

Gadget-Free-Hour Parent Handout

November 20, 2026 | 7:30–8:30 PM | Theme: Imaginative Play



Hello Parents!

Welcome to Gadget-Free Hour 2026!

Did you know that adulthood needs playfulness as much as childhood does, perhaps even more?

We invite you to enjoy an hour of imaginative play, giving your child not just your time, but your playful self - imagining, playing, and enjoying each other's company.

Because families don't always need more entertainment. Sometimes, they need more imagination.

This handout offers 45 games parents and children (kindergartners to teens) can play together at home, using everyday materials. Choose a few favorites; there is no need to complete them all.

Get ready to play

- Put away phones and switch off the television.
- Let your child help choose the games. Age groups are a guide; adapt any game to your family.
- Read or print the instructions before the hour begins.
- Keep paper, pencils, crayons, paper cups, socks, a scarf, and a cardboard box nearby. Use what you already have.
- Join in as a player. Bring your energy and enthusiasm. Take turns leading, welcome unusual ideas, and let the story or game change as you play.

Plan your hour

7:30–7:35 - Settle in, put devices aside, and choose your games.

7:35–7:45 Start with a few warm-up activities:

7:45–8:10 - Enjoy one longer game, such as a puppet show or inventing a game.

8:10–8:25 - Play another favorite, swap roles or try a new ending.

8:25–8:30 - Share your funniest moment and choose a game to play again.

Sticky Tape Hands

Pretend someone put incredibly sticky tape on your right hand. Shake your hand wildly to get it off! Now, it accidentally stuck to your left hand—shake that one off too!

Heavy Boots

Pretend your feet are trapped in heavy, sticky mud. Lift your right leg and stomp and shake to get the mud off. Switch and shake the mud off your left leg.

Jelly Belly

Keep your feet glued to the floor, but turn your torso, hips, and stomach into wobbly jelly. Jiggle your middle section back and forth as fast as you can.

The Wet Dog Finish

Pretend you are a dog that just jumped out of a swimming pool. Shake your whole body from your nose, all the way down to your toes, to ‘dry off,’ ending with a loud dog bark or laugh!

Find your family’s games

Kindergarten Kingdom • pages 3–4

Primary Play • pages 5–6

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Keep everyone comfortable

- Make room for movement and use soft, unbreakable props.
- Keep small objects away from younger children.
- All movement games can be played seated with gestures and sounds.
- Anyone may pass, help with a story, or join in when ready.

The timings are flexible. If everyone is enjoying a game, keep going!

Kindergarten Kingdom

Ages 3–5 | Tiny adventures and big imagination for little ones

Keep the instructions short and show your child how to begin. Follow their ideas and repeat favorite games as often as they like.

1. Magic Object

5–10 minutes

Choose a spoon, scarf or paper cup. Pretend it is something else and demonstrate its new use. A cup might become a telescope or a tiny hat. Take turns guessing, then swap roles.

2. Animal Adventure

10–15 minutes

Go on a pretend journey: “We are entering a jungle. Who can we hear?” Everyone becomes an animal using movements and sounds. Let your child decide where you travel next and which animals you meet.

3. Build an Imaginary Home

15–20 minutes

Use cushions, a sheet, and a box to make a floor-level den, cave, or spaceship. Decide who lives there. Knock on the imaginary door and visit each other in character.

4. Finish My Story

5–10 minutes

Begin, “A tiny star landed in our kitchen...” Take turns adding a sentence, sound, or action. Help with choices if needed: “Did it want a snack or a new friend?”

5. Family Puppet Show

15–20 minutes

Turn socks or paper bags into characters without decorating them. Give each puppet a voice. Act out a small problem, such as a dragon who cannot find its teddy, and solve it together.

6. Mirror Me

5–10 minutes

Face each other. One person slowly makes a funny face or moves their hands while the other copies like a mirror. Switch leaders, then try moving like robots, sleepy bears, or floating bubbles.

