

Summer Fun and Learning: Ways to Keep High Ability Kids Busy this Summer

Resources to Explore

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For Parents -

Summer is a great time for children to explore a variety of interests and to build new skills. Below are some ideas for you and your child to consider.

It is also a chance to increase your child's resiliency and problem-solving skills by allowing your child to engage in free play - unstructured play without close adult supervision. It is okay for your children to "be bored" as they will then learn to explore, discover, and entertain themselves - especially if they are outdoors and do not have access to a device. For more thoughts about nurturing your child, see *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness* by Jonathan Haidt. Check out [Haidt's YouTube video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVq4ARlINvg\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVq4ARlINvg)

General Listing of Museums in Illinois

A listing of museums throughout Illinois - [Which Museums](#)

Chicago Attractions and Activities

The Field Museum - [Games, Projects, and More](#) & [The Brain Scoop](#)

Museum of Science and Industry - [Science at Home](#)

Art Institute of Chicago - [Get Creative at Home](#)

Adler Planetarium - [Online Resources](#)

Chicago Children's Museum - [Recipes for Play at Home](#)

Chicago Architecture Center - [@Home Resources](#)

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago - [Learning Resources](#)

Chicago High School for the Arts - [Online Summer Camps](#)

Frank Lloyd Wright Trust - [Wright at Home Kids and Family Activities](#)

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Chicago History Museum - [Chicago History at Home](#)

Chicago Academy of Sciences Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum - [Hybrid Summer Camp](#)

The University of Chicago Oriental Institute - [Youth & Family Programs](#)

International Museum of Surgical Science - [#MuseumFromHome](#)

The University of Chicago Smart Museum of Art - [Smart at Home](#)

Ravinia Festival - [Kids Concerts](#)

Chicago Botanic Garden - [Youth & Family Programs](#)

Brookfield Zoo - [Events & Things to Do](#)

Morton Arboretum - [Youth and Family Programs](#)

Other Illinois Attractions and Activities

Suburban Chicago

Fermilab (Batavia) - [Science Snippets](#) & [Resources for Families and Educators](#)

Lake County Parks & Recreation - [Dunn Museum](#)

[21st Century Skills Academy Model United Nations](#) (Hinsdale & Western Springs)

Argonne National Laboratory (Lemont) - [Outloud Public Lecture Series](#) & [Summer Camps](#)

Northern Illinois

Discovery Center Museum (Rockford) - [Playful Learning at Home](#)

[Anderson Japanese Gardens](#) (Rockford)

[Rockford Area Museums and Historical Sites](#)

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[John Deere Historic Site](#) (Grand Detour)

[Volo Auto Museum](#) (Volo)

[Museums in the Quad Cities](#) (Moline, Rock Island, Davenport, Bettendorf)

Central Illinois

Lincoln Home National Historic Site (Springfield) - [Virtual Tours](#)

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (Springfield) - [Calendar of Events](#)

[African American History](#) (Springfield)

Peoria Riverfront Museum - [Virtual Museum](#)

[21 Museums in Greater Peoria](#)

McLean County Museum of History - [Futures in History Camp](#)

[Children's Museum of Illinois](#) - Decatur

Southern Illinois

[History Museums in Southern Illinois](#)

UNESCO World Heritage Site - [Cahokia Mounds](#)

Special Interests

FACETS - [Film Camps](#)

[Exploring Illinois' Connection to the Underground Railroad](#) - (various sites)

[Historic Route 66 in Illinois](#) - (various sites)

[Trail of Tears in Illinois](#) - (Southern Illinois)

[Sites of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858](#) - (various sites throughout the state)

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[Math and Science Camps by the Illinois Mathematics and Sciences Academy](#) - (various sites throughout the state)

Language Camp to Learn a Variety of Foreign Languages - [Concordia College Language Villages](#)

Nature - Check your area's forest preserve website - For example, in [Kane County](#)

[Photography](#)

[State Parks in Illinois](#)

Search your area's community college for [College Programs for Kids](#)

Illinois Gifted Resources

[Chicago Gifted Community Center](#) - Calendar of Area Events, Summer Programs, Gifted Resources, Connect with other families

Northwestern Center for Talent Development - [Summer Programs](#)

[The Center for Gifted](#) - Long Grove, Elmhurst, & Glenview camp locations; Online Dungeons & Dragons

Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA) - [Summer at IMSA](#)

Roycemore School - [Virtual Camps & Courses](#)

Quest Academy (Palatine) - [Summer Camp & Classes](#)

Avery Coonley School - [Summer Program](#)

Dominican University (River Forest) - [Summer Gifted and Talented Program](#)

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Other Summer & Online Resources

[Camp Wonderopolis](#)

[Varsity Tutors Virtual Summer Camps](#)

[Family Maker Camp](#)

[The Meeting House Virtual Playground](#)

[National Academy of Sciences The Science Behind It](#)

[Prodigy Math Game](#)

[Dragon Box Math Apps](#)

[Robot Kits for Kids](#)

[Ed Zaccaro Math Books for Gifted & Advanced Learners](#)

[Outschool Live Online Classes & Camps](#)

[Coyote Science - The Science Show for Kids](#)

[Reedsy Prompts - Weekly Creative Writing Contests](#)

[The Math Contest](#)

[The Big List of Student Contests and Competitions](#)

[Podcasts for Kids](#)

[Top 5 Children Bloggers: Meet the kids who make a difference!](#)

[MENSA for Kids' Excellence in Reading Program](#)

[Lit 2 Go: Free Online Classic Novels and Short Stories \(audio in an included feature\)](#)

[Legends of Learning Game-Based STEM Competitions](#)

[Zoo with Us Live Zoo Webcams](#)

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Outdoor Activities

Archery (Google Search - [Archery Classes in Illinois](#))

[Bike Trails in Illinois](#)

Fishing

[Geocaching](#)

Hiking

[Kayaking/Canoeing](#)

Outdoor Fun - Check your local park district for opportunities. Alternatively, contact your local high school or community college for names of a student who might be willing to teach your child.

Badminton (Can purchase glow in the dark or light up birdies for night games!)

Bags/Cornhole

Basketball

[Classic Outdoor Games for Kids](#)

Golf

Mini Golf - [Best Illinois Mini Golf](#) and [Best Mini Golf in Chicagoland](#)

Pickleball

Volleyball

[Board Games](#) - Get off devices and play old and new games.

Life Skills - Check your local library, park district, or 4-H for learning opportunities. Alternatively, a group of parents/grandparents with skills could offer experiences to the children

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in their group. Skilled teens could be employed to teach younger children. Active seniors in some senior living communities may have skills they'd like to share.

Cooking

[Plan and make a meal](#)

Baking

Virtual Cooking Classes - [The Kids Table](#)

[Oui Chef Chicago](#)

Investing, Spending, Saving, Donating Money

[Videos for Kids to learn about money](#)

[Knitting/Crocheting](#) - Supply stores may have classes.

Planning a Family Trip

Charge your child with planning a family trip - whether it's for a day, a weekend, or longer. Depending on the age of the child, have him/her interview family members about their preferences; select activities; plan a route; plan accommodations; plan possible meal options; provide your child with a budget and have them stick to the budget. Once the plan is developed, have your child present the plan to the family. Make any needed changes, and implement the plan.

[Repairs around the house](#)

Sewing - Fabric stores may have classes.

Learn to use a sewing machine (make pillows, bags, etc.)

Learn to sew a button, mend a hem