

41 (Mostly) Fun Things to do with your Tween/Teen

We all know that toddlers need to be kept busy, and yes, teens often do need lots of sleep. BUT don't get caught unprepared for Spring Break or long weekends or even Summer!

These ideas are not new (as you'll quickly see), but the challenge is for you as a parent of tween/teen to make it age appropriate and compelling. Teens need some direction/structure, too. Here's how to increase success:

1. Let them bring a friend or friends along.
2. Make them part of the decision process. You can force a toddler into a car seat and push them in a stroller around the zoo. But a teenager has "gotta wanna" for a successful day.
3. Welcome their ideas! Chances are if you show them this list (which you should--no need to keep it secret!) they'll have their own ideas for things you can do as a family.
4. Be willing to say yes (even if it's not your 1st choice) and focus on building the relationship with your tween/teen over whatever it is you're doing.

The main idea is to spend time with your teen, not to do your favorite hobby. Ask your kid questions. Find out what they like or don't like and why. Find out who they like and why. Be curious and willing. The payoff of getting to know your teenager is so very worth it!

ACTIVITIES

- 1 Bowling
- 2 Mini Golf
- 3 Amusement Park
- 4 Arcade

OUT ON THE TOWN

- 5 Go to a game at their school, or a local college level or even see a pro event! Depending on where you live and the season, you may have LOTS of options!
- 6 Go to a concert at their school/high school or at a local college (there are often free recitals happening), or even a community or professional ensemble
- 7 Go to a concert of a popular artist
- 8 Go to a play or musical--again, this could be anything from a community to a school or a university or professional level performance! You decide together!
- 9 Go see a movie (bonus—get snacks!)
Secret Shopper--everyone in the group draws a name until no one has their own. Give everyone a spending limit, time limit, and place to meet when their done shopping for
- 10 the person who's name they drew.
- 11 Go to a Thrift Store or Flea Market and find a treasure/memory to take home

RESTAURANTS, ETC.

- 12 Go to a coffee shop
- 13 Go to their favorite restaurant
- 14 Go get fast food and eat outside

AT HOME

- 15 Cook a meal together
- 16 Bake together
- 17 Watch home videos
- 18 Look at photo albums
- 19 Movie night! Make tickets, have snacks
- 20 Watch YouTube - take turns picking what to watch
- 21 Smores Night
- 22 Game Night
- 23 Karaoke

FIELD TRIPS*

- 24 Museum
- 25 Park
- 26 Library
- 27 Zoo
- 28 Aquarium

*These outings may have been something you did a lot when they were small, but it's fun to take teens. They are easier to spot in a crowd, and they can feed themselves snacks!

VARIOUS FAMILY ACTIVITIES

- 29 Create a Spirit Week with daily themes: weird hair day, hat day, dress up day, fan day, etc. EVERYONE in the family participates!
- 30 Serve together--do chores for a neighbor, volunteer, shop for items to give away
- 31 Spa Day--from nails to facials to hair . . . You can do this out or at home
- 32 Show & Tell--is your kid creative, athletic, inventive, artistic, musical? Consider a family talent show or show & tell for them to share their latest ideas, creations, and accomplishments.
- 33 Go for a drive with or without a destination
- 34 Get outdoors: walk, hike, bike, fish, rollerblade, shoot baskets, jump on the trampoline, play frisbee, golf, etc. etc. etc.
- 35 Text-only Time: No one speaks, only communicate through texts for half a day or during a meal
- 36 Create a Story: Each person says one word and you go in a circle or pass back and forth. Example: "Once--> upon --> a --->dark ---> morning" (You never know what they'll say!)

VARIOUS 1:1 or FAMILY ACTIVITIES

- 37 Listen to their playlist together
- 38 Watch (on their phone usually) their favorite videos
- 39 Play online games (see Game Pigeon. Your kid will know if you don't!)
- 40 Trade clothes - borrow from each other's closets for a day
- 41 Trade roles--let your teen be in charge for the day, taking on your responsibilities as you take on theirs.