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30 Best Virtual Summer Camp Ideas to Keep Kids Entertained This Summer

But first, figure out what kind of online camp is right for you.

BY [MARISA LASCALA](#) May 26, 2020





With the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic, parents' summer plans — which are often locked into place way back in January — have been thrown for a loop. Depending on where you live and how bad the outbreak is, traditional camps may not be an option this year. So, what is everyone going to do with their kids this whole summer?

Virtual summer camp is a tantalizing proposition. On the one hand, it offers parents a chance to have someone else take over childcare duties for a minute, opening up an opportunity to get work done, do chores, or, heck, even take a shower. On the other, after two months of remote and home-schooling, kids may be over the whole e-learning thing entirely, and virtual summer camp can't replace the outdoor experiences that make regular summer camp a beloved childhood tradition. And no one wants to shell out for a virtual camp only to find that their kid will bail after 20 minutes of video instruction in favor of playing with toys or staring forlornly out the window.

Signing up for a free virtual camp seems like the obvious solution, but there are trade-offs there, too: Free camps usually can't pay for lots of instructors and counselors, so the activities may be more "parent-directed," which erases some of the free time you'd hope to gain. Then again, when you see some of the cool programs offered — covering everything from Minecraft to Harry Potter — the cost might be worth it. Whether you're looking for free activity ideas, extra enrichment in your kids' main areas of interest, or a summer program that'll give them the full camp experience, check out these virtual summer camps.

Free Virtual Camps

Test the online camp waters and see if it works for your family without making a huge financial investment.

- ▶ **Camp PBS Kids**: PBS Kids offers different, parent-led learning activities with themes like dinosaurs, space, and books, among others. Often, the activities are connected to a different PBS program and are designed for kids ages 2–8.
- ▶ **Camp Wonderopolis**: This online summer-learning destination lets you choose what kinds of activities you want to focus on, from music-making to city-building to fitness; camp is free, but you can purchase Camp Kits to enhance the experience.
- ▶ **Kids Need More Virtual Camp**: Dip in and out of different Zoom activities as you need them; sessions include princess visits, LEGO building, baby meet-ups, and performances.
- ▶ **Little Tikes Camp Play@Home**: Starting June 15, Little Tikes will offer ideas for affordable, easy-to-do camp activities for young kids over social media and email, which parents can do at home at their own pace.
- ▶ **Miss Megan's Camp Kindergarten**: Megan Jessen, a former kindergarten teacher, does lessons, music, and storytime on her Facebook group, which has close to 100,000 members.
- ▶ **MOCA Art Camps**: The Museum of Contemporary Art in Miami offers free instruction in mixed media, painting, drawing, and textile art for kids between the ages of 6 and 13.
- ▶ **Too Cool for School**: This Facebook group offers parent-to-parent live classes, along with ideas for crafts, arts, physical activities, and games.
- ▶ **Varsity Tutors Virtual Summer Camps**: Varsity Tutors is running lots of weeklong camp sessions for no cost, with classes that run the K–12 gamut. You can hunt and find one that matches your kids' particular interests, from recycled art for kindergartners and LEGO moviemaking for elementary students to Minecraft storytelling for middle schoolers and podcasting for high school students.

Virtual Camps for Art, Music, STEM, and More

Campers can focus in on one area of interest at these specialized online camps.