7. What Is in the Box

5–10 minutes

Hold an empty box and pretend to lift out something invisible. Show its size, weight, or sound. Others guess what it is. Let your child invent an object and help you handle it.

8. Silly Soup

10 minutes

Place an empty bowl in the middle. Take turns adding pretend ingredients: a cloud, a giggle, or a dinosaur sneeze. Stir together and describe what happens when everyone tastes the imaginary soup.

9. Emotions Express Train

Build the Track: Use masking tape to create a long, winding train track on the floor.

Place the Stations: Place small colorful objects along the track to represent specific train stations.



Example track layout. Follow the arrows and act out each station as a family.

How to play

- The family forms a line and moves like a train.
- When the train reaches a 'station', everyone must act out that station's label.
- Travel down the tape line to the next stop.

10. Indoor Camping Trip

Pack a backpack with snacks, turn off the lights, and use flashlights to explore the dark house. Pretend the house is a forest and look for imaginary wildlife.

Primary Play

Ages 6–10 | Creative games for young explorers and family

Let your child invent characters and rules. For longer games, agree on a simple starting idea, then figure out the rest by playing them together.

1. Family Treasure Hunt

15–20 minutes

Hide a paper treasure and make three picture or word clues leading to it. Include a playful task, such as “Walk like a penguin to the next clue.” Let your child create a second hunt for you.

2. Invent a New Game

15–20 minutes

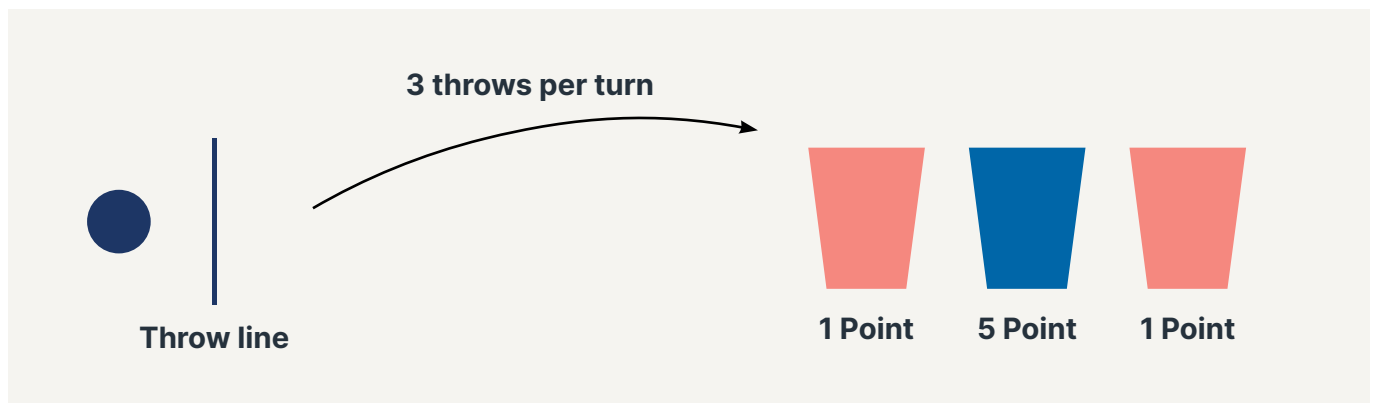
Materials Needed: Plastic or paper cups, rolled-up socks or paper balls.

How to play

- Scatter or stack your cups on a table or the floor, and give everyone a few rolled-up socks or paper balls.
- Give your game a fun name

Set three simple rules

- **Rule 1:** Stand behind the sofa to throw.
- **Rule 2:** Knocking over a red cup is 1 point; a blue cup is 5 points, and so on.
- **Rule 3:** You only get 3 throws per turn.



Example setup for the cup game. Choose your own throw line and scoring rules.

Play Round 1

Take turns playing according to the 3 rules you just created. Keep track of scores or just play for fun!

