

# 101 Things to Do When There's Nothing to Do

<http://specialchildren.about.com/od/behaviorstrategies/a/timewasters.htm>

## Emergency time-wasters for planes, cars, lines, and waiting rooms

Forgot to toss toys in your purse? Carry-on consigned to the cargo hold? Long waiting-room stay used up all your distractions? No matter how organized the parent, there will always come a time when your child will rely on you for distraction, just you and you alone. What do you do when you're stuck without props? Here are 101 informal activities that use nothing more than your clothing, your accessories, and whatever wits you have about you. If your child has a particularly short attention span or low tolerance for boredom, you may have to run through a whole string of these -- but finally, the time will pass.

1. Play "Rock, Paper, Scissors"
2. Arm wrestle
3. Thumb wrestle
4. Push palms together to see who can push the hardest
5. Stack hands one atop the other, pulling out the hand at the bottom and bringing it up top
6. Stack fists, using same rules as above
7. Stack arms, similarly
8. Play with your child's hair
9. Let your child play with your hair
10. Draw a letter on your child's back with a finger and see if he or she can guess
11. Draw a letter instead on your child's arm
12. Have your child draw a letter on your arm or back, and you do the guessing
13. Take off your shoe and have your child practice shoe-tying
14. Take off your child's shoe and find a different way to lace it
15. Take off your child's shoes and sock and use the socks as puppets
16. Use your wristwatch to give a lesson in telling time
17. Use your wristwatch to time things going on around you
18. Let your child try on your wristwatch
19. Let your child try on your jewelry
20. Count by twos, threes, fives, tens
21. Count backward from 100
22. Pick a number between one and 10
23. Teach the [9 times table trick](#)
24. Give a math equation for your child to figure mentally
25. Give a string of math equations and ask for the answer at the end
26. Make up math story problems
27. Say words to spell
28. Say words to rhyme with
29. Play "[I Spy](#)"
30. Try some [tongue twisters](#)
31. Play "[I Went to ...](#)"
32. Sing some [silly songs](#) (softly)
33. Do songs with hand motions, with and without the words
34. Play "[20 Questions](#)"
35. Look for things out the window
36. Play paddy cake
37. Teach your child some clapping games
38. Have your child teach you some clapping games
39. Whisper secrets, silly and serious
40. Say "Tell me three things you did today"
41. Tell a story, taking turns one sentence at a time
42. Write a poem, taking turns one sentence at a time
43. Hide something (even just your thumb) in one fist -- guess which hand?
44. Count your change
45. Count your currency
46. Make a stack or a snake with loose change
47. Fold or roll up currency

48. Make a pattern, train, or house out of credit cards.
49. Show your child the pictures in your wallet (yes, even your driver's license)
50. Try to remember one of your child's favorite storybooks; let your child correct your mistakes.
51. See how your child looks in your glasses
52. Give an invisible manicure
53. Give an invisible pedicure
54. Get an invisible manicure or pedicure
55. Have your child name all his or her classmates
56. See how many people your child can name in your extended family
57. See how many birthdates of friends and family your child can recall
58. Name a relative's birth year and have your child figure out how old; invent relatives if necessary
59. Guess what the people around you do for a living
60. Make a Christmas or birthday wish list
61. Count how many words you can spot -- on signs, posters, clothes
62. Make faces
63. Play [Straight Face](#)
64. Try to make each other laugh -- last one wins
65. Have a staring contest
66. Have your child narrate a favorite movie
67. Interview your child for a TV news show
68. Speak Pig Latin
69. Play "Truth or Dare"
70. Make up your own secret code
71. Think of rhyming words for items around you
72. Take turns naming words for a letter of the alphabet; last one to think of a word wins, and you move to the next letter
73. Same as above, but with rhymes
74. Same as above, but with entries in categories
75. Explain the meaning of various figures of speech
76. Make up silly similes
77. Make a puppet face with your fist, with your thumb as the lower jaw
78. Flip a coin
79. Do "This little piggy" on feet or hands
80. Give a backrub
81. Get a backrub
82. Crawl fingers up your child's back or arm like a spider
83. Make up an acronym for your child's name, and the names of other family members
84. Ask for favorites: TV show, movie, book, color, game, animal, friend
85. Play peek-a-boo
86. Give your child the name of an object and ask what color it is, what letter it starts with, what shape it is, if it's heavy or light
87. Go on a "hike" with your two fingers walking over your child's arms, shoulders and head
88. Break an egg over your child's head by rapping it gently with your fist and then opening your hand to make the egg roll down the face
89. Do charades
90. Be mirror images
91. Play "Simon Says" on a small scale.
92. Throw an imaginary ball
93. Blow imaginary bubbles
94. Blow a raspberry on your child's arm
95. "Steal" your child's nose
96. Be a [little goldfish](#)
97. Do "[Here is the church, here is the steeple.](#)" or make your own version for another building
98. Try [guided relaxation](#)
99. Practice [breathing techniques](#)
100. Repeat what the other person says; repeat what the other person says.
101. See who can go the longest without talking.