- ▶ **Act One Theatre Camp**: Kids ages 6–15 can spend the summer singing, dancing, and acting in one of three different themed theater sessions.
- ▶ **Bake-a-Camp**: Each week, campers will get a baking box featuring four themed kits from Baketivity kits for kids ages 6–11; the recipes will get more advanced and explore different topics, themes, or cuisines.
- ▶ **Broadway Plus**: Broadway stars offer lessons and virtual masterclasses for older students. Dates and pricing are to be determined.
- ▶ **Camp:ASPIRE**: UBTECH Robotics, maker of the JIMU line of robot building kits, offers at-home summer programs for kids 8+ in robotics and engineering using hands-on STEM learning activities and design challenges. Courses go from June 15 to August 24.
- ▶ **Camp DIY**: Given through the DIY app, this camp has 80+ DIY project ideas for your little maker to choose from. Activities come in seven themed "packs" and also branch out onto science, engineering, and cooking.
- ▶ **Camp Hullabaloo**: For kids ages 2–8, the Hullabaloo Book Company is hosting a 12-week, go-at-your-own pace summer camp; if you sign up, you'll get 12 new books with accompanying of kid-friendly craft ideas and activities to go with them.
- ▶ **Camp KiwiCo**: Starting June 22, KiwiCo will offer five-day sessions filled with videos, DIY activities, downloadable printables, creativity challenges, all themed around a different crate they offer. Campers are split into four different age groups covering kids between the ages of 2 and 9.
- ▶ **Camp Whatever-It-Takes**: This camp offers teens and tweens experiences in entrepreneurship and empowerment.
- ▶ **The Center for Contemporary Art Virtual Summer Art Camps**: Choose from full-day or half-day art classes for kids ages 5–15. There's also a special needs program available.
- ▶ **Connected Camps Minecraft Classes**: If your house is all Minecraft, all the time, Connected Camps offers dozens of Minecraft-related classes for 8- to 13-year-olds that cover everything from Minecraft art to coding.
- ▶ **PAFA Summer Art Camp**: For serious artists ages 6–15, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts will host a virtual camp from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. every weekday. A box of supplies for that week's activities will come in the mail each week.
- ▶ **Raddish Kids**: The monthly cooking subscription kit company will be offering a summer cooking camp through Outschool. It's geared for kids ages 8–12; follow Raddish on Outschool for dates and pricing information.
- ▶ **Smart Buddies Camp-in-a-Box**: Smart Buddies fans ages 7–11 can get extra enrichment with a camp that includes small meetups (socialization!) along with activities and assignments to sharpen those coding skills.
- ▶ **Super Soccer Stars @ Home**: Livestream virtual soccer lessons in small-group settings, where kids can get one-on-one attention with activities designed for small spaces.

Virtual Camps That Offer a Little of Everything

If your kids like to dabble with lots of different interests and activities, these can help. Some offer a well-rounded, traditional camp experience, while others host a lot of different classes in a variety of different areas.

- ▶ **Activity Hero Camps**: Kids ages 6–16 can find an e-learning camp that interests them, from forensic science to cartoon-drawing. You can even find classes that brush up on skills like public speaking or entrepreneurship.
- ▶ **Blue Sky Kids Virtual Camp**: Daily, hourlong private or semi-private sessions move at the pace of your child, exploring interests like coding, cooking, comedy/improv, art, chess, magic, or songwriting.

- ▶ **Brain Chase**: Kids take on different learning "challenges" and figure out puzzles and clues to find a buried treasure (and possibly win an IRL \$1,000 prize).
 - ▶ **Camp Cloud Virtual Camp**: Kids ages 8–17 are placed into different teams, which meet every day, and activities that kids can complete on their own are also emailed out every day. Campers can focus on different topics, like pet care, STEM, or performing arts.
 - ▶ **Happy Camper Live**: You can find sports, art, music, cooking, and performing activities, along with quintessential camp experiences like campfire songs at this site, co-created by a camp expert: Steve Slavin, creator of the show *Salute Your Shorts*; many of the activities are available for free.
 - ▶ **Camp Supernow**: New sessions for kids age 5–11 start every Monday, and each week has a new theme, including fables and fairytales, Renaissance Fair, and Explorer's Club. Campers are sorted into virtual cabins of 6 to 8 students and meet daily for counselor-guided activities, and then there are optional camp-wide activities kids can also join.
 - ▶ **Camp EDMO**: This camp offers either half-day or full-day programs focused on social-emotional learning for kids in pre-k through eighth grade. The day mixes counselor-led programming with activities that offer screen time breaks.
 - ▶ **Outschool**: If you need to fit camp into a tricky schedule, you can sort through tons of virtual camps via Outschool based on age, meeting time/duration, or level of interest. Classes include everything from Wings of Fire dragon drawing and writing to Harry Potter-themed creative writing.
 - ▶ **Teachers Who Tutor Virtual Summer Camp 2020**: If you want to give your kids an academic brush-up to help develop skills they may have not honed during remote learning during the school year, or if you're looking to fight the dreaded "summer slide," Teachers Who Tutor has grade-specific fundamentals for grades K–5 as well as electives for grades K–12.
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