Rules Change

After the first round, pause and ask: "How can we make this even crazier or more fun?"

Let each player suggest one new rule or tweak. Examples:

- "Throw with your non-dominant hand."
- "Throw while standing on one foot."
- "If you miss, you have to do a funny dance."

3. One Object Many Uses

5–10 minutes

Choose a household object. Take turns silently showing an imaginary use for it while everyone guesses. A spoon could become a microphone or an oar. See how many ideas the family can create together.

4. Family Superhero Team

15–20 minutes

Invent a name and unusual power for each person. Choose a mission, such as rescuing a lost moon or helping a shy dragon. Act out how your different powers help the team finish the mission.

5. Pass the Drawing

10–15 minutes

Start a drawing on paper and pass it around. Each person adds a new detail without erasing anyone else's work. When it returns to the first artist, take turns telling a story about the finished picture.

6. Silly Shop

10–15 minutes

Open an imaginary shop selling things such as bottled laughter or shoes for elephants. One person is the shopkeeper and another the customer. Ask questions, demonstrate the products, and switch roles after each visit.

7. Invent an Animal

10–15 minutes

Combine two animals to invent a new creature. Draw it together, name it, and decide what it eats and where it sleeps. Act out a day in its life while the others guess its habits.

8. Postcard from an Impossible Place

10–15 minutes

Pretend you are visiting a city inside a flower or a hotel on the moon. Draw a postcard and describe one surprising thing that happened there. Family members ask questions as if they are planning a visit.

Middle School Magic

Ages 11–13 | Creative games for tweens and family

Take turns leading and build on each other's ideas. Enjoy the unexpected turns without worrying about polished performances or perfect drawings.

1. Family Improv

10–15 minutes

Write three unusual situations on slips, such as "Our house has landed on Mars." Pick one and act it out without a script. Each person adds a new twist; everyone works it into the scene.

2. Mystery at Home

20–25 minutes

One person hides a paper "missing object" and prepares three clues pointing to its location. The others become detectives and explain their reasoning. Once solved, choose a new mystery-maker and swap roles if time allows.

3. Alternate Ending

10–15 minutes

Choose a story everyone knows. Each person proposes a different ending. Combine two ideas and act out the result, with someone providing narration or sound effects. Try a second ending in a completely different mood.

4. Make a Family Board Game

20–30 minutes

Draw a path of 12 spaces on paper. Choose four of the 12 spaces as challenge spaces. Take 2 minutes to come up with mime or storytelling challenges. Move folded-paper pieces (counters) one space per turn, completing each challenge together until everyone reaches the finish.



Example board: 12 spaces, with four starred challenge spaces. Move one space per turn.

5. Secret Alien Visitor

10–15 minutes

One person plays an alien who has never seen everyday objects. Others demonstrate an umbrella or a lunchbox without saying what it is. The alien demonstrates what they think it does, then everyone swaps roles.

6. Yes And Story

5–10 minutes

Begin with an unlikely event: “A whale arrived at our door.” Each person continues with “Yes, and...” followed by a new detail. Keep accepting the story’s twists, then work together to give it an ending.

7. Family Restaurant

15–20 minutes

Children become chefs, and parents become customers. Play out the scenario from the customers entering until they leave the restaurant after their meal. Use props and loads of imagination.

8. Time Machine

5–10 minutes

How to play

- One person shouts “Spin the Dial!” Other players spin in a circle to ‘travel.’
- The person announces the destination, and players must instantly freeze or move around acting like a resident of that era using big physical movements and sound effects.

