



summer sanity

a mom's guide to a great summer

by Kimberlee Stokes

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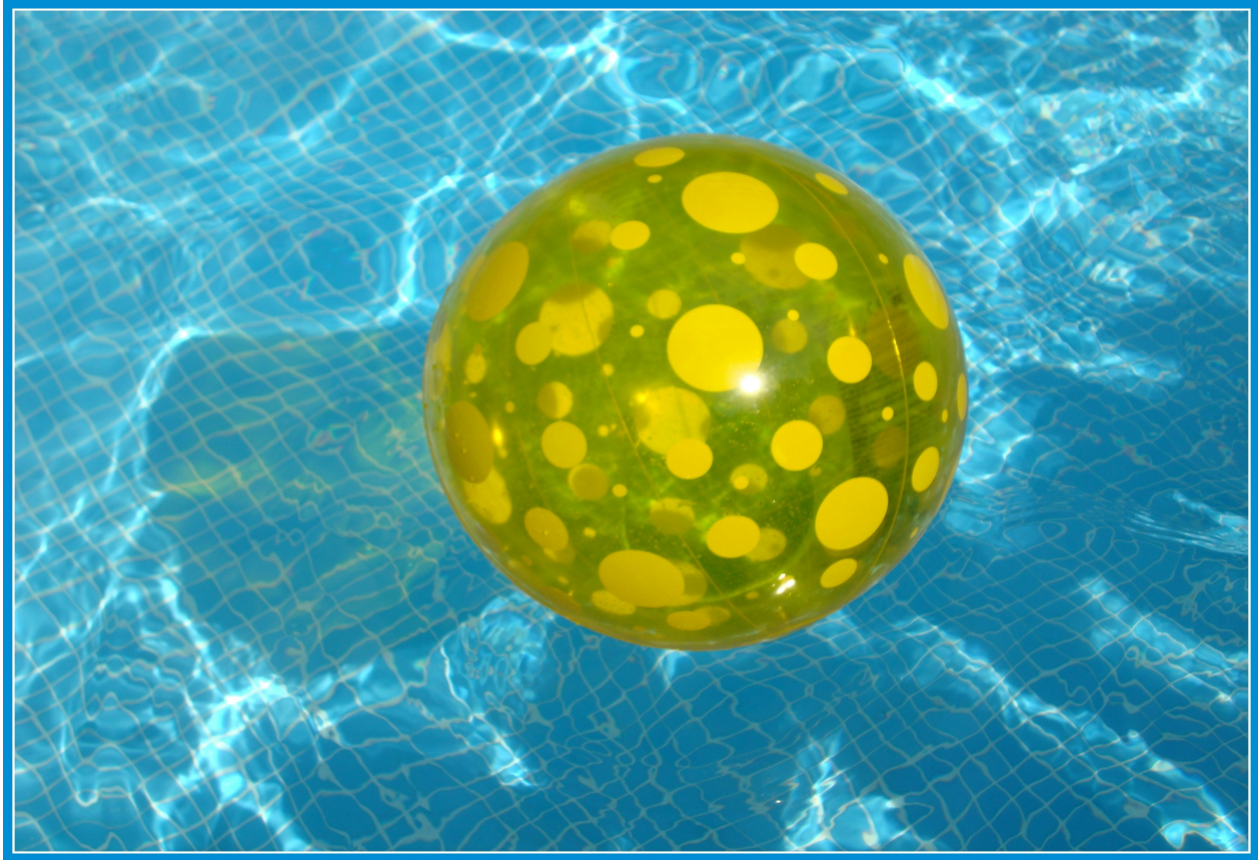
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Introduction

Summer can be a fun-filled time of families making memories together, or it can be a time when mom pulls her hair out. **Summer Sanity** is your guide to having the memory-making kind of summer.

You'll find practical help like simple planning tips to get organized and creative activities like 15 Creative Uses for a Paper Bag and 10 Ways for Teens to Make Money. I've included fun, affordable crafts complete with photos, material lists and instructions, as well as easy recipes to make this your most memorable summer ever!

Throughout the book you will find links to resources on my website ThePeacefulMom.com, and the appendix includes helpful forms like my Summer Sanity Daily Planner and a printable shopping list for all the materials you need. I've even included a Make Your Own Section with some easy and frugal recipes to make your own supplies for summer activities.

My hope is that you will use some of these ideas and some of your own to create a spectacular summer that makes memories for your kids and leaves you a peaceful mom!

Kimberlee

ThePeacefulMom.com

planning

An ounce of planning can
prevent a pounding headache.

You Need A Plan!

Summer's here and the kids are home, so how do you keep your sanity? The difference between making joyful summer memories and simply surviving is having a plan. I know, summer is supposed to be carefree and relaxing, but a little structure can help life run more smoothly and keep you calm and collected. With a basic framework and clear expectations, your children will be more at peace and you will be less frustrated. Allowing your children to do whatever they want all day long is a sure recipe for disaster and one frustrated mom!

Daily Routine


Your first line of defense is implementing a great daily routine. Children thrive when mom's expectations are clear and they know what the basic plan is for the day. Your routine doesn't have to be complicated or even tied to a schedule, but you should include four basic ingredients: personal care, daily duties, enrichment and entertainment.

Personal care items include bathing, brushing teeth and hair, as well as getting dressed. Just because the kids aren't going to school doesn't mean they should stay in their pajamas all day. Children need to know that personal care doesn't take a vacation – some things need to be taken care of every day no matter what.

Daily duties include all of the activities that keep life running smoothly at your house: making the bed, picking up toys, taking dirty clothes to the laundry room, fixing breakfast, putting dishes in the sink or dishwasher and any other chores you want your children to complete. Younger children can empty smaller trash cans into bigger ones, fold laundry, dust and put away toys and other clutter. Older children can clean bathrooms, sweep, vacuum and wash laundry.

Enrichment activities are those educational experiences that you want your child to take part in over the summer. They might include reviewing math flash cards, practicing a musical instrument or sports skill, and reading or writing. You don't want summer to feel like school, but including a couple of daily enrichment activities can prevent your child from turning into a couch potato.

Entertainment activities are probably the easiest to decide, but you will want to place some limits on television, computer and video game time and encourage your children to use their imaginations a little. Board games, imaginative play and outdoor time are essential to your child's overall well-being.



