



SUMMER-FALL-WINTER-SPRING FAMILY PLAY PLANS

Busy families often find it hard to set aside time for play, especially with the distraction of screens and technology.

TRUCE offers some seasonal, screen-free ideas to inspire your whole family — whatever their ages—to play together.



SUMMER PLAY PLAN

Turn off the Screen & Turn on the MUD

Mud offers endless opportunities for family playtime.

Mud is a simple, everyday item—messy but almost universally available. Families can turn it into a play material to create hours of delight and creativity.



As families play together, children learn skills such as cooperation, turn taking, problem-solving, and much more. And, of course, playing together just plain fun for everyone.

You can add to the value of the play by talking about what you are doing: “I’m scooping the mud into this bucket.” “The mud feels sticky and cool.” Ask simple questions, such as: “How many scoops will it take to fill this bowl?” “What happens if we add more water?”

Watch young children as they play. This can help you figure out what they are working on, which can help you know what to say and do.

PLAY VALUE—PRICE VALUE

Playing with mud—a free, open-ended material—can offer a deeper, more creative play experience than many of the expