

99 WAYS TO SPEND #JUST5MINUTES



The Aaron Judge ALL RISE Foundation believes that #Just5Minutes is all it takes to have a positive interaction with a young person in your life. This initiative was inspired by the book Hey Dad! Let's Have a Catch, by Harold Theurer, JR. In the book, Harold asks his very busy father for five minutes to play catch. Those five minutes would often turn into 15 or 20. Over the years, these moments were opportunities to connect, share stories, and converse about what was happening in their lives.

#Just5Minutes is all it takes to start a game of catch, read a book, have a conversation, or try one of the ideas mentioned above. Choose one of the following activities to spend #Just5Minutes with the youth in your life to build their confidence, promote literacy & create meaningful connections.

BUILD VOCABULARY AND CREATE SCHEMA WITH FOOD

1. Make fruit salad and remove pits, stones, and seeds from fruits. Find more fruits with pits, stones, and seeds. Sort and discuss types of fruits.
2. At meals, talk about adjectives that describe your foods.
3. Compare and contrast foods you eat. "My steak is tender and chewy, but my potatoes are soft and smooth."
4. Play I'm Going on a Picnic! Start with the letter A and go through the alphabet naming foods for each letter A to Z. Make an ABC book with words and drawings.
5. Go to a grocery store or farmer's market and have a scavenger hunt. Look for foods that are roots, leaves, flowers, and stems. Create a colorful poster at home of your findings.
6. Fill up a bowl with water. Predict and test which foods sink and which foods float. Create a poster to show your findings.
7. Make a menu for dinner. Include illustrations and a description for each item.
8. Read food labels. Discuss which is the healthiest drink, cereal, or snacks in your home. Make an advertisement to persuade your family to eat the healthiest items.

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9. Find a recipe you'd like to make. Read and follow the instructions. For older kids, have them convert fractions to decimals!
10. Cut baked items into halves, thirds, fourths, etc. Talk about equal shares.
11. Create a recipe for a smoothie. Include directions. Freeze them in molds for later!
12. Plant an herb garden. Start a journal to measure their growth. Find recipes for each of the herbs you've grown. Compare flavors. Have some great discussions!
13. Make a charcuterie with colorful veggies, cheese, nuts, and crackers. Can you shape it to look like an animal or favorite book character?
14. Read a book and plan a party that your book character would enjoy. What food will you serve? Design an invitation to send to your book character.
15. Choose a color for the day. Can you eat everything in just that color for the day? Write or draw about what you ate.
16. Paint or draw still life art with food. If you need ideas of styles, visit a virtual museum, such as NASA or the Museum of American Revolution.

BUILD VOCABULARY AND CREATE SCHEMA OUTSIDE

17. Gather leaves and make a leaf rubbing book. Place a leaf under a piece of paper and use a crayon to create a rubbing of it. Label each tree or plant.
18. Go to a nursery or a field with wildflowers. Sketch flowers. Record each name and some information. When you are home, watercolor each flower in your book.
19. Find some rocks. Have a rock stacking contest. Can you tell which type of rock you found?
20. Paint some rocks with inspirational words or messages. Leave them around your neighborhood.
21. Do a melting experiment in the sun. Put items outside on foil and record how long it takes for items to melt. (ice, chocolate, crayons, popsicles...)
22. Write a recipe and make solar s'mores. Wrap food in foil and put it in the sun. See how long it takes for your items to melt.
23. Make a mini golf course in your yard. Find a stick to use as a putter. What can you find to be your golf ball? Acorns? Cherry pits?
24. Find some toy cars. Use units of measurement to record how far you can roll cars on different surfaces. Try cement, dirt, grass, etc. Talk about friction. Explore gravity on hills!
25. Shadow draw with chalk. Measure items drawn with rulers.
26. Paint with water and a brush. Watch how long it takes for the water to evaporate. Try this in the sun and in the shade.

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27. Make new mixed crayon colors with old and broken crayons. Place them in foil and put them in the sun to melt together. Roll them together when they are warm. Create pictures with your new crayon colors when they cool. Name your colors!

28. Build a “volcano” with mud and grass. Make a hole in the center. Then, add baking soda and vinegar to erupt your volcano. Illustrate and write about the steps. Describe the chemical reaction.

29. Make some homemade ice cream by tossing cream and sugar in a bag with another bag of ice around it. Count how many tosses it takes to make the ice cream harden.

30. Hide a treat in your yard. Give your child directions to guide them to the treat. Use words such as to the right or left of, over, under, next to, behind, across from, etc. This builds listening comprehension!

