

MANAGING IN TOUGH TIMES

FAMILY FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

Conquering the Great Indoors with Children

School holidays and summer vacations are fun and yet challenging times for caregivers. While many caregivers look forward to a break in the school year routine, these times can leave many overwhelmed with thinking of activities that will keep children occupied.

Occasionally, the rain, heat, or cold may keep you and the children you are caring for indoors. Caregivers may feel tempted to turn the television on for hours at a time. However, there are many fun alternative indoor activities that can take the place of electronic media. There is no reason why staying indoors shouldn't include activities that both entertain and inspire your child's creativity!

There are a number of indoor activities that you can do in your home that will keep your child occupied for hours at a time, and they don't require travel or money. So that you and your child enjoy the activity, keep your child's unique interests in mind.

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MANAGING IN TOUGH TIMES INITIATIVE



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Listed below are some indoor activities that you may wish to consider:

- **Indoor treasure hunt.** An indoor treasure hunt is the perfect activity for one child or multiple children. Make one set of clues for each child participating. Be sure that each clue leads to the next one and, eventually, to the hidden treasure. Place the clues in envelopes marked with a clue number that will help the children keep track of where they are in the treasure hunt. You can choose to have each child find his own treasure or for the children to work together to find the treasure. The treasure hunt is over when the hidden treasure is found.
- **Camping.** Consider setting up camp in the great indoors! It won't take much for you to set up a tent—either use a small pop-up tent or gather sheets to drape over a couch or table. Be sure that the tent is secure and then gather air beds, pillows, blankets, or sleeping bags to make your campsite comfortable. You can even have an indoor picnic and exchange campfire stories to complete the experience.
- **Story time.** The indoors is a great place to encourage your child's creativity. Think about crafting a story together. Starting with "Once upon a time," go around the room and have each person add a single word to the story. Before you know it, you will have created a fun and memorable story. You can either pick a genre ahead of time such as a fairy tale or ghost story, or see how silly your story can get!
- **Marshmallow creations.** If you have marshmallows and pretzel sticks on hand, this activity is perfect for you. For children of all ages, crafting small figures out of marshmallows and pretzels can't be beat. Your child can skewer marshmallows and pretzel sticks together to build creations ranging from a small house to animals.
- **Family photo bingo.** This activity is a great way to help your child learn your family tree. You can improve your child's memory of who's who in your family by playing family photo bingo. Select nine photos of family members and arrange them in rows of three. Give your child an age appropriate game piece to use as

a bingo chip such as a checkers piece. When someone calls out "Mommy" or "Grandpa," instruct your child to cover the photo with his bingo chip. The person who covers three photos in a row first is the winner.

- **Greeting cards.** Set up a mini card making shop at home. Break out the craft supplies and have your child make a greeting card for a family member. You can use construction paper, glitter, stickers, markers, magazine clippings, or anything else that you have on hand. Help younger children write out a sweet message inside.
- **Living room bowling.** All that is needed for this activity are six empty water bottles and a rubber ball. Arrange the empty water bottles in a bowling pin formation and instruct your child to aim the ball at the pins. Enjoy!
- **TV producers.** Instead of turning on the television, why not write, direct, and produce your family's own TV show? You can help your children to develop a story line, gather props and costumes from around the house, and then film the sure-to-be fun production.

Choosing to stay indoors does not mean that you have to sacrifice fun with your children. There are a number of activities that you can choose from to keep both you and the children you are caring for stimulated throughout the day. Keep your own interests and the interests of your children in mind and don't be afraid to experiment by switching up activities or adding your own twist!

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By:

Kristyn Jackson, LMFT, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Family Sciences,
University of Kentucky

Jennifer Hunter, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor / Extension Specialist in Family Financial Management
University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service
(859) 257-3290 / jhunter@uky.edu

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