks in local woods, nature reserves, or even just a different park. Explore, climb, and run!

#### 4. Mindful & Connected Kids (Emotional Growth & Harmony!)

- **"Feelings Charades":** Write different emotions on slips of paper (happy, sad, angry, surprised, silly). Take turns acting them out for others to guess. Great for emotional literacy.
- **Gratitude Jar:** Decorate a jar. Each day, encourage everyone to write or draw one thing they're thankful for and put it in the jar. Read them out at the end of the week.
- **Meditation for Kids:** Find age-appropriate guided meditations online (many free apps or YouTube channels). Even 5-10 minutes can help with calm and focus.
- **Family Story Time:** Continue the tradition of reading aloud, even for older kids. Choose chapter books that everyone can enjoy.

#### 5. Life Skills & Practical Learning (Growing Independence!)

- **Cooking Buddy:** Involve them in meal prep. Decorate cookies, make mini-pizzas, or help bake a cake. Simple tasks like stirring, measuring, or washing vegetables.
- **Rearrange or Redecorate a Space:** Let them take ownership of their room or a play area. Help them declutter, organize, and rearrange furniture.
- **Free Online Courses:** Search for free online courses or tutorials for kids on topics they're interested in – drawing, simple coding, a new language, or a craft.
- **Board & Card Games:** Play classic board games (Monopoly, Chess, Snakes & Ladders) or card games (Uno, Go Fish). "Question games" (like 20 Questions or Guess Who?) are excellent for brain development and critical thinking.

#### 6. Social & Community Engagement

- **Playdates:** Arrange playdates with other families. Take turns hosting or meeting at a park. Consider reciprocal childcare arrangements where you watch their kids one day, and they watch yours another.
- **Day Trips:** Plan exciting day trips using public transport (buses or trains) to a new town, a museum, a historical site, or a special exhibition. The journey itself can be an adventure!
- **Holiday Clubs:** Enroll them in a themed holiday club (e.g., baking, cooking, football, drama, science). This provides structured activity and a chance to meet new friends.

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## Preteens/Teens (13–18 Years)

### 1. Skill Building & Future Focus (Empowering Independence!)

- **Life Skills Workshop:** Dedicate time to practical life skills.
  - **Budgeting Basics:** Help them understand saving, spending, and simple budgeting.
  - **Laundry Day:** Teach them how to sort, wash, dry, and fold their own laundry.
  - **Simple Meal Prep:** Guide them in preparing basic meals or snacks (e.g., pasta, scrambled eggs, a simple salad).
  - **Basic Car Maintenance:** (If applicable) How to check oil, tire pressure, or change a flat.
- **Coding Basics:** Encourage them to explore free online tutorials like "Hour of Code" or platforms like Codecademy to learn the fundamentals of programming.
- **"Try a New Hobby" Day:** Encourage them to pick up a new skill or hobby they've always been curious about – knitting, skateboarding, chess, photography, learning a few phrases in a new language, or playing a simple instrument.
- **Free Online Courses:** Beyond hobbies, encourage them to search for free online courses related to potential career interests or academic subjects they want to explore further (e.g., Coursera, edX, Khan Academy often have free options).

### 2. Creative Expression & Digital Exploration

- **DIY Podcast/YouTube Video:** Encourage them to plan, record, and edit a short podcast episode or YouTube video on a topic they're passionate about. This builds communication, research, and technical skills.
- **Photography Walk:** Give them a camera (even a phone camera) and a theme (e.g., "nature in the city," "patterns," "emotions"). Encourage them to capture images and then share their favorites.
- **Vision Board Party:** Gather old magazines, printouts, glue, and a large board. Encourage them to create a visual representation of their goals, dreams, and aspirations for the future.
- **Music Jam Session / Karaoke Night:** If they play instruments, encourage a jam session. If not, a karaoke night is always a fun way to let loose and express themselves.
- **Digital Art/Design:** Explore free online tools for graphic design (Canva), digital drawing, or video editing.