31. Have your child hide something and make a treasure map for you to follow to find the item. Let them amend the map, if needed, until you have success.

32. Teach your child to play hopscotch. Let them find their own markers outside. They will soon learn to find an object that won't roll.

33. Use your phone to take close-up pictures of outdoor items. For example, get super close to tree bark, grass, a leaf, or the sidewalk. Take a close-up photo and then a photo from a normal view. Have your child guess what the items are. You'll be amazed how challenging this can be! Your child will begin to notice details in the world.

34. Jump rope to rhymes. Make up your own! Rhyming is great for phonemic awareness and poetry writing!

35. Go on a nature walk and use adjectives to describe objects you see. Take turns saying descriptive words. “That fence is brown, wooden, tall, thin...” When you run out of words, find your next object.

36. Pick up leaves and take them home to make animal designs art. What can you make with leaves and glue?

37. Draw in the dirt or sand with a stick. Fine motor practice and handwriting improve reading skills!

BUILD VOCABULARY AND CREATE SCHEMA INSIDE

38. Have your child read the directions before playing card or board games.

39. Create your own game. Use poster board. Decide on a theme. Will you make cards or use dice to move around the board? Write the directions and play!

40. Send your child on a scavenger hunt in the house. Have them find things that are soft, thin, slippery, etc.

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41. Fingerprint with shaving cream. Have your child practice letters, shapes, sight words...
42. Keep a summer journal. Have your child write and illustrate what they do each day.
43. Have a fashion show! Have your child put on a crazy outfit. Then, take turns announcing each model and describing what they are wearing.
44. Take pictures or draw pictures and create a magazine for a topic. Give your magazine a name. Write articles on sports, food, travel...
45. Build a fort with blankets, towels, chairs, etc. Then, draw the blueprint of your fort. Read descriptions of homes for sale and write your own description for your fort.
46. Make items to sell in the neighborhood. Have a sale in your yard. Try bookmarks, paintings, clay designs. Clean out your closets and see if you can sell some of your old toys or clothes.
47. Start or visit a neighborhood little library. Trade books with neighbors.
48. Make your own slime. Find recipes online and follow directions.
49. Watch a movie and then make a movie poster. Advertise the show for others.
50. Each time you watch a TV show, write a summary and give a review and a rating of the show.
51. Make your own card game. Instead of "Crazy 8s", make something else crazy or wild. Write the rules. Play with friends or family.
52. Read a chapter book together. Create a scene in a shoe box.
53. Make rhythm instruments with recycled items (water bottles, boxes with beans...) Put on a concert. Play along with songs or sing your own songs from rhyming books!
54. Create a trap for a magical creature. How will you catch a leprechaun or a mermaid?
55. Read a book and act like that book character all day. Write your own book about that character and the day you had acting like them.
56. Look through old pictures. Play, "I Remember When..." with your family. Does everyone remember the same things?
57. Have a paper airplane contest. Throw and measure distances. Keep a chart of your findings.
58. Try some origami!
59. Find types of paper at your house (wrapping, wax, tissue...). How many types can you find? Talk about how they are the same and different. Make a book about paper.
60. Create your own zoo with stuffed animals. Sort them by habitat. How will you arrange your zoo? Make animal descriptions on cards for each animal. Be the zookeeper by giving your family a tour.

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61. Read books on the website: storylineonline.com. What activities can you do that you saw in those stories?
62. Color pictures and cut them into puzzle pieces. Have your family try putting the puzzle pieces together!
63. After reading a story, make paper bag puppets of book characters. Put on a puppet show that retells the story. Make up an episode of your own!
64. Make an obstacle course. Write instructions to help someone get through the course with. To make it more challenging, have them complete the course with a blindfold on.
65. Build a city out of paper cylinders, blocks, Legos, boxes. Give your city a name. Write an advertisement inviting others to come visit your city!