Era examples

The Dinosaur Era • The Robot World • The Flying Car Era

The Medieval Era • The Zero-Gravity Space Station

9. The Floor Is Lava

10–15 minutes

How to play

- Players must travel across the room without touching the floor, which has turned into boiling lava.
- One side of the room is the starting point. The other side is the Safe Zone.
- Place cushions, pillows, yoga mats, or small sturdy rugs across the room to act as ‘safe stones’ or ‘islands.’ Space them out so players have to stretch or take careful leaps to reach them.
- Players must move from the starting point to the Safe Zone on the other side, stepping only on the ‘safe stones’ or ‘islands.’
- If a player accidentally touches the floor with any part of their body, they have to shout “Ouch!”, return to the closest safe stone or island, and do a quick physical challenge (like 5 jumping jacks or balancing on one foot for 5 seconds) to ‘cool off’ before they can start moving again.
- One player, a Lava Monster, crawls slowly on the floor, gently tapping the feet of players who hang over the edges of their cushions.

10. The Magic Runway

15–20 minutes

How to play

- Construct a long fashion runway out of yoga mats or blankets laid end-to-end.
- Mix and match mismatched socks, hats, and oversized shirts
- Take turns walking the runway while the other person acts as the enthusiastic photographer (remember, no gadgets).

High School Spark

Ages 14–18 | Fun games for teens and family

Offer a choice and let your teenager shape the hour. Play as equals; keep humor kind and make room for quiet storytelling as well as performance.

1. A Film Without a Camera

20–25 minutes

Choose a genre and create a short live film with a beginning, problem, and ending. Share acting, narration, and sound effects. Perform it, then replay a scene in another genre. Two people can take several roles.

2. Role Reversal

10–15 minutes

Choose a light situation, such as planning a holiday or ordering dinner. Parents and teenagers exchange roles and act it out. Keep impressions affectionate and avoid ongoing disagreements. Finish by sharing one thing that surprised you.

3. Design the Family of 2050

15–20 minutes

Imagine how your family might live, travel, and celebrate in 2050. Sketch a home or act out a future family gathering. Each person contributes one useful invention and one unexpected complication.

4. Object Story Challenge

10–15 minutes

Choose one ordinary object. Each person tells a short story about it in a different genre, such as mystery, comedy, or science fiction. Combine elements from the stories to invent a shared finale.

5. Family Talk Show

15–20 minutes

One person hosts a talk show while others play invented guests: a retired dragon, a time traveler, or a cloud designer. Ask about their work and unusual problems. Rotate the host after each interview.

6. Memory Remix

10–15 minutes

Choose a family memory everyone is comfortable sharing. Recreate it as a news bulletin, musical, or sports commentary. Each person adds a playful fictional twist. Finally, come up with a new title for the story.

7. Pitch the Most Useless Product

10–15 minutes

Invent a delightfully useless product, such as an umbrella for fish. Give a one-minute sales pitch. Others ask serious-sounding questions, then help improve the product in an even more ridiculous way.

8. Soundtrack Theatre

10–15 minutes

One person acts out a simple scene while the others supply live sound effects and humming. Replay it as a thriller or comedy using different sounds. Swap roles and notice how the mood changes.

9. Invent Something Impossible

15–20 minutes

Draw or build a model of an impossible invention using paper and clean packaging. Explain what it does, demonstrate it, and reveal one funny flaw. Others ask questions as potential customers.

10. Planet of Feelings

15–20 minutes

How to play

Players must physically transform their bodies, voices, and actions to mirror each character's home territory.

- Clear a central space in the room to be the Spaceship. Name different corners of the room as specific territories on the Planet of Feelings.
- Players stand in the center, count down from five, and leap into the air to 'land' their spaceship on the planet.
- The leader acts as the Mission Commander and announces which character's territory the crew is entering.
- Players must instantly walk, sound, and act like that character until the Commander calls out the next location.

Planet characters and territories

Glimmer (The Joy Colony)

The Environment: A bouncy, bright land made of cotton candy clouds.

The Movement: Players must skip, leap, and constantly bounce on their tiptoes.

The Vibe: Wear massive smiles, give enthusiastic high-fives, and laugh loudly.

Grumble (The Volcano of Anger)

The Environment: A smoky, rumbling landscape covered in jagged rocks.

The Movement: Stomping heavily, crossing arms tightly, and tensing up muscles.