Summer Sanity Daily Planner

List activities:

personal care	daily duties	enrichment	entertainment
(ex: brush teeth, brush hair, shower)	(ex: make bed, take out trash, clean bathroom)	(ex: reading, crafts, educational games, instrument practice, exercise, cooking, artwork)	(ex: tv, movies, video games, computer time, friends, pool)

----- cut here -----

Schedule activities:

morning	afternoon	evening

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To create your own daily routine, print [The Peaceful Mom Summer Sanity Daily Planner here](#) (or print from the Appendix) and fill in each category. Your plan will work much better if you allow your children to give their input.

Schedule

Once you know the components of your daily routine, it's time to create a basic outline for your day. You don't need a schedule with specific times, but your children should have a list of items that need to be completed before lunch, dinner, etc. For example you may want your children to complete some chores before breakfast, so you would specify those chores in the “morning” section.

The “morning” section could include:

- make bed
- eat breakfast
- put dishes in dishwasher
- brush teeth
- take dirty clothes to laundry room

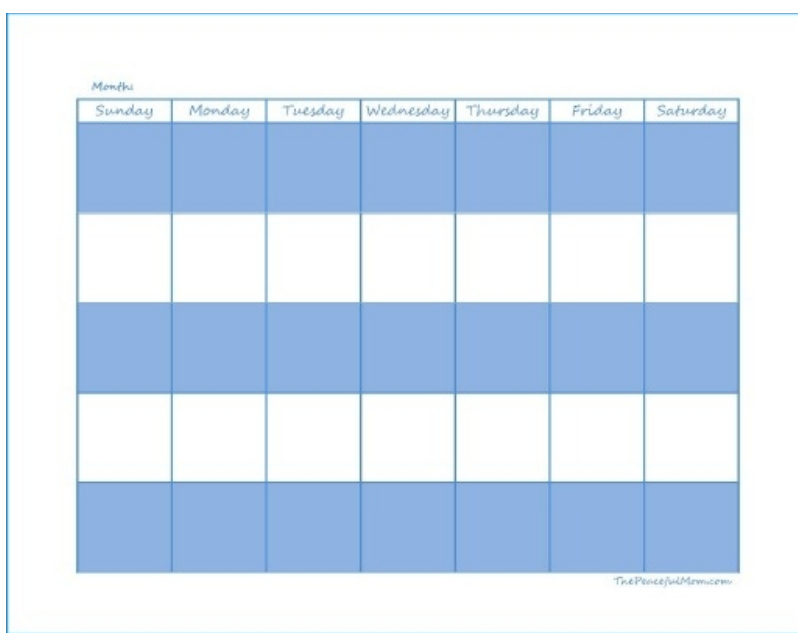
(For younger children you may want to use pictures for the different activities.)

Continue for the afternoon and evening sections. **Note:** I usually schedule quiet activities in the afternoon when it's hottest outside. The kids entertain themselves and mom gets some rest.

Post It

Once you have completed your Summer Sanity Daily Planner, post the planner on your fridge so that you and your children can refer to it throughout the day. When someone asks what to do, you have a plan! You will be pleasantly surprised at the peace this will create in your life.

Just a note, having a plan doesn't mean that your children won't continue to complain sometimes, but this is simply a character issue that you can address by letting them know that children with sweet attitudes are allowed to participate in fun activities, not those who complain. (I have also been known to assign extra chores to those who complain, which tends to cut down significantly on the complaints – ha!)



You can also print a blank monthly calendar [here](#). Calendars on your phone are convenient, but a calendar in a visible location has the advantage of being available for everyone in the family and it is also a visual reminder for you.

Designated Days

Once you have a daily routine in place, another easy way to organize your summer schedule is to use Designated Days. To use this organizational tool simply assign a special theme or activity to each day of the week. For example:

Monday-Cooking Lesson, Water Fun


Tuesday-Park with friends, Family Night

Wednesday-Library Day

Thursday-Ice Cream After Dinner

Friday-Pizza and a Movie

Saturday-Family Fun Day (visits to local attractions)



Our Summer Schedule

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.

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Print this fun [Summer Sanity Weekly Planner](#) and fill in your designated days.

Meal Planning

Part of the stress of summer is keeping everyone fed, but you can accomplish this task with less stress by simply taking a little bit of time to create a meal plan each week. A meal plan doesn't have to be overly detailed. A minimalist meal plan would be a simple list of the dinner meals you will serve for the week. You can choose which meal you will have that day first thing in the morning and begin the day with a little meal preparation so that you don't feel rushed when it's dinner time and the kids are all complaining of hunger.

If you'd like to make a more detailed plan you can make a list of breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner for each specific day. I like this plan better because I can make sure that we don't have chicken two days in a row or that I have the meat thawed out to put in the slow cooker in the morning.

Once you consistently make a weekly meal plan you may be surprised to find that you also save lots of time and money. Warning, you may become addicted to the lack of stress surrounding meal times!

If you need some help getting started, try my favorite meal planning trick: theme days. Just as you selected designated days for your summer schedule, you can select designated theme days for your meal plan. Your plan may look like this:

Sunday - soup and sandwiches

Monday - meatless dish

Tuesday - chicken dish or Taco Tuesday

Wednesday- Italian or Mexican Night

Thursday – leftover night (or “Serve Yourself Buffet Night”)

Friday – homemade pizza

Saturday – breakfast for dinner

For more creative Theme Day ideas, read this [Easy Meal Planning: Theme Nights post on The Peaceful Mom](#).



For more tips on meal planning [click here](#) to read [How to Make a Meal Plan](#). You can even print my free customizable menu planner pictured below:

A weekly menu planner grid. At the top left is a logo with a fork and knife icon and the text "weeklymenuplanner". Below the logo are seven columns labeled "Sunday", "Monday", "Tuesday", "Wednesday", "Thursday", "Friday", and "Saturday". To the left of the grid are four rows labeled "dinner prep", "breakfast", "lunch", and "dinner". The grid consists of 28 empty boxes for planning meals. At the bottom right, there is a small copyright notice: "©2015 ThePeacefulMom.com".

You can also [click here](#) to check out my [Simple Summer Food Board](#) on Pinterest for easy summer meal ideas!

Join over 32,000 other moms who follow The Peaceful Mom on Pinterest! [Click here](#) to follow!

fun

Memories are made
in the moments in between.



Part of making memories is doing enjoyable activities together. On the following pages you will find lots of ideas for inexpensive family fun. Use these ideas as a springboard to come up with your own fun!

I have divided the activities into age groups, but of course some of the ideas will span several ages. You might be surprised to find that older children want to participate in something that the younger ones are doing.