MORE IDEAS TO BUILD VOCABULARY AND CREATE SCHEMA

66. Make an art gallery around your house with your works of art. Try painting, drawing, clay sculptures, etc. Organize rooms. Name each piece of art and give a brief description. For more ideas, visit an art museum or a virtual museum.
67. Go to a hobby or craft store. Learn how to do a new hobby or craft at home. Read and follow directions.
68. Write instructions on how to do something simple (make a sandwich, brush your teeth, fold a shirt, etc.). Then, have a family member try to follow the instructions. Keep trying until they can do the thing you are describing. Start with simple 4 step directions.
69. Illustrate cards with yoga poses. Describe body parts that are doing different poses (feet turned out, palms up...). Play a statue game. See how long you can make a pose that matches a card. Who will be the last one standing in your family?
70. Write a letter with a date, greeting, body, closing, and signature. Have your child address an envelope. Then, go to the post office, buy a stamp, and mail the letter.
71. While shopping at a store, talk about aisles, displays, registers, clerks, etc. Then, at home, have your child draw a store they would like to have. Include displays, numbered aisles, signs, the parking lot, etc.
72. Have your child write or talk about how they can persuade you to take them to a special place. Teach them how to persuade in a positive way. If they do a good job, take them on an outing!
73. Do chores to earn money. Then, go to a dollar section of a store. What crafts can you find there? Use marketplace vocabulary words (supply, demand, producer, consumer...).

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74. Design your own dream school. What would make it great? Use descriptive words and/or illustrations!

75. Design a map of a place you would like to visit. Describe your transportation. How long will you stay? Write an itinerary of your visit. Use books or the internet for inspiration!

76. Camp inside! Get flashlights. Tell stories. Sing silly songs. Sleep in sleeping bags together in your home or outside in your yard.

77. Play charades! Act out verbs!

78. Write sight words or vocabulary words on pieces of paper. Wad up the pieces and have a snowball fight in the house. Collect snowballs and have your child read words or tell what each vocabulary word means. If they are correct, they get to keep the snowball. Play until they get them all correct!

79. Write words on cards and place them on the floor. Say an antonym or a synonym for words on the cards and have your child walk to the match. If they get it correct, they can pick up the card. Play until all cards have been picked up.

80. Put an item in a bag. Let your child ask 20 yes or no questions and see if they can guess what is in the bag.

81. Play "I'm Thinking of..." by describing an item in the room. Use descriptive words and count how many clues it takes for your child to guess. Then, let them have a turn and see if they can describe an item so well that you guess it!

82. Set up an indoor bowling game with plastic cups. Place cards under each cup with items to learn (sight words, letters, colors, fractions, shapes, etc.). Roll a ball and read whatever is on the card of the cups that get knocked over.

83. Set up an ice cream shop. Make a large menu on poster board. Let them be the server and cashier. Enjoy your ice cream!

84. Have a family movie night. Set up a snack bar. Give your child pretend money and help them make decisions about what snacks they would like to purchase with their money. Talk about characters, setting, problem, and solution in the movie.

85. Have themed dinners. Learn about foods from different cultures or geographic areas.

86. Write secret messages with white crayons. Then, have your child use watercolor paint or markers to uncover the secret message and read it. You can practice letters and words, or state fun facts for your kids to read.

87. Have your child write instructions on how to babysit their parent. Have them think about what you like to do and eat, what time you need to get to bed, your nightly routine, etc. Then, let them babysit you for a night!

88. Look for shapes in clouds and make up a story about what you see. Take turns adding dialogue!

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89. Look up riddles to stump your family. Many riddles use multiple meaning words. Try making up your own!
90. Attach a paper plate to a plastic spoon and play balloon tennis. Each time you hit the balloon say the alphabet letters in order, a word that begins with the next letter, or words from a category.
91. Listen to audiobooks from the library. Draw pictures of scenes as you listen. Talk about the most descriptive parts of the story.
92. Find a book on stars. Grab a blanket and head outside when it gets dark to look at the stars.
93. Have a picnic. Sketch any insects, birds, or trees that you see. When you get home, look up what you found. Keep a book of the trees and wildlife you see this summer.
94. Interview an older relative virtually or in person. Take notes. Then, write a biography of that person's life. Give them a copy of it when you are finished.
95. Make a treat for a neighbor. Read and follow a recipe. Write the recipe on a card to give to your neighbor when you deliver the treat. Thank them for being a good neighbor.
96. Research how glow sticks are made. Then, have a glow stick dance party!
97. Learn to do a new skill as a family. Juggle? Do a cartwheel? Make awards for each family member, such as the Stick to it Award, Never Gave Up Award, Best in Family Award, etc.
98. Play water balloon baseball with a plastic bat! Learn all about strategies and baseball-related vocabulary!
99. Go to a major league, minor league, or even a free little league baseball game! Eat hot dogs! Make memories with your family! Learn how to keep score. See if you can figure out the signs the coaches are giving. Sing, "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" as loud as you can. Remember to insert "Yankees" into the song, because if they don't win, it's a shame!



*Created by Cynthia Amerman Adams for
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