### 3. Active & Social Engagement (Connecting & Moving!)

- **Sports Tournament:** Organize a friendly basketball shoot-out, soccer match, or spikeball tournament with friends or family.
- **Outdoor Adventures:** Hiking, cycling on longer trails, exploring new parts of your city/town on foot.
- **Escape Room at Home:** Design a DIY escape room with puzzles, riddles, and clues hidden around the house. (Many free templates online!).

- **Activity Centres:** Continue to encourage trips to indoor trampolining parks, water parks, or swimming. These are still great for physical activity and socialising.
- **Bike Riding or Scooter:** Encourage longer rides to explore new areas or simply for exercise.
- **Campfire Night (or "Fireside" Chat):** If you have a safe outdoor space, a small campfire for stories, stargazing, and roasting marshmallows. If not, create a cozy "fireside" atmosphere indoors with blankets and dim lights for deep conversations.

#### 4. Community & Connection (Giving Back & Growing!)

- **Volunteer Project:** Encourage them to give back.
  - Bake for elderly neighbours.
  - Offer to help clean a local park or community space (e.g., a church hall).
  - Volunteer with a local charity (e.g., food bank, animal shelter, community garden).
- **Book/Movie Club:** Pick a book or movie everyone agrees on, and then gather to discuss it over snacks. Encourage open dialogue about themes, characters, and personal reactions.
- **Day Trips:** Plan day trips using public transport to explore new cities, historical sites, or cultural events. Let them help plan the itinerary.
- **Rearrange or Redecorate a Space:** Give them autonomy to redesign their room or a shared family space. This fosters responsibility and creativity.
- **Board Games & Card Games:** Continue playing board games and card games. For this age, introduce more strategic games or those that encourage deeper conversation ("question games" are still great!).

## VIRTUAL IDEAS

### School-Age (5–12 Years)

#### Virtual Field Trips & Learning

1. **Google Arts & Culture** (Free)
  - Explore the *British Museum* (London) or *NASA's Space Center*.
  - Try the "Blob Opera" music game or "Art Coloring Book."
2. **National Geographic Kids** (Free)
  - Virtual animal cams (zoos, aquariums).
  - Interactive geography quizzes.
3. **Louvre Virtual Tours** (Free)
  - "Mona Lisa Up Close" or Egyptian antiquities.
4. **Discovery Education Virtual Field Trips** (Free)
  - Topics like STEM, farms, or factories.

## Creative & Skill-Building

5. **Scratch Coding** (MIT, Free)
    - Animate stories/games with block coding.
  6. **Prodigy Math Game** (Free)
    - RPG-style math practice.
  7. **DIY Animation**
    - Use *Stop Motion Studio* (free app) to make claymation shorts.
  8. **Virtual Music Lessons**
    - *Chrome Music Lab* (free) to compose songs.
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### Virtual Exploration

1. **Google Earth "Voyager"** (Free)
  - Guided tours of global landmarks or climate change sites.
2. **Smithsonian Learning Lab** (Free)
  - Curate digital collections (art, history, science).
3. **Virtual College Tours** (e.g., *YouVisit.com*)
  - Explore campuses worldwide.
4. **NASA's Eyes** (Free)
  - 3D tours of planets, asteroids, and spacecraft.

### Productive Hobbies

5. **Canva Design Challenges** (Free)
  - Create social media graphics or posters.
6. **Duolingo Language Battles** (Free)
  - Compete with friends in Spanish/French/etc.
7. **Khan Academy Courses** (Free)
  - Coding, art history, or AP test prep.
8. **Virtual Volunteering**
  - Transcribe historical docs at *Smithsonian Digital Volunteers*.

### Career Prep

9. **"Adopt a Stock" Game**

- Track a real stock (fake money) and research trends.

#### 10. TED-Ed YouTube

- Watch/debate videos like "How to Manage Your Time."