To keep these activities affordable and fun:

Make a list. Print the shopping list in the Appendix and list all of the supplies you will need for your planned activities. Make one shopping trip to save time and gas money.

Use a coupon. Most of the national craft supply stores offer online coupons. You can print them or show them on your smart phone.

Substitute what you have. If you are missing one of the supplies for an activity or project, think about what you have that could work. If you don't have something for the project think about what you can substitute. For example, for box building maybe you don't have any large boxes, but you could give your child empty pasta or cereal boxes. Maybe you don't have duct tape, but you could use masking tape. The point is to have fun, not spend money, and you may come up with an even better idea.

Don't sweat it. Sometimes your child won't enjoy an activity as much as you expect him to. Don't get frustrated, just try something else and come back to that activity on another day.

Toddler Activities (ALWAYS supervise toddlers closely!)



Box Building- Let your child build with small and medium sized cardboard boxes like shoe boxes and empty pasta boxes.

Bubble Obstacle Course (see the Make Your Own section for a recipe) – Try to blow bubbles through a hula hoop and other recycled items to create an “obstacle course”.

Car Tracks- Give your child a roll of masking tape to make a track for his cars.

Cardboard Tube Tunnels– Use the cardboard tubes from paper towel rolls and gift wrap to form a system of tunnels to roll marbles or toy cars through.

Cushion Fort-Let your child remove the cushions from your sofa and chairs and build a fort.

DIY Playhouse- Ask for a large appliance box from a local store and turn it into an indoor play house. Your child can help decorate it.



Felt Box – Cover the top of a shoe box with felt. Cut pieces of felt into various shapes that your child can play with. Store the pieces in the box when you are done.

House Painting: Give your child a bucket of water and a large paint brush and let him “paint” the drive way or side of the house.



Paper Bag Block Building- (see Craft section for instructions)

Pouring- Set out a bucket half full of water, an empty bucket or container and plastic or metal measuring cups. Let your child transfer the water from one bucket to the other using the measuring cups.

Shark Attack- Place the cushions from your sofa and/or pillows in a path on the floor with spaces in between. Have your child try to jump from one cushion to the next without falling in to the “water” in between where the sharks are.

Sidewalk Chalk (see Make Your Own section for recipe)- Draw a house for your child to play in or a track to ride her tricycle through. Draw a circle and let your child fill in the facial features. Teach your child to write her name.

Washing Dishes: Set a dishpan half-filled with water and some plastic dishes (toy dishes or your plastic ware) on the driveway or another safe outdoor location. Let them “wash dishes”.

Watering the Garden: Give your child a plastic watering can and let them water your flowers, trees and grass.



Children's Activities

Alien Tag- Choose one person to be the alien. If the alien touches you, you become an alien, but if a non-alien touches your foot, you become human again. If the aliens outnumber the humans, they have won.

Backyard Camp Out- Have a pretend or real camp out in your yard complete with sleeping bags, flashlights and snacks.

Bake-a-thon- Bake cookies and other treats with your children and take them to the neighbor's house or sell them. (Make these [Oatmeal Peanut Butter Cookies with Dark Chocolate Chips](#).)

Bike Gran Prix- Set up a course in your neighborhood and have a bike race.

Bookmark Bonanza- Cut strips of paper from card stock and design bookmarks for your family and friends.



Bag Bot- Create a robot costume from a paper bag and other recycled items from around your house like aluminum foil, plastic lids and paper.

Board Game Bonkers- Play a board game with a twist like Backwards Monopoly. Lose \$200 when you pass go and try to be the first to lose all of your money. You can also create your own board game with your children.

Card Work- Create your own card game. You can make new rules for a card game you have, or create an entirely new game including the cards.

Create a Collage- Take old magazines and colored paper and create a collage to hang on the wall.

Cushion-lympics- Pile cushions or pillows on the floor and practice Olympic events like the long jump or wrestling.

Create a Clubhouse- Start a new club for your friends complete with membership cards, by-laws and a secret hideout.

Finger Print Fun- Press your fingertips onto a washable ink pad and press them onto a piece of paper. Use a pen to draw body parts and faces on your finger prints to create your own cartoon characters.

Fort Building- Create a fort using recycled cereal boxes and other found items.

Get “Buggy”- Use a shoe box to collect bugs from the yard. Collect fireflies in a jar at night.

Ice Cream in a Bag- Mix 1 tablespoon sugar, 1/4 teaspoon vanilla and 1/2 cup of milk or heavy whipping cream in a quart size zipper bag. Seal the bag tightly. Fill a gallon zipper bag half-full of ice and cover it with 1/3 cup of rock salt. Place the quart bag inside the gallon bag, seal it tightly and shake for about 5 minutes. Enjoy your new frozen concoction!

Indoor Tents- Cover chairs and tables with a bed sheet to create a tent. Read a stack of books inside your tent.

Marshmallow Pops- Insert a straw into one end of a large marshmallow and dip it in melted chocolate then cover it with candy sprinkles.

Mini City- Make a city from blocks, Legos or other toys for toy cars to drive through.



Mint Tin Travel Kit- (See the Crafts section for instructions.) Create a fun game in a recycled mint tin for those long car rides.

Name Plate- Create a door hanger with your name on it. [Click here](#) for a template to use.

Note Cards- Create note cards using paper and water color paints or markers. Send a note to a friend.

Paper Flowers- Make flowers from colored paper and hang them from the ceiling.

Puppet Show- Create puppets from cardboard tubes (toilet paper or paper towel rolls). Glue on googly eyes, yarn for hair and fabric or paper for clothing. Make a puppet show for your family.

Puzzle Pieces- Paste a magazine photo onto card stock or a sheet of thin cardboard. Cut the photo into puzzle pieces. Time yourself to see how fast you can put your puzzle together.

“Snowball” Fight– Crumple newspaper into a ball shape and secure them with tape. Use the paper balls (or rolled up socks) to have a “snowball” fight.

Spa Day- Host a spa day for your friends. Paint your nails, do your hair and enjoy some fragrant body lotion.

Switch It Out- Use colored paper and stickers to decorate your bedroom light switch cover.

Tower Contest- Compete with another family member to see who can build the tallest tower from blocks or Legos.

Treasure Hunt– Hide a secret treasure and create a map for someone else to follow to find it.

Water Works- Wash the car or have a water balloon battle.

Writing Studio- Write and illustrate a story or write a play and perform it.

It's a Zoo!- Use empty laundry baskets and boxes to create cages for your stuffed animals. Create tickets from colored paper and invite your friends to see the animals. You can also create “food” for the animals with colored paper.



