

## THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR KIDS

Keeping children occupied just takes a little imagination and creative thinking. Take into account not only what interests your children, but what other things they may never have had any experience with. Opening them up to new experiences can trigger a new hobby or sport for them and jump-start their imagination.

- **Take a walk.** You can still go out to a non-crowded place to avoid close contact with others. The weather is getting more spring-like so what about walking in your neighborhood, along the river or on some of your local nature trails! **Great Brook Farm in Carlisle** is less than a 10-minute car ride from Chelmsford Center. The farm is part of the federal government parks system and plans to remain open to the public. The buildings and restrooms are closed, but the farm trails are open for walking and exploring nature.
- **Arts and Crafts.** Check out Pinterest for crafts and gifts to make together.
  1. Get started on making the birthday gifts you'll need in the next few months.
  2. Learn how to make items that will help your family get more organized.
  3. Do an art or craft activity about Spring.
  4. Find interesting ways to use recyclables.
- **Get baking together.** There are lots of kid-friendly recipes online or use one of your tried and true family favorite recipes. Let kids help you while learning at the same time. Baking involves being able to organize your ingredients and utensils, math (measuring), science (properties of the ingredients; what happens when we apply the heat of the oven?), the senses and language (your talking and reading).
- **Look at old photos.** Sort through old photographs and share the stories about them. You'll be spending quality time with your kids and sharing stories that can be passed down.
- **Draw a family tree.** Young children can be amazed when they hear about their older relatives (especially grandparents, aunts and uncles) as children. They only think about them in the present and not that they were children once. Share stories and information about what life was like when they were growing up.
- **Organize.** Pick a room (maybe your child's) and have your child help decide what things should be kept, what thrown out and what is still in good condition and can be donated.
- **Write a note or letter or make a card.** Writing is a dying art, but, many people especially older ones appreciate the time and effort that goes into this. Have your child write (or if younger) dictate a note to their grandparents or favorite cousin. Then walk to the post office box to mail it.
- **Scavenger Hunt.** This will take a little time to set up, but it will keep the kids busy and maybe as a reward to the winner, you can let them choose a movie for the family to watch or an activity to do.
- **Get gardening.** Go to your online library site and choose a gardening book for children. Show your child how to take care of plants and let them garden, too. If you live in apartment, go to your balcony plant some flowers in pots.

- **Family Movie Time.** Choose a movie and make some popcorn. When the movie is over have a conversation with your children about what they/the character learned, what they experienced, was it funny or sad, what would they do different than the main characters.
- **Dance Party.** Put some tunes on and dance!
- **Puppets.** Make finger puppets and help them create their own puppet show. Make a theatre out of a box and get creative.
- **Read.** Have a child pick a book and then you.
- **Indoor or Outdoor Picnic.** Throw a blanket on the floor, on the balcony or in your backyard.
- **Sports.** Make your own mini-golf course in the living room. There are many online ideas you can easily recreate.
- **Homemade games.** In the evenings get the kids to design a game that you can make the next day – give them ideas to keep it simple such as a paper boat race in the bath or homemade skittles using a tennis ball and empty toilet rolls.
- **Origami.** All you need is paper and instructions which can be found online, will keeps kids amused and they will learn a new skill.
- **Games.** Play board games and card games, I'm sure there are some lurking somewhere in the house.