

# Activity Ideas for a Screen Detox

from Clare Morell, author of *The Tech Exit*

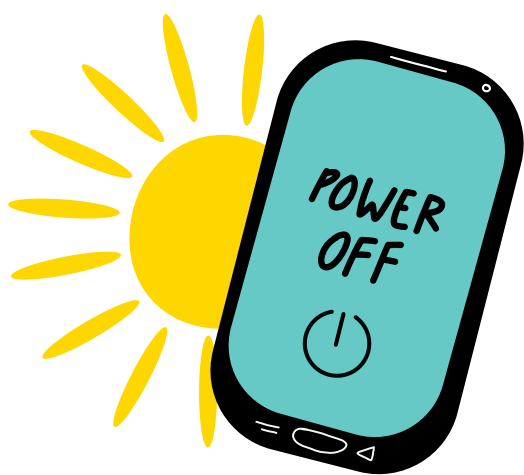
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## For Toddlers and Elementary Age Kids

- Give them digging/sand tools and buckets and set them loose in a yard or park to dig and fill their buckets.
- Make bubble foam with dish soap and water. You can even add food coloring and set them outside with various scoops, Tupperware, and bins and let them play with the foam.
- In the summer, a water table makes for great water play with toys.
- Chalk or bubbles are great outlets for creativity and burning off energy.
- Paint with water on the driveway or sidewalk; give them paint brushes and water and they can make water pictures.
- Water guns and refillable water balloons make for fun water play.
- Scooters and balance bikes are great first “vehicles” for toddlers to learn to use to move around, often with older kids on scooters and regular bikes taking them out and around the block or neighborhood
- Take an adventure walk where there is no destination; just walk to explore and notice things. If you’re in a city, this could look like noticing cars and construction, or in a park noticing nature and animals. It’s just a walk to explore.
- Take them to a creek to play, with boots or water shoes and buckets, and let them throw rocks or float sticks down the creek and explore.
- Have elementary kids run a lemonade stand.
- Teach your child a new chore that he or she will take ownership of doing the rest of the summer for the home.
- Have your kids help wash the car.
- Take your family on spontaneous ice cream runs.
- Organize a game of wiffle ball or capture the flag with neighbors or friends.
- Have a family picnic outdoors for dinner.
- Put a blanket down in your yard at night and lay down and star gaze with your kids. See what stars they can find.

## For Tweens and Teens

- Organize nighttime games at home or in your neighborhood, like flashlight tag, kick the can, sardines, etc.
- Have a bonfire with s’mores.
- Give them a summer reading challenge with a number of books or pages to read by the end of the summer, and if they complete the challenge, give them a prize or reward that is mutually agreed upon beforehand.



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## **For Tweens and Teens, cont.**

- Go to the pool.
- Let them ride their bike around the neighborhood, to the pool, or to a friend's house when they are old enough.
- Have them join the local swim team for the summer.
- Have them start a journal and write down their thoughts and dreams.
- Get a few 1000-piece puzzles to work on one at a time and have it out on a table in the family or living room.
- Take trips to the local library to check out books, or let them go to the library by themselves.
- Go mini golfing.
- Find local summer concerts or theater in the park and have them go to shows with their friends, or go as a family.
- Sign them up for a tech-free, sleep-away camp, where they'll be off tech and in nature with peers.
- Organize a group hike for them with friends. Check out state and national parks in your area for hiking or walking trails or places to picnic or to throw a frisbee or football around.
- Get a spikeball set and have your teens take it to the beach or park with their friends.
- Buy cornhole boards for your yard for teens to play (also consider a croquet set, badminton set, ladder ball and other yard games).
- Go bowling or indoor roller skating.
- Go to an indoor trampoline park or maybe you have a trampoline in your yard.
- Consider investing in a ping pong table or pool table for your basement or garage. For a cheaper option, you can often find used ones on Facebook marketplace or Craig's List - it could even be a project to assign your teen to find one to buy and then coordinate the purchase and picking it up.
- Design a scavenger hunt or have your teens design a scavenger hunt to do with their friends.
- Encourage your teen to get a summer job. Often, Parks and Rec Departments have good seasonal jobs for teens like camp counseling, lifeguarding, and working on grounds teams for parks.
- Teach them how to mow the lawn and make that your tween or teen's responsibility for the summer. You could even encourage them to start a lawn mowing business for your neighborhood.
- Encourage your teen to learn to cook over the summer. Give them ownership for planning and making a meal for the family. Or better yet, teach them how to grill and have them organize a BBQ at your home for their friends.
- Take your family on a camping trip or beach trip that is tech-free, where everyone leaves their devices behind, or locked away in a box or basket somewhere.
- Have board game nights as a family or have teens host them for their friends. Some ideas for fun board games teens will like include: Resistance, Code Names (or Code Names Pictures), Exploding Kittens, and Wavelength.