[Click here](#) to see my list of Summer Freebies for Kids!

10 Fun Dough Projects



Playing with dough can keep your child entertained for quite a while if you use a little creativity. Try these ideas:

Alphabet Fun- Make letters and spell words. Teach a young child to spell his name

Caterpillar- Roll small balls of dough to make a long caterpillar.

Counting- Print the Fun Dough Counting page in the appendix. Have your child roll the correct amount of dough balls and place them by the number on the chart.

Face It- Roll a flat oval and let your child add facial features.

Holes- Roll a large piece of flat dough and let your child use straws and plastic lids to cut holes in it.

Ice Cream Sundae- Place a lump of dough in a bowl and let your child create toppings.

Play Food- Make pizza, cupcakes, cookies, burgers and veggies from fun dough. Play “restaurant” and take orders from your family members then serve them the food on play dishes.

Snake!- Have a contest to see who can make the longest snake without breaking it.

Sorting- Make small pieces of dough into different shapes and sizes. Have your child sort them into groups (same color, same size, same shape, etc.) in a muffin tin.

Tic-Tac-Toe- Make a game board along with x's and o's from the dough and play a few games.



Another fun activity is to create animals and insects with dough and add details like googly eyes. Of course, watch small children to make sure that they don't put the eyes in their mouths.

See the Make Your Own Section for a easy DIY dough recipe!



Inexpensive Fun Dough Tools

Many items that you have around the house can be used to play with dough. Check the dollar store for other inexpensive items to use.

Cutting the Dough- cookie cutters, spatulas and plastic knives

Making Designs- plastic forks, drinking straws, wire from clothes hangers formed into shapes, any textured plastic objects

Rolling Out The Dough- plastic rolling pins, bottles and cans to roll play dough flat

Circle Cutters- cans and jars of various sizes, drinking straws, fun dough can

Play Food Containers- aluminum pie pans, muffin tins, plastic bowls and paper plates



Wall Mural- Cut the bag open and paint on it. Tape the mural to a wall.

Cave Man Paintings- Draw stick figure people/animals with berry juice on an open bag.

Building Bricks- Make large building blocks from grocery bags. (See the Craft section.)

Pirate Treasure Map- See instructions in Pirate Theme Day section.

Car Track- Draw city buildings and roads for Hot Wheels Cars.

Grocery Store- Play “grocery store” with food boxes, plastic containers and some bags.

“Stone” Path- Cut 6 x 6 inch squares (or other dimensions). Let your child place the squares into the shape of a path and practice jumping from one “stone” to the next.

Wrapping Paper- Create personalized wrapping paper using vegetables or other objects to stamp paint on to an open bag.

Cover It- Cover a book or box with the bag and let your child decorate it.

Sorting Game- Set up 3 paper grocery bags and label them with a category (ex: round, square, triangle or red, blue, green, etc.). See how many items you can find for each category and place them in the appropriate bag.

Paper Bag Hoops- Fold the sides of the paper bag down so that the bag is half it's normal size. Practice throwing balls into the basket from different distances.

Fishing Expedition- Fill a grocery bag with metal objects. Make a fishing pole from a stick and a piece of string. Attach a magnet to the end of the string and go fishing for the objects in the bag.

Paper Swords- Cut a grocery bag open, then roll it up long ways to form a sword. Duct tape the handle and let your little ones “sword” fight.

Paper Bag Soccer- Crumple the bag into a large ball, secure it with tape and start kicking!



Wardrobe Change- Make a grass skirt, a pirate or indian vest or a robot costume.

Teens

You will probably hear your teenagers complaining of boredom before you hear it from any of your younger children. Suggest a few of these (mostly) non-electronic ideas to stir some creativity in your teen:

Board Game Marathon- Choose a game like Cranium, Monopoly or Life and play all day. Whoever wins the most games at the end of the day wins a prize.

Comic Creation- Create your own comic hero and draw a few panels or an entire comic book.



Collage Notebook- Design a cover for a composition book.(See Crafts section for instructions.)

Cooking Class- Find a new recipe online and make it for your family. ([Click here](#) for recipe ideas.)

Custom Clothing- Decorate a plain t-shirt or pair of shorts with fabric paint or beads.

Flip Pad- Create an animation by drawing a series of figures on the corner of a notepad. When you flip the pages, your drawings will appear to move.

Monogram Mania- Create personalized stationery or note cards with your initial. Send a note to a friend.

Movie Marathon- Watch all of the episodes of your favorite movie back-to-back.

Personalized Jewels- Make a bracelet or necklace with with beads and your initials.

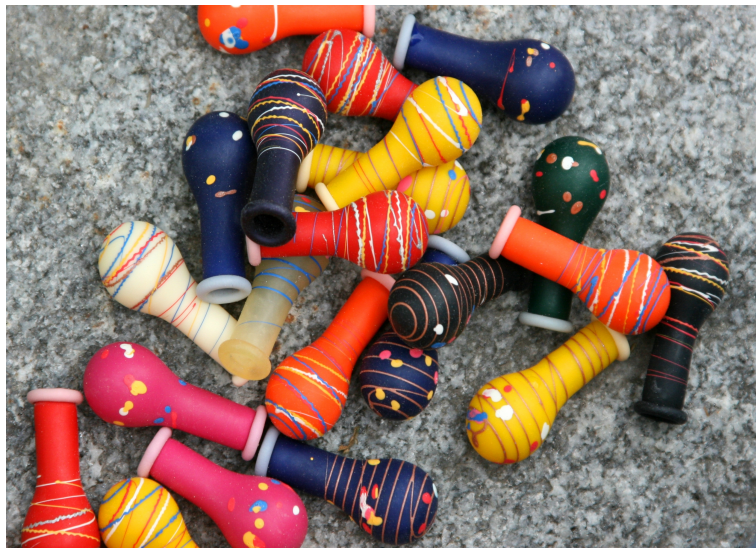
Photo Shoot- Go to a park with a couple of friends and photograph or video each other.

Scrap Happy- Create a photo album or scrapbook for yourself or a friend.

Silly Socks- Use fabric paint and googly eyes to create sock creatures.

Sneakers with Soul- Buy a cheap pair of sneakers and paint them with fabric paint or permanent markers.

Super Snack- Create a new snack food combination with popcorn or cereal and other ingredients.



Water Wars- Host an epic neighborhood water balloon or water gun battle.

Wii Competition- Play a Wii sports (or other short video game) tournament. Play several rounds and keep score. Give the winner a certificate or funny trophy.

