

Having Fun Together!

How do youth and mentors spend their time together? The particular activities can be almost anything. What is important is that the mentee play a role in deciding on the activity, and that it be fun. Here are a few suggestions:

Play Games

Shop for food and cook a meal

Go to the movies and discuss what you see

Walk around the mall

Play catch

Play chess

Hang out and talk

Take photographs together

Find interesting information on the internet

Spend time together “doing nothing”

Watch TV and talk about what you see

Do homework (although only occasionally)

Eat at a restaurant

Go to a concert

Go bowling

Go to the library

Shoot some hoops

Do gardening together

Go to a baseball or basketball game

Do woodworking together

Go to a museum

Talk about your first job

Read a book together

Give a tour of your current job

Get involved in a community service project

Take a walk in the park

Write a story together

Go bargain hunting

Have a picnic

Play miniature golf

Fly a kite

Talk about the future

Listen to music each of you enjoys

Attend BCYMP Youth Activities

So What Exactly Does a Mentor Do?

Mentors commit to spending a minimum of an hour per week with their youth. Group activities are fun, but it is expected that the mentor and youth will spend time together, just the two of you. This time may be spent in a number of ways. The following are some recommended activities that youth and mentors have found valuable in the past:

Expected Activities

- Make a point of meeting your youth's parent(s), early in the relationship
- Attend periodic BCYMP group activities
- Attend periodic Advanced Mentor Training
- Attend special events such as Recognition and Awards Event

Suggested Activities

- **Arrange one or more job shadows.** Have your youth follow you around as you perform your work. Have your youth follow a worker that has agreed to host your youth for a prearranged period of time. Or be a youth for a day – shadow your youth.
- **Talk.** Tell your youth those things that you wish you had known when you were in high school. You can do this anywhere, anytime – over lunch, walking in the park, on the phone – whatever works.
- **Ask Questions.** Teenagers need somebody to ask, “What do you want to do after high school?” and “What’s your plan for how to get there?” They will also need help answering those questions.
- **Attend recreational and/or cultural activities.** Youth need more exposure to enriching activities such as visits to museums, attending plays, concerts, or sporting events. These experiences can pique interest and encourage youth to pursue new areas of learning.
- **Tutor.** Mentors should feel free to help youth with homework. Getting involved with their curriculum is a good way to relate to youth and gain insight into the educational program. Mentors may also arrange for someone else to tutor the youth.
- **Attend youth activities.** If your youth is involved in extracurricular activities, is employed, or is involved in activities outside of the school environment, attend those functions, when appropriate, to show support.
- **Do things in groups.** Mentors should be encouraged to join in activities with other mentors and youth. Participants in mentor programs enjoy meeting, interacting, and sharing experience with one another.

You need not limit your activities to this list of suggestions – be creative. The goal is to provide experiences that the youth's usual environment does not provide. The more “real world” exposure a mentor can provide a youth, the more that youth will learn. Youth will gain new perspectives on the working world and their own education and potential.

Fifty TV-Free Activities for the Kids This Summer!

1. Have an ice cream sundae party
2. Help an elderly person with house or yard work
3. Hike at night
4. Hike up a mountain and let kids take pix
5. Host a teddy bear or favorite stuffed toy themed picnic
6. Host a yard sale
7. Join the library reading program
8. Jump on a trampoline
9. Keep a summer journal of places visited
10. Lay on a blanket and watch the clouds out
11. Lay out at night and watch stars
12. Learn or teach a new sport with someone
13. Learn some new outdoor games
14. Light a sparkler
15. Make a campfire in the back yard
16. Make a dam in the brook behind the house
17. Make a movie
18. Make a new kind of sandwich
19. Make a popsicle stand
20. Make a scrapbook of everything you do this summer
21. Make a teepee out of big sticks
22. Make an obstacle course in your back yard
23. Make chalk paint
24. Make clover or daisy chains
25. Make dinner for your family
26. Make fairy houses
27. Make homemade ice cream
28. Make homemade yogurt pops
29. Make juicy ices (with paper cups and sticks)
30. Make lemonade from lemons
31. Make s'mores
32. Make snow cones
33. Make some new window boxes for mom and plant with flowers
34. Make stepping stones for your garden or yard- or to give as gifts
35. Make your own letterbox
36. Make your own soccer camp
37. Make/work on outdoor play fort
38. Organize a scavenger hunt
39. Pick blueberries
40. Pick strawberries
41. Pitch a tent in the backyard and have a "camp out"
42. Plan a tricked out staycation for the kids
43. Plant a garden
44. Plant a tree in your child's name
45. Play badminton
46. Play Frisbee
47. Play hopscotch
48. Play in the sand
49. Play kickball at the playground
50. Play Marco Polo

Eighty-Three Things to Do on a Rainy Day!