The Vibe: Furrowed brows, deep stomps, and making low huffing noises ("Hmph!").

Tremble (The Shivering Forest)

The Environment: A spooky, shadowy wood where the trees whisper.

The Movement: Walk slowly, take tiny cautious steps, and frequently look over your shoulder.

The Vibe: Shaking hands, wide eyes, and taking quiet, quick breaths.

Games for the whole family

These games work for all ages, grandparents and other caregivers. Pair a younger child with an older player when helpful. Most games can be played with just two people.

1. Family Imagination Jar

10–20 minutes

Write or draw prompts on slips: “Our home is underwater,” “We run a dragon hotel,” or “The moon needs a birthday party.” Pick one and act it out together. Let younger children choose the characters.

2. Sound Effects Story

10–15 minutes

One person narrates an adventure. Everyone else makes rain, footsteps, animals, or spaceship sounds with voices, claps, and gentle taps. Pause regularly so each person can add a sound or take over the narration.

3. Family Talent Swap

15–20 minutes

Each person teaches one small skill, such as a paper fold, rhythm, funny walk, or drawing trick. Practise together, then invent a performance or story that uses at least two of the skills.

4. Paper Tower Town

15–20 minutes

Use scrap paper and tape to build towers together. Turn them into a tiny town, name its buildings, and invent its residents. Tell a story about something surprising that happens in the town.

5. Family Museum

10–15 minutes

Choose three ordinary objects and display them as imaginary museum treasures. Become tour guides and invent their histories. A sock might belong to a giant! Visitors ask questions and help develop each object’s story.

6. Freeze Frame Story

10–15 minutes

Choose a scene, such as a picnic on the moon. Everyone holds a pose while one person describes what is happening. Unfreeze, act out the next moment, and freeze again. Seated poses work equally well.

7. News from an Imaginary World

15–20 minutes

Invent three headlines from a world where animals run the town. Become a newsreader, reporter, and interview guest. Present the news live, with sound effects and a surprising weather forecast.

Before the gadget-free hour ends

Take turns completing: “My favorite moment was...” and “Next time, let’s...”

Decide when you would like to play together again.

Our favorite game: _____

Our next family play date: _____

More imaginative play ideas

Quick ideas by age group, including favorites from the main activity pages.

Kindergarten 3–5

- **Cardboard Adventure:** A box becomes a car, rocket, boat, castle, or robot.
- **The Magic Wand:** Use a stick, spoon, or ruler as a magic wand. Wave it and “freeze” your child into an animal, a robot, or a statue, then let them take a turn freezing you.
- **Indoor Camping Trip:** Turn off the lights, pack a backpack with snacks, and use flashlights to explore the dark house. Pretend the house is a forest and look for imaginary wildlife.
- **Shadow Puppet Show:** Shine a flashlight against a blank wall in a dim room. Use your hands or cut-out paper shapes on popsicle sticks to create characters and make up a funny story together.
- **Emotion Express Train:** Create a floor track using masking tape. Kids move to designated mats along the route, acting out various feelings or animals—such as a joyful stop, a tired bear rest, or a laughter spot—with energetic movements and expressions before moving forward.

Primary School 6–10

- **The Living Room Jungle:** Turn furniture into trees, rivers, caves, and animal homes.
- **Reverse Day:** Children act as parents; parents act as children.
- **Treasure Hunt:** Create clues using household objects.
- **Superhero Family:** Each family member invents a superpower.

Middle School 11–13

- **Family News Channel:** Everyone reports funny family news.
- **Family Restaurant:** Parents become chefs, and children become customers.
- **Time Machine:** Travel to the past or future and act out what life is like.
- **Make-Believe Market:** Buy and sell imaginary things.

High School 14–18

- **Planet of Feelings:** Create a planet where every feeling has a character.
- **Pictionary**
- **Dumb Charades**

Inspiring moments, lasting memories—brought to you by ParentCircle