

## **75 simple ways to share joy with your child during lock down**

Being at home with your child gives you a great opportunity to show them love and have fun together. Here are some creative and simple ways to give you some special moments together when you have limited time and resources.

1. Smile at your child, let them see your eyes light up, and look deep into their eyes.
2. Give them a big hug and let them feel how much you love them.
3. Make them laugh out loud at a funny story or a joke.
4. Ask them about the happiest moment in their day, and celebrate the special moment together.
5. Ask them about the saddest moment in their day, listen to them and comfort them.
6. Draw or print hollow outlines of the letters of their name, and fill each letter with positive adjectives, describing your child, that begin with that letter. e.g. fill the outline of a letter S (for Sally) with words like smiling, sunshine, sweet, special, serene, sociable, etc.
7. Use wrapped sweets, or tiny toys, to make the outline of a heart on their bed, or to spell their name.
8. Invite them to help you bake their favourite cakes or cookies.
9. Spend an hour with your child doing whatever they want to do.
10. Decorate an ice-cream together with pieces of food you have in your cupboards.
11. Write a happy or funny poem about them.
12. Tell them how glad and blessed you are to be their parent.
13. Let your child 'overhear' you telling someone else what they have done well today.
14. Tell them something interesting they didn't know before.
15. Teach them a small life-skill, such as how to sew on a button, or how to take a good photograph.
16. Enter their world and play their games with them.
17. Put a sticker inside their shoe that says 'I love you!'
18. Cook their favourite dinner together.
19. Put an encouraging love-note in their pocket or under their pillow.
20. Spend a few moments looking at something beautiful together, such as a sunset, tree, or amazing flower. Look carefully at all the details.
21. Let them do something kind for you, like making you a drink, or doing one of your chores.
22. Give them a tiny treat that is totally unexpected.
23. Make a list together of thirty things to be thankful for.
24. Tell your child that being their parent fills your heart with joy.
25. Write a message on a sticky note and put it on the mirror they use every day.
26. Arrange their food in a picture or pattern on their plate.
27. Make an award or certificate to celebrate a special achievement in the past week.
28. Notice when they use one of their character strengths and appreciate them for using it.

29. Tell them when they have made a good choice, especially one that's been inspired by an important value such as kindness or patience.
30. Take a photo of them, place it in a lovely frame, and put it in a prominent position.
31. Think of at least one thing you're both thankful for that begins with each of the letters of the alphabet.
32. Plan a kind surprise for someone else and involve your child in the activity.
33. Amuse them by eating a meal in a different place – a picnic outside, or on a rug indoors; under the table instead of on the table; etc.
34. Snuggle up together and read a favourite book, one chapter a day, so they can't wait for you to read the next one!
35. Call a family member and ask them to tell you about one of the happiest times in their life.
36. Find a video of a funny animal to watch.
37. Make up a silly song where each verse is about a different family member.
38. Plan something fun to do in a couple of week's time, so that they have something to look forward to. Anticipation adds extra joy to the experience.
39. At the end of the day ask your child to tell you three things that went really well for them.
40. Pray a prayer of blessing over your child.
41. Mail your child a funny card.
42. Look at an amusing collection of animal photos on the Internet, such as [www.boredpanda.com/perfectly-timed-funny-animal-pictures/](http://www.boredpanda.com/perfectly-timed-funny-animal-pictures/)
43. Help your child make a den somewhere – by throwing a sheet over a table or a washing line, inside a huge box, or using whatever else you have around. Let them play and eat their meals inside the den for a day.
44. Ask your child to draw a picture, or write a story, about a something happy that happened to them.
45. Give them a tiny gift. Wrap it up and then put it inside a series of larger boxes, so they have to undo several layers to find the present. Write a funny instruction on each layer so that have to hop around the room, pull a funny face, etc., before they can open the next layer.
46. Take it in turns to say, 'If I could I would give you a...'. Then suggest different gifts you'd like to give each other beginning with each letter of the alphabet.
47. Create a small treasure hunt for your child that leads to a tiny treat.
48. Cheerfully offer to tidy their room with them. Teach them tidying skills as you go and end up with a delicious drink as a reward.
49. Say something encouraging when your child is working hard towards one of their goals, such as practicing football or music.
50. Tidy their room up completely when they're not expecting it. Don't mention what you've done or even complain about it. Just do it as a special gift for them. It may inspire them to keep their room tidier in the future!
51. Find a free craft activity online that you can print out and do together.
52. Look for a free audio book online, or a video of someone reading a story.
53. Blow bubbles together. The breathing we use to blow bubbles helps to calm us down.

54. Make a sign to put over their bed that says something special about them. 'A kind princess sleeps here!' or 'A brave prince sleeps here!'
55. Say, 'I want to spend a whole hour doing something fun with you! What shall we do?'
56. Make a beautiful picture for your house with your child. Paint; make a rainbow collage of pieces torn from a magazine; or find ideas for children's art projects on the Internet.
57. Make a thank you card together to send to someone who has been kind, helpful or generous to your child.
58. Make up some funny actions together for your child's favourite song.
59. Learn an encouraging Bible verse together.
60. Partially fill balloons with water, tie the ends, and play with them outside.
61. Choose an everyday object, such as a jar, a newspaper, a large stone, etc. Work together to think of twenty different ways to use the object.
62. Gather up lots of small empty food cartons and boxes, and other recycled bits and pieces, and let your child create whatever they like with them.
63. Find a large shallow box. Use a thick black marker pen to draw a road map for toy cars on the base of the box. Draw in houses, trees, fields, a garage, etc. Give it to your child as a playmat for their cars or blocks.
64. Fill a clear plastic bottle with oil or clear liquid soap or any other transparent, thick and safe liquid. Add glitter sequins, tiny pieces of foil, bits of ribbon etc. Let your child shake it and watch all the pieces fall slowly to the bottom again.
65. Tidy their room up completely when they're not expecting it. Don't mention what you've done or even complain about it. Just do it as a special gift for them. It may inspire them to keep their room tidier in the future!
66. Praise their effort whenever you see them persisting with a challenging task.
67. Teach them a game you enjoyed playing when you were a child.
68. Do something fun that's very different to your normal routine, like serving ice-cream for breakfast, or wearing clothes back to front.
69. Let your child look through the food you have in the house and choose three of their favourite ingredients. Then try to make a meal together that uses some of each ingredient.
70. Watch a happy film or TV show together.
71. Ask your child what you do that makes them feel especially loved, and then do more of it.
72. Hide tiny coins around the house, and let your child gather them up to put in a charity box to help others.
73. Fill a large plastic box 1/3 full of water and freeze it. When it's frozen add several plastic toys and another layer of water. Freeze again. Then top up the box completely, and refreeze. Turn the frozen block out onto the ground in hot weather and give your child some safe tools, or sticks and stones, to try and get their toys out as quickly as they can.
74. Go outside at night and look at the stars together.
75. Write an alphabet of love for your child. 'I love you because you are A – affectionate – I love your hugs; B – a Blessing for me; C – caring towards your baby brother, etc.

“We find delight in the beauty and happiness of children that makes the heart too big for the body.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

Adapted from “52 Ways to Parent Happy Children” Karen Holford, Stanborough Press.

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