Zombie Monopoly- A fun alternative to the regular rules. [Click here](#) for details.

[Click here](#) to see **My Summer Crafts for Teens** for a few more ideas.



Bake Sale- Bake cookies to sell to neighborhood kids or moms who don't have time to bake.

Bangles and Bobbles- Make friendship bracelets, bottle cap necklaces or other accessory items that would be relatively cheap and popular with kids.

Buckets of Fun- Offer to wash neighbors' cars for money. Charge extra to vacuum.

By The Yard- Cut grass or do other yard work for neighbors, friends and family.

Clean It Up- Start a clean up service for garages and basements.

House Calls- Purchase number stencils and paint and offer to paint house numbers on curbs and mail boxes in surrounding neighborhoods. Charge \$8-10 per house.

Kids Club- Do crafts and games with neighborhood kids for one-two hours a week. Charge \$5 - \$10 per child plus the cost of materials (keep these costs low).

Online Biz- Think up a creative product to make and set up a Facebook Page or website.

Personalize It!- Start a business decorating clothing or accessory items. Add beads or rhinestones to jeans and t-shirts, add monogram letters to purses, etc.. Make some samples and take orders. Print business cards to hand out to friends and family.

Sell Your Stuff- With your parents help gather your used video games, comics, etc. to sell on Craigs List or Ebay. Follow safety guidelines when using Craigs List (meet in a well lit public place, don't give out personal information, get the money upfront, etc.).

theme days

Imagination is the
passport to fun.



Hawaiian Day

Dress Up Fun- Wear bathing suits and “grass skirts”. (See Crafts section for instructions.)

Activities

Flower Lei- See craft section for instructions.

Hula Contest- Hula is a form of Hawaiian dance that involves motions which convey a message. Have your children create their own story and make up moves to tell the story. (Find music online).

Hawaiian Punch Slushies- See the Food section for instructions.

Surfing- Place sofa cushions on the floor and practice “surfing” on them.

Snacks -Tropical Fruit Salad, Tropical Trail Mix, Kebobs (ham and pineapple cubes on pretzel sticks). See the Food section for recipes.



Pirate Day

Dress Up Fun- Make your own eye patch and pirate vest from a paper bag.

Activities

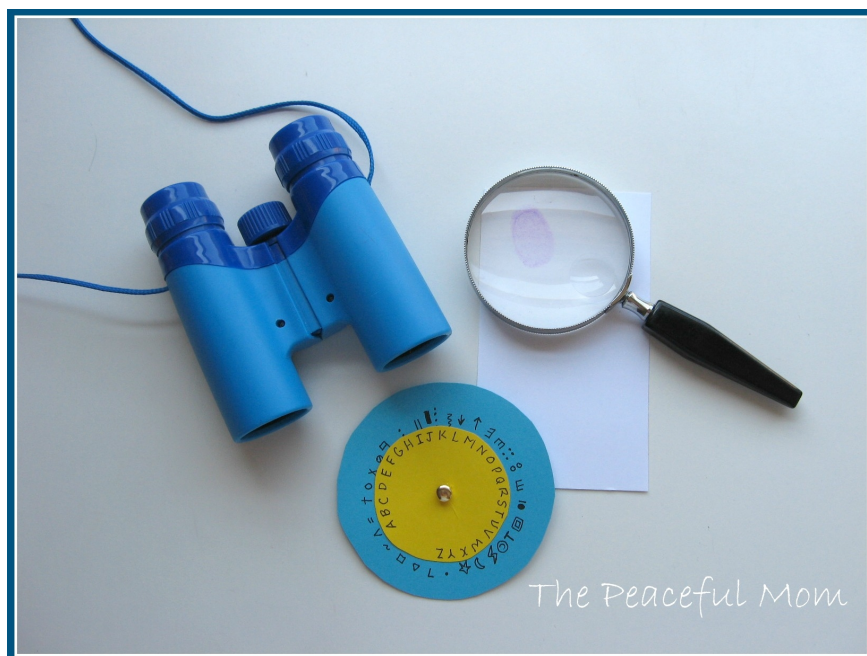
Make Your Own Treasure Map- Cut one side from a brown paper grocery bag so that you have a large rectangle. Let your child tear the edges and color them brown to make the map look old., then draw a map to the secret location of a treasure.(or hide something and make an actual map for the kids to follow to find it).

Treasure Stones- Hide small plastic toys inside these “rocks” and let your children discover what's inside, then let them make their own. See [instructions here](#))

Swashbuckling Swords- See Craft section for instructions.

Pirate's Booty Scavenger Hunt- Hide small dollar store treats or non-melting candy in a secret location. Give your kids a map or clues to find the treasure. (If you have older children, this is a great activity for them to create for the younger ones.)

Snacks - Banana Boats (see Food section), Pirate's Booty, fruit leather, beef jerky



Spy Secrets Day

Dress Up Fun - Wear sunglasses, a hat and a fake mustache so you won't be recognized.

Activities

Detective Notebook- Find or make a small notebook to write “clues” in.

DIY Binoculars- See the Crafts section for instructions. Use these to “spy” on people.

Fingerprint Catalog- Using a washable ink pad, take fingerprints on index cards. Write each person's name beside his or her prints.

Secret Decoder- See the Crafts section for instructions. Write secret notes using the decoder and have friends or family decode them.

Spy Messages- Type a message in a tiny font (unreadable to the human eye like 3 pt.) on your computer. Have your child read it with a magnifying glass. For toddlers you can make clip art images tiny.

Movie Night- (preview first) Watch a good spy movie like Spy Kids, The Spy Next Door or The Pacifier.



Rainbow Day

Dress Up Fun

Colorful Clothing-Each person in your family can wear one color of the rainbow or dress in every color. (You can host Rainbow Week and wear one color of the rainbow each day. Ex. Red on Monday, Orange on Tuesday, etc.)

Rainbow Headbands- Wrap a plastic headband with colorful ribbon and secure with a hot glue gun.

Activities

Paint your food- See the Make Your Own section for instructions.

“Stained Glass” Windows- See the Crafts section for instructions.

Rainbow Balloons- Blow up balloons of different colors and let your toddlers bat them around the house or have a rainbow balloon water fight! (Please note: NEVER leave a small child unsupervised with a balloon. If a balloon pops, pieces of the balloon can lodge in your child's throat causing suffocation.)

Rainbow Day (continued)

Tie Dye Shirts- Purchase a kit or find instructions online to make your own tie dye rainbow t-shirts.

Story Time- Read the origin of the rainbow in Genesis 6:9 through 9:17.

