

Exclusive: Boredom busters for young people

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on behalf of

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Source: Ashley Osborne, 4-H youth development specialist

COVID-19 has caused most of us to make dramatic changes to our everyday lives. Most young Kentuckians are out of school and nearly all extracurricular activities and events, like 4-H, have been canceled, postponed, rescheduled or delivered online, as we work together try to minimize the severity of this new disease.

As young people adjust to this extended break from their daily routines, chances are parents and caregivers will hear a lot of "I'm bored" in the coming weeks. Here are some ideas to get young people active and engaged during this time of much uncertainty.

Take a break from electronics and get outdoors. Here are some outdoor activities to break up the monotony:

- Go on a nature scavenger hunt. Numerous outdoor scavenger hunts are available online for free or create your own.
- Plan a backyard picnic lunch.
- Build a fairy house using only natural items, such as leaves, sticks, flowers, seeds, grasses and rocks. Have a contest amongst siblings to see who can build the most creative house.
- Listen and look for wildlife and signs of wildlife, such as feathers, nests and tracks, in your backyard.
- Go stargazing. Grab a blanket and observe the night sky.
- Take part in the Kentucky Adopt-a-Tree Program. All you need is a tape measure, camera (a smartphone will work perfectly), internet access and a tree. Learn more at <https://ufi.ca.uky.edu/adopt-a-tree>.
- Search for rocks and fossils. Create a 4-H Geology Collection to enter in the county fair. Learn more at <https://www.uky.edu/KGS/education/4H.php>.
- Grab your digital camera or smartphone and encourage your 4-H'er to participate in the new

4-H entomology project! This project allows 4-H'ers to create a virtual insect collection. Learn more at <https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/4HEnt>.

If the weather is not cooperating, here are some indoor ideas to help you pass the days.

- Plan your garden together as a family. What vegetables do you want to grow this year? Draw your garden and map out what you plan to plant and where.
- Upcycle. Gather items that you would typically toss in the garbage or recycle bin and get creative repurposing them.
- Take a virtual tour of the Kentucky Horse Park. Kentucky Farm Bureau's Kentucky Farms Feed Me has a new virtual field trip that explores the Kentucky Horse Park and how to care for horses. Check out this video in addition to the numerous other virtual field trips available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfO30aPjW94>.
- Play Bird Song Hero, a fun, free online game from The Cornell Lab Bird Academy Play Lab. Several free interactive games are available to explore bird flight, song, dance, feathers and more. Learn more at <https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/learning-games/>.
- Project Learning Tree, an award-winning environmental education program, has free activities for families available for download on their website, <https://www.plt.org/activities-for-families/>.
- The Nature Conservancy has Nature Treasure Hunts available free on their website, <https://www.fws.gov/international/pdf/education-nature-treasure-hunt.pdf>.
- Kentucky Agriculture and Environment in the Classroom has 32 Pinterest boards with fun activities related to agriculture, life sciences, environmental and earth sciences, and more. Visit <https://www.pinterest.com/teachkyag/>.

For more information, contact the (COUNTY NAME) office of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

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