1. Bake a pie with fresh fruit
2. Bake banana bread
3. Bake cookies
4. Build a time capsule
5. Build with Legos
6. Compare a book to a movie
7. Cook dinner for friends and surprise deliver it to them
8. Create a new world
9. Create fun "to-do" chore jars
10. Create your own holiday
11. Cut up an old greeting card picture and make a puzzle
12. Dance in the rain
13. Design a family flag
14. Discover a new favorite author or book series
15. Do "spontaneous problems" from OM
16. Picnic with a blanket on the kitchen floor on a rainy day
17. Donate some of the toys and clothes you no longer use
18. Go bowling
(<http://www.kidsbowlfreecom/>)
19. Go out for ice cream
20. Go to story time at the library
21. Have a family game night
22. Have a handmade pizza party
23. Have a music/house cleaning party
24. Have a pillow fight
25. Host a tea party
26. Invent a new dance
27. Invent your own board game
28. Keep your brain going (with brain teasers)
29. Learn a new word Use it
30. Learn about a new place and have a meal based on that area
31. Learn about fireworks
32. Learn the Greek alphabet
33. Learn to crochet
34. Learn to play chess
35. Learn to sew
36. Learn to sew
37. Make (and eat!) Crash Hot Potatoes
38. Make a bird feeder
39. Make a bird house
40. Make a cd mix and burn it for the car
41. Make a collage from magazine words and pictures
42. Make a cool 100 chart for younger sibling or friend
43. Make a craft out of recyclables
44. Make a fire safety plan
45. Make a nighttime cd mix
46. Make a tech deck park

47. Make funny faces
48. Make home-made play dough
49. Make ice cream sandwiches
50. Make pancakes
51. Make pirate costumes
52. Make rock monsters for the garden
53. Make silly putty
54. Make something from recyclables
55. Make strawberry freezer jam
56. Paint a portrait of your best friend
57. Paint your face
58. Play dress-up
59. Practice spanish
60. Print some pictures and decorate plain frames
61. Put notes inside of balloons and hand them out to friends
62. Read a story to someone
63. Redecorate boys bedroom for a new school year!
64. Research your family tree
65. Scrapbook photos taken over summer
66. Send a postcard
67. Share your favorite movie with a friend
68. Start a collection
69. Sword fight
70. Take airplane rides on Daddy's feet
71. Tell ghost stories
72. Tint some shaving cream, spread it in a baking pan, and doodle or write words
73. Travel in time
74. Turn a big box into something cool
75. Visit ECHO on a rainy day
76. Visit the library
77. Visit the Vermont Teddy Bear Factory and build a new friend
78. Wash your hair with shampoo in the summer rain
79. Wrestle
80. Write a fairy tale
81. Write a letter
82. Write a poem
83. Write a song

99 Ways to Have Fun with Your Kids for Free or Cheap

Yesterday I posted about Family Day, where we try to have fun together as a family, often for free or without spending much money. I thought it would be useful to list some ways to have fun with your kids without spending a lot of money:

1. Have a reading marathon.
2. Write stories together.
3. Play soccer.
4. Paint or draw together.
5. Create a fort in your living room out of blankets or cardboard boxes.
6. Go on a hike.
7. Have a sunset picnic at a park or beach.
8. Play board games.
9. Play kickball.
10. Get up early, pack breakfast, and have a sunrise breakfast.
11. Go to a museum.
12. Go to a playground.
13. Play hide-and-seek.
14. Have a pillow fight.
15. Ride bikes.
16. Build sandcastles.
17. Rent a dvd and make popcorn.
18. Tell stories.
19. Have a scavenger hunt.
20. Make mazes or puzzles for each other to solve.
21. Play card games.
22. Garden together.
23. Bake cookies (let the kids help).
24. Go to the zoo.
25. Go to the library.
26. Shop at a thrift shop.
27. Create a blog together.
28. Create a scrapbook.
29. Make a movie using a camcorder and computer.
30. Learn to play music.
31. Finger paint.
32. Make play dough from scratch.
33. Make homemade mini pizzas.
34. Buy popsicles.
35. Make hand-painted T-shirts.
36. Set up a hammock, make lemonade, relax.
37. Go to a pool.
38. Go to a public place, people watch, and make up imaginary stories about people.
39. Visit family.
40. Write letters to family.
41. Paint or decorate the kids' room.
42. Make milkshakes.
43. Play freeze tag.
44. Create a treasure hunt for them (leaving clues around the house or yard).
45. Decorate a pair of jeans.
46. Do a science experiment.
47. Play games online.
48. Teach them to play chess.
49. Learn magic tricks.

50. Create a family book, with information and pictures about each family member.
51. Fly kites.
52. Go snorkeling.
53. Barbecue.
54. Volunteer.
55. Donate stuff to charity.
56. Compete in a three-legged or other race.
57. Create an obstacle course.
58. Pitch a tent and sleep outside with marshmallows.
59. Roast marshmallows.
60. Play loud music and dance crazy.
61. Write and produce a play (to perform before other family members).
62. Paint each other's faces.
63. Have a water balloon fight.
64. Have a gun-fight with those foam dart guns.
65. Explore your yard and look for insects.
66. Go for a walk and explore the neighborhood.
67. Go jogging.
68. Take pictures of nature.
69. Play a trivia game.
70. Make up trivia questions about each other.
71. Make hot cocoa.
72. Play house.
73. Decorate the house with decorations you make.
74. Make popsicles.
75. Play school.
76. Do shadow puppets.
77. Make a comic book.
78. Play in the rain.
79. Make mud pies.
80. Blow bubbles.
81. Take turns saying tongue twisters.
82. Sing songs.
83. Tell ghost stories in the dark with a flashlight.
84. Build stuff with Legos.
85. Give them a bubble bath.
86. Play with squirt guns.
87. Play video games together.
88. Play wiffleball.
89. Play nerf football.
90. Build a rocket from a kit.
91. Bake a cake and decorate it.
92. Play dress-up.
93. Thumb-wrestle, play mercy, or have a tickle fight.
94. Make a gingerbread house, or decorate gingerbread men.
95. Learn and tell each other jokes.
96. Play basketball.
97. Learn to juggle.
98. Walk barefoot in the grass and pick flowers.
99. Build paper airplanes and have a flying contest.