Snacks- blueberry yogurt pops (in Food section), rainbow veggies with dip, rainbow gelatin cups (For cups: Pour one color into a glass or clear plastic cup and place it in the refrigerator. Once set, add another color. Continue with a third color.)



Check out my Pinterest [Summer Fun Board here](#)
for more awesome rainbow inspired ideas!



Ocean Day

Dress Up Fun Wear your bathing suit and swim goggles!

Activities

Ocean View Place Mat- See Crafts section for instructions.

Ocean in a Bottle- Fill a recycled plastic water bottle half full of water. Add 2-3 drops of blue food coloring. Pour vegetable oil in to fill the bottle one inch from the top. Secure the lid tightly (hot gluing it is a VERY good idea) and let your child tip the bottle from side to side to make “waves”.

Under The Sea Pencil Holder- Cover the outside of a can with paper and attach stickers or paper cut outs of sea creatures.

Deep Sea Fishing- Tie a strong magnet to the end of a long piece of string. Tie the string to a stick and let your child “fish” for paper sea creatures with paper clips attached.

Movies- Watch Finding Nemo or Dolphin's Tale.

Water Games – Head outside for some wet fun like water balloons.

Snacks- Fishy Snack Mix (recipe in Food Section), blue Jello cups with gummy sharks

food

The way to a kid's heart
is through his snack mix.



Blueberry Yogurt Pops

2 cups vanilla yogurt
1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries
1 tablespoon honey or other sweetener
1 teaspoon vanilla

Combine all ingredients in a blender, adding water or milk if necessary to maintain a vortex in the center while blending. Pour into popsicle molds, freeze and enjoy!

Fishy Snack Mix

“fishy” or “shark” crackers
raisins
“O” shaped cereal

Mix in equal proportions. Place in a plastic sandwich bag with a paper fish attached to the outside or draw waves on the plastic bag with a blue permanent marker.



Crock Pot Granola

5 cups rolled oats (we use Bob's Red Mill Gluten Free Rolled Oats)
1 cup sweetened coconut flakes (use unsweetened if you prefer)
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 cup oil (we use extra virgin olive oil, coconut oil would also be good)
1/2 cup honey
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Add oats, coconut and cinnamon to crock pot and stir to combine. Add oil and honey (if you use the same measuring cup you used for the oil to measure the honey, it will slide out of the cup more easily.) Add vanilla. Stir until all ingredients are well incorporated.

Cook on low for one hour with the lid of the crock pot cracked. Stir granola and replace lid (slightly open).

Cook for 2 additional hours, stirring every 30 minutes for the first hour and every 15 minutes for the last hour. This burns easily!

Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. You can also add nuts and dried fruit!

Hawaiian “Punch” Slushies

1 quart plastic zipper bag
1/2 cup fruit juice or Hawaiian Punch
1 gallon zipper bag
1/2 cup ice
1/2 cup kosher salt

Place fruit juice in quart bag and seal tightly. Place quart bag inside gallon bag. Add ice and kosher salt to gallon bag around the quart bag. Seal gallon bag. Have kids shake the bag 2-3 minutes. Open the gallon bag and remove the quart bag. Open quart bag and pour slushie into a cup.



Mango Orange Smoothie

1/2 banana
2 ripe mangoes, peeled and diced
1 orange cut into chunks
orange juice or water

Put all ingredients in the blender and blend, adding orange juice or water to maintain a vortex in the center while blending. Add ice cubes. Serve immediately.



Monkey Bites

2 ripe, firm bananas
 1/2 cup chocolate chips
 1/4 cup shredded coconut

Melt chocolate chips in a double boiler or in the microwave. Cut banana into 2 inch chunks. Dip banana pieces in melted chocolate. Sprinkle with coconut. Freeze for 30 minutes to allow chocolate to harden. Serve immediately

Rainbow Fruit and Veggies with Dip

Wash and cut fresh vegetables and fruit and have your child place them in rainbow order on a plate. Dip the fruit in strawberry yogurt and the veggies in ranch dressing.

Food Ideas:

red: red peppers, cherries, grape tomatoes, strawberries, red apples

orange: carrot sticks, orange slices, orange pepper slices, peach slices

yellow: yellow apples, yellow pear slices, summer squash, yellow peppers

green: broccoli, green peppers, celery, green grapes, kiwi

blue/indigo: blueberries, blue corn tortilla chips (not a veggie but made from one!)

violet- purple cabbage, blackberries, purple grapes, plums



Tropical Fruit Salad

- (3) 20 oz. cans unsweetened pineapple chunks (the salad is just too sweet otherwise)
- (2) 15 oz. cans mandarin oranges slices
- 1 cup sweetened coconut flakes

Drain the juice from the fruit (you can drink it or make popsicles with it). Combine fruit and coconut. Chill in the refrigerator for 1-4 hours. Enjoy!

Tropical Trail Mix

- 1 cup dried banana chips
- 1 cup dried pineapple chunks
- 1/2 cup shredded coconut
- 1/2 cup macadamia nuts or pecans, cut into small pieces

Combine all ingredients. Store in an airtight container.



Banana Boats

firm banana
peanut or almond butter
chocolate or carob chips

Cut banana in half and slice lengthwise. Spread peanut or almond butter on the open flat area of the banana. Let your kids add the chocolate chip “passengers” to their boat.

Make flag by folding a small “sticky note” around a toothpick. Let your child draw a pirate-y symbol on his/her flag.

crafts

Everyone needs a
sense of accomplishment.



“Stained Glass” Windows

Materials

clear Contact paper (available in the home organization section of Walmart)
colorful tissue paper cut into shapes (light colors work best)
scissors
masking tape
duct tape (optional)

Instructions

[Note: This craft can be highly frustrating., but worth the effort. I recommend having all supplies ready before hand and working with toddlers individually.]

Cut two pieces of Contact paper of equal sizes. Using masking tape, tape the edges of one piece (with the backing facing up) to a flat surface such as a tile floor or table top.



Carefully peel the backing from the paper and have your child place the tissue paper pieces on the sticky side of the paper. (You will want to help small children because once the paper touches the adhesive that's where it stays!)

Once your child is happy with his/her arrangement, remove the masking tape from the contact paper. Remove the backing from the second piece of contact paper and carefully place it over the first. Smooth out any air bubbles.



Trim the edges with colored duct tape to make a frame. Hang your “stained glass” in the window and enjoy the view!



