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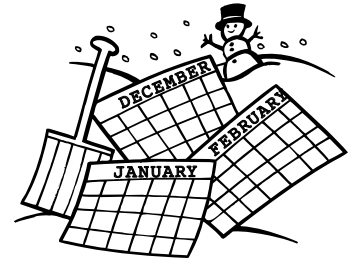
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Beating the Winter Blahs: Ten Boredom Busting Family Activities

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It's very exciting when the first snowflakes fall. However, after days of dreary weather, the house seems to get smaller and the family seems to get larger! The good news is winter doesn't have to mean hibernation. Take advantage of the colder temperatures and shorter days to enjoy family togetherness. Get everyone involved in these engaging activities and send those winter blahs packing!



Bring the Beach Indoors! Pretend that it is blazing hot outside. Put on swimsuits and sunglasses. Lather on a little sunscreen, lie on beach towels, and play some beach tunes. Grill burgers and serve some lemonade!

Learn a new hobby. Teach your child to sew or knit something fun like a scarf, pillow cover, or a plush toy! Not a knitter or seamstress? No problem! Try some of these winter-themed crafts: paper snowflakes, marshmallow or cotton ball snowmen, or DIY snow globes.

Spread Some Cheer! Children can cheer up the elderly like no one else. Visit grandparents or great-grandparents. Visit a care center for seniors or an elderly neighbor. Bring along a book that children can read or have read to them.

Get in the Kitchen. Find a baking project that kids can both bake and decorate. Try cut-out cookies, build your own pizzas or Rice Krispie Treats they can mold into creative shapes.

Mad Science! Many fun science activities are easy and only require basic household ingredients. Try making slime, a vinegar volcano, or invisible ink. Recipes can be found with a simple internet search.

Make a Family Time Capsule. Preserving family artifacts is a fun way to celebrate your family now and later! Get a plastic shoe box. Include children's artwork, a small toy, a current family photo, award ribbons, event ticket stubs, whatever is memorable. Seal the box and label it with the date to be opened. Store your family time capsule in the attic or basement until the big reveal!

Go Camping. Set up a campsite indoors! Pitch a tent using blankets and chairs and break out the sleeping bags. Build a fire in the fireplace or have the kids get crafty and build their own "campfire." Make microwave s'mores or Worm Dirt Dessert. Don't forget the shadow contest. Turn out the lights and take turns using flashlights to make the best shadows!

For the Birds! Birds often have limited food supplies in the winter. String garlands of popcorn, cranberries, raisins, and oranges. Make a peanut butter suet feeder. Recipes can be found on the internet. Hang them from trees or drape them on shrubs. Then, watch the birds come to feed! Keep track of the kinds of birds that visit.

Plant a bit of summer. Plant a windowsill garden. Herbs and some vegetables work well. A sunny window, a few small containers, some soil, and seeds are all you need to get started. Take a trip to the local garden center and let your children pick out their seeds.

Bundle up and go outside! Winter outdoor play is good for children. Being outside helps strengthen their immune systems, gives them a good dose of vitamin D, improves their problem-solving abilities, boosts their independence, and is crucial for their social, emotional and physical development. To encourage outdoor play during the colder months try these tips:

- Have your child dress appropriately; hats, gloves, jackets, and warm shoes are a must.
- Have a colorful ice cube hunt. Use food coloring and freeze ice cubes. Hide the colorful ice cubes and have your child hunt them.

- Create snow art. Mix food coloring and water in a mister or spray bottle. Let your child create colorful art in the snow.
- Take a hike. Take a walk in the woods, a local park, or your neighborhood.
- Offer hot cocoa and a change of warm, dry clothes after all of the outdoor fun!

Finally, when you have exhausted your ideas, have your children come up with their own activities. Give them a box of old discarded items or clothing and see where their imaginations take them. No matter how you choose to bust the winter blahs, the time spent together will be priceless!

Sources:

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