

Family Play Thanksgiving Week Planning Ideas

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1. Brainstorming Fun Activities

Use the laid-back atmosphere of the week for a dedicated brainstorming session.

- **Create a "Dream Day" List:** Have the kids, perhaps with Dad, make a big list of everything they love to do together, no matter how simple or elaborate.
 - *Example:* Building a massive fort, having a video game tournament, going fishing, cooking a new recipe, making up a superhero story.
- **Themed Categories:** Divide a piece of paper into categories to encourage varied ideas:
 - **Adventure:** (e.g., Hiking, geocaching)
 - **Creative:** (e.g., Drawing, painting, building models)
 - **Sporty:** (e.g., Catch, backyard Olympics)
 - **Chill:** (e.g., Movie marathon, reading books together)
- **Budget & Time Check:** Talk realistically about time and money constraints for the *actual* day in June. This introduces a valuable lesson in planning.

2. Building the "Play Blueprint"

After the brainstorm, help them turn their ideas into a rough plan.

- **The Play Day Menu:** Have them choose one or two major activities from the list for the June date. If they can't decide, make a "spinner" or draw from a hat!
- **Logistics Check:** Since it's far away, look up the hours or requirements for any outside venue (like a park or museum) to make sure it's feasible for a Sunday in June.
- **Assign "Prep Work":** If the activity requires preparation (like collecting supplies for a science experiment or learning a new board game), assign a small, fun task they can do between now and June.

3. Creating a Reminder

Create something tangible to keep the excitement going.

- **A "Play Day Jar":** Decorate a jar and write all the ideas on slips of paper. Every now and then, they can pull one out to talk about.
- **A Family Calendar Entry:** Have the kids officially mark the third Sunday in June on a large family calendar with a special doodle or sticker.
- **Draw the Day:** Have the kids draw a picture of what they imagine Play Day will look like. This can be stored until June.

Specific Play Day Activity Suggestions

Here are some specific, engaging activity suggestions perfect for **National Play Day With Dad**, categorized by interest level:

The Builders & Makers

These activities involve creation, problem-solving, and a final product.

Activity	Description	Planning Notes
DIY Mini-Golf Course	Use household items (books, cans, pillows, cardboard) to design and build an elaborate 9-hole mini-golf course inside or outside.	Requires a few simple props (balls/marshmallows and putters/brooms) and plenty of space.
The Cardboard Challenge	Get a huge appliance box or collect several smaller ones. Build a time machine, a spaceship, a massive fort, or a full suit of armor.	This is an all-day commitment! Save boxes leading up to the day.
Model Rocket Launch	Purchase a simple starter rocket kit (e.g., Estes). Build it together and head to a large, open park to launch it.	Requires supervision and researching local laws on small rocket launches.

The Adventurers & Explorers

These focus on getting outdoors, physical activity, and discovery.

Activity	Description	Planning Notes
Geocaching Scavenger Hunt	Use a smartphone or GPS device to hunt for hidden geocaches (small containers with logbooks) in local parks or trails.	Download the free Geocaching app ahead of time and practice using it.
Backyard Olympics	Create funny, low-stakes events like a three-legged race, water balloon toss, hula hoop competition, or obstacle course. Make medals from aluminum foil.	Write down the events and rules during the Thanksgiving planning session.
Go Fishing or Kayaking	Spend the day on the water. If you don't own equipment, many parks or local businesses offer rentals.	Check for required fishing licenses or life vest regulations in June.

The Strategists & Storytellers

These activities encourage imagination, role-playing, and critical thinking.

Activity	Description	Planning Notes
The "Choose Your Own Adventure" Story	Start a story (Dad begins the first paragraph). At key points, the kids must choose the next direction (e.g., "Do you go through the spooky door or climb the rope?"). Write it all down!	Bring paper, pencils, and maybe some fun props for costume changes mid-story.
Epic Board Game Tournament	Dedicate the afternoon to competitive, classic games (e.g., Chess, Ticket to Ride, Monopoly, or even giant Jenga). Play for a silly prize like the "Golden Dad Joke Trophy."	Choose the games during Thanksgiving week and practice the rules.
Cook-Off Challenge	Have Dad and the kids each prepare one course (appetizer, main dish, dessert) for a "panel of judges" (Mom/other family members).	Decide on the dishes ahead of time to purchase ingredients. Baking or making pizza are great hands-on options.

These suggestions offer a range of time commitments and interests. The best part of planning in November is that they have plenty of time to get excited and maybe even save up for a needed supply (like a new board game or materials for a cardboard castle).