Ocean View Place Mat

Materials

colored paper

scissors

clear Contact Paper (available in the home organization section of Walmart)

colored duct tape

Instructions

Cut two pieces of Contact paper of equal sizes (about 14 inches wide). Using masking tape, tape the edges of one piece with the backing facing up to a flat surface such as a tile floor or table top (see photo in Stained Glass Window instructions).

Cut fish, shells and other ocean life from colored paper (or use stickers). Have your child place pictures or stickers onto the contact paper's sticky side. When the scene is completed, carefully remove the masking tape from the edges of your scene. Remove the backing from the second piece of Contact paper and carefully place it over the first piece. Smooth out the bubbles as much as possible, but wrinkles are okay because they look like moving water! Place duct tape on the edges to form a border.



Collage Notebook

Materials

composition notebook
magazines to cut up
scissors
glue stick
clear Contact paper or clear packing tape
duct tape (optional)

Instructions

Cut photos, letters and designs from the magazines. Glue photos onto the front of the notebook using the glue stick. Cover the pictures with clear Contact paper or strips of packing tape side by side.

Add colored duct tape to the binding of the notebook if desired.



Foam Swords

Materials

pool noodle
colored duct tape

Instructions

Cut styrofoam pool noodles into 3 foot lengths. Cover the bottom 6 inches of the noodle with duct tape to make a handle. Let your kids sword fight away!

Note: Older kids can insert a length of pvc pipe into the hollow part of the noodle to make the sword more sturdy. Leave about 6 inches of pvc below the end of the noodle and attach a 3 inch piece of noodle to the bottom of the pipe (to cover the sharp edges). Tape over the piece of noodle and pipe handle with duct tape.



Flower Lei

Materials

colored paper
scissors
string or yarn
needle
colored drinking straws

Instructions

Cut flower shapes (see template) from colored paper (or white paper and let your children color them). Cut a piece of string or yarn to the desired length and use a needle to thread string or yarn through the flowers, alternating 3 inch pieces of colored drinking straws in between. Tie a knot in the string when you are finished.



“Grass” Skirts

Materials

brown paper grocery bag
 colored paper
 masking tape
 string or yarn
 scissors

Instructions

Cut open the bag to make a rectangle. Cut slits from the bottom to about 3 inches from the top to make the “grass”. Measure a piece of string to fit your child's waist. Lay the string on the backside of the paper skirt about 1 inch from the top. Fold the top of the bag over the string and secure with tape. Tie the skirt onto your child's waist.





Pirate's Telescope

Materials

cardboard tube from a paper towel roll
cardboard tube from a toilet paper roll
clear plastic (such as Saran Wrap)
duct tape or masking tape
colored paper (optional)

Instructions

Insert the toilet paper tube into the paper towel tube so that $\frac{3}{4}$ of it extend out of the top of the paper towel roll. This is the part that your little buccaneer can turn to “adjust” the focus of the telescope.

Tape a piece of clear plastic on the opposite end of the tube. Tape the plastic on with masking or duct tape. Let your child decorate the telescope or wrap it in colored paper.



Paper Bag Bricks

Materials

brown paper bags
newspaper or rags
masking tape

Instructions

Fill a grocery bag half-full with crumpled newspaper. Fold the top down and tape it with masking tape to make a large block. Note: These will stack better if you insert a rectangular piece of cardboard or poster board on the top and bottom, but it's not necessary.

Use the blocks to build walls or forts. Then knock them over!



Spy Binoculars

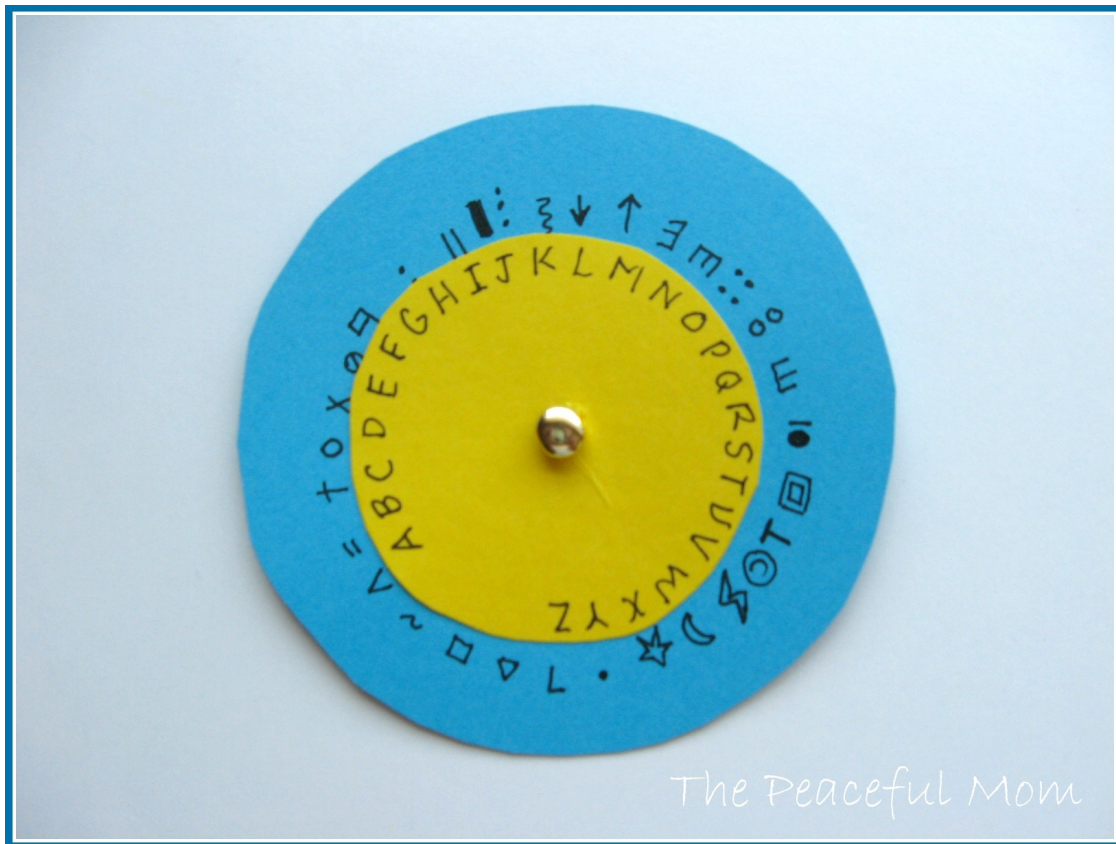
Materials

cardboard tube from paper towel or toilet paper roll
clear plastic (optional)
colored paper (optional)
duct tape or masking tape
scissors
stapler
yarn (optional)

Instructions

Cut 2 rectangles of colored paper the width of the cardboard tube and about 6 inches long. Cover tubes with colored paper. Attach tubes together and staple them on both ends by inserting the stapler into the tubes. Attach one end of a string or piece of yarn to the inside of each tube.

