



Summer Survival Guide: 26 Simple Activities to Do with Your Kids

A – Aquatics Center. We are spoiled with a beautiful aquatics center where we live and my kids love it. Check out your local swimming places and make a day of it.

B – Board Games. Kids love board games. Let each kid pick out their favorite game and take turns playing them. This is a great (and sneaky way) of working on your special needs kiddo's coping skills on how to work through losing a game.

C – Cook. This doesn't have to be a full-course meal. Think simple! Let the kids help you make lunch today. They will love being able to jump in and make sandwiches and you'll love seeing their smiling faces.

D – Dogs. Take the dogs for a walk. This is great exercise for the entire family and kids love feeling like they're contributing in some way.

E – Experiments. Kids love doing experiments. Look online for some simple ones that you and your kids can do together like making slime which seems to be the super popular thing to do right now.

F – Friends. Have friends over. Let each kid have a special playdate with their friends on different days during different weeks. Spread it out. This is a great way for you to help your special needs kid work through social skills.

G – Grocery Shopping. You have to do it anyways so why not make it fun? Give each kid a list of five things to get and let them put them in the cart. They will enjoy this more than you realize.

H – Hammock. Get a hammock! These are fun and a great sensory tool for your special needs kid. It's perfect for those relaxing summer days.

I – Ice Cream! Go out for ice cream at your local ice cream place or buy some for home and make ice cream cones.

J – Jump Rope. Let's face it. Our kids love seeing us adults do funny things and I guarantee you if you start jump roping, they're going to laugh. Find your inner kid and see who can jump rope the longest.

K – Kindness. Challenge your kids to something kind for someone else. This could be holding the door open for someone at the store or helping a sibling clean up their room. It's free way to add so much value to your life.

L – Library. This is hands-down one of my favorite things to do with my kids. Most libraries have summer reading programs where your kids can earn prizes the more they read. Head to the library and get your them signed up.

M – Movie Time. Either rent a movie at home during one of the days you've declared at a SAHD or go out to the movies.

N – Nap. Not all kids will take a nap, especially if they're older, but you can still try. Maybe the little one takes a nap while the older ones read books.

O – Occupational Therapy. Take some of the homework to-dos that your child has been given by the therapist and make it a family thing. My son has to work on wearing socks all day and part of his homework is to wear them longer and longer as time goes on. Include your other kids and let them pick out a pair of their favorite socks. See who can wear them the longest. This creates a sense of inclusion and it has the potential to make something that's really hard for your special needs kid – be something fun.

P – Picnic. Have a picnic. This can be in your backyard or at a park. Kids love picnics and you can pack the meal they helped make (see letter C).

Q – Quarters. I give out a quarter each time I catch my kids doing one of their chores. They each have their own piggy banks in the laundry room and the sound of “kerplunk” that the quarters make when their tiny hands drop them in their containers gets everyone excited.

R – Rain. The next time it rains, let your kids play in it. Really. Your kids will think you're kidding but let them do it. No umbrellas needed.

S – Scavenger Hunt. These are so fun! You can come up with your own things for you kids to find or you can print out idea sheets online (Pinterest) to send your kids on a scavenger hunt.

T – Travel. Take a short trip somewhere. This could be to a nearby family member's house or maybe an overnight trip to explore a new place.

U – Underhand. Work on throwing a ball around underhand with your kids. My daughters are always wanting to get in on the fun of playing football with their big brother but they can get discouraged when their throwing techniques have them running around more than catching. Teach your kids how to throw underhand if they're on the younger side so they can enjoy a fun game of catch, too.

V – Volunteer. This is a great way to show your kids first-hand what it means to do something kind for someone else. You can volunteer to walk dogs at the animal shelter or pack meals at the local food bank. If going out and volunteering in a public place is too much for your special needs kid, you can have him volunteer his time doing something at home like making cards for Veterans that you can mail out at your own convenience.

W – Watermelon. Watermelon is the perfect thing to eat on a hot summer day. Cut some big slices up and let your kids eat them outside as part of the perfect summer BBQ.

X – X Marks the Spot. This is similar to a scavenger hunt but this activity includes a map with a hidden treasure at the end. Take it one step further and encourage your kids to dress up as pirates.

Y – Yes. Have a YES day. Don't tell your kids this but try saying yes to everything they ask (within reason). You'll be surprised just how fun this activity can be and I bet you'll learn some things about your kids you didn't know.

Z – Zoo. Visit your local zoo!