



### **Beat Those Summertime Blues**

School's out for summer, the weather is hot and the kids are bored. What to do to keep those summer time blues away. Being new to the area I found myself in a conundrum on where to go and what to do. I soon realized it's a common worry among all parents on what to do to keep the kids busy in the summer. I will tell you a variety of things to do with your kids that are free or cost very little.

Begin your summer by sending a message in a bottle for your kids to find a new adventure or activity to do for that day.

Put on your treasure hat and go on a great treasure-hunting adventure - just watch out for mugals along the way. Geocaching is a real-world, outdoor treasure-hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the treasure chest, aka geocache (container) hidden at that location. Geocaching is a great, inexpensive way to get out of the house and go seek buried treasure in your county, another county or even another state - it's everywhere. Visit [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) or download the app on your iPhone.

Water palooza: Have a good old water balloon toss; make water balloon piñatas; run through the sprinklers; go swimming at the Rec Center, or do something big and exciting like rafting down the Dolores River on boats, or simply float on tubes. Soft Adventures in Dolores can fit your needs whatever they may be.

Make believe: Have a kid "tea party" only instead of tea, make homemade lemonade and cool cucumber sandwiches and treats. If you have a daughter, invite several girls over and have them wear princess dresses. Or, have a superhero "tea party" for boys with pb & j sandwiches. Make a fort in your living room; camp in your backyard; build a fairy house and put it in your garden; bury treasures in your yard, mark them with flags, and have the kids dig them up. Playing make believe encourages your child to be creative and a good problem solver. Let your kids take the lead on what they are playing; after all, who else do you know who can turn a towel into a superhero cape, or a box into a train?

Nature scavenger hunt: Put together pictures and words of things you would find outside. Then take your kids on a hike and have them find those items. When they've found most or all of them, take them for ice cream or make a cone at home. Get a bird watching book and put together picture bingo card of local birds kids might see.

For your little paleontologist or archeologist: Travel to Fruita, CO and go to the Dinosaur Museum. While you're there, climb Riggs hill where there is a real dinosaur being excavated; or, stop by Rabbit Valley on the way into Fruita and hike the trail to see real dino bones. Dinosaur National Park has many fossils and petroglyphs. Thanksgiving Point, UT has one of the largest collections of mounted dinos on display. Don't take your backyard for granted - visit Mesa Verde and explore endless cliff dwellings and archeological sites. You can easily spend a good

couple of days there with very informative and helpful rangers to bring the past to life. They have a great Junior Ranger program for children, too.

Lil' chef: Kids love to be in the kitchen. Find creative recipes and have your sweet little cupcakes help you create a delicious treat or whip up a crafty recipe for sidewalk chalk paint. Picky eaters are more likely to eat something they helped make.

Pinterest: If you are still stuck for ideas, fall back on my favorite family fun resource, Pinterest. You can find anything from summer crafts to recipes to anything you want.

Whatever you choose to do this summer grab the sunscreen, water, and create magical memories your kids will never forget.

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