Note: You can attach plastic to the ends of the tubes before covering them with the colored paper, but it is completely optional.



The Peaceful Mom

Spy Decoder

Materials

2 pieces of colored card stock
2 jars or cans of different sizes
metal brad
pen

Instructions

Cut 2 circles of differing sizes from the colored paper (use the jars or cans to draw the circles). Pierce the center of each circle with the brad and attach the circles to each other. Write the alphabet on the outer edge of the inner circle, making sure to evenly space letters. Write the corresponding symbols on the outer circle.

Show your child how to write a coded message. Make sure to note which symbol the letter “A” is on when you write the message, so that you can correctly decode it.



Mint Tin Travel Kit

Materials

empty mint tin
magnetic sheet

Instructions

Cut the magnetic sheet to fit the top of the tin. Cover the magnet with card stock or colored paper and let your child decorate it and write his/her name.

Make a tic-tac-toe board by cutting craft paper or card stock to fit the inside lid and drawing a grid on it. Make the x's and o's by cutting advertising magnets or the magnetic sheet into the appropriate shapes, or place letter stickers on the magnets and then cut around them. Fill the kit with mini playing cards, two mini pens, mini Post-It notes (for word games).

[Click here](#) for more Mint Tin Travel Kit Ideas!



Decoupage Jars

Materials

small glass jars with labels removed
tissue paper with cute design
Mod Podge
Sponge Brush
Scissors
Ribbon (optional)

Instructions

Cut designs from tissue paper. Adhere to the jar using Mod Podge. Allow to dry and attach ribbon.

[Click here](#) for step by step photo instructions and ideas to use these jars!

make your own

Why buy it when
you can make it?



Homemade Bubbles

Materials

1 cup water
2 tablespoons light corn syrup or 2 tablespoons glycerin
4 tablespoons dish washing liquid (Joy works well)

Instructions

Mix all ingredients together in a plastic container. Great bubble makers: kitchen utensils such as strainers and slotted spoons, frozen juice cans with the ends removed, plastic straws (just make sure your child blows rather than inhaling!).

Homemade Colored Bubbles

Materials

1 cup granulated soap or soap powder
1 quart warm water
liquid food coloring

Dissolve soap in warm water. Add food coloring a few drops at a time until desired color is achieved. Note: Use outside only! Food coloring will stain clothing and other objects.

Edible Food Paint

Materials

milk or evaporated milk
food coloring
disposable containers

Instructions

In a disposable muffin tin or other disposable containers, mix milk and food coloring to create desired colors. Allow child to dip marshmallows and pop corn kernels into paint to color them.



Fun Dough

Materials

1 1/2 cups flour
3/4 cups salt
1 1/2 cups water
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1/2 tablespoon cream of tarter
liquid food coloring

Instructions

Mix all ingredients in a saucepan over medium low heat. Stir occasionally until ingredients start to cling together (about 5-8 minutes). Remove pan from heat and scoop dough onto a plate to cool. Once dough is cool enough to handle, knead it to form a nice texture. Store in an air tight container.



Sidewalk Chalk

Materials

1 cup plaster of Paris (available at home improvement or craft stores)
1 cup water
powdered tempera paint
cardboard tube from toilet paper roll
duct tape

Mix plaster of Paris and water. Add powdered tempera paint to create your desired color.

Cover the bottom of the toilet paper tube completely with duct tape and set the tube into disposable container. Pour mix into the tube and allow it to dry completely. When dry, remove the cardboard tube and draw something!

You can also make a simple **Sidewalk Chalk Paint** by mixing these ingredients:

1 cup cornstarch
1 cup water
food coloring (neon colors show up very well)

Mix the paint in the cups of a muffin tin and give your child one sponge brush for each color.

appendix

In other words,
"extra stuff"



Summer Sanity Daily Planner

List activities:

personal care	daily duties	enrichment	entertainment
(ex: brush teeth, brush hair, shower)	(ex: make bed, take out trash, clean bathroom)	(ex: reading, crafts, educational games, instrument practice, exercise, cooking, artwork)	(ex: tv, movies, video games, computer time, friends, pool)

----- **cut here** -----

Schedule activities:

morning	afternoon	evening

Summer Project Shopping List

[illegible]

FUN DOUGH COUNTING

Have your child roll pieces of dough and place the correct number by each numeral.

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

More Summer Fun

Activity Strips- Print the activity lists, cut them into strips and place them in a jar or can. Have your child choose one every couple of days to prevent “Mom, I’m bored” syndrome.

Road Trip Activity Bags- Are you traveling this summer? Make these DIY Road Trip Activity Bags ahead of time and enjoy a much more peaceful trip! [Click here](#) for details.



Be sure to check out my [Summer Fun Board](#) on Pinterest ([click here](#)) for more fun summer ideas!

Join The Peaceful Mom Community for tips and tools
to help you save money,
get organized and enjoy life!

[Click HERE](#).

Stressed about the school year starting?



Grab the Mom's Back-to-School Planner!

Inside You'll Find:

- the **scientifically researched technique** to help your child **maximize his study time**
- the one “trick” to **get your kids to bed** without a struggle
- the **four-step wrap up to your day** that will help you **sleep better and stay calmer**
- tips for **creating simple routines** to **avoid manic mornings**
- the **3 organizational zones** you need to create now to **stay organized all year long**
- my **weekend prep plan** so you can enjoy **stress-free school days**
- a fun way to **motivate your kids** to **get ready faster**
- 28 theme meal ideas to **make meal planning a snap**

Click [**HERE**](#) to see what's inside!

About the Author



Kimberlee Stokes is a professional blogger, author and speaker as well as the happily married, hormone-wrangling mom to four young adults ages 15 to 21. She is the creator and owner of the popular website ThePeacefulMom.com where she helps hundreds of thousands of women each month to live purposeful, joyful, beautiful lives.

She has been featured in both print and online media including Huffington Post, Today.com, Mint.com, CharismaMag.com, iBlog and Sacramento Parent, as well as being mentioned in Woman's Day Magazine.

In her spare time she enjoys laughing at her teens' latest posts on social media.

You can contact her by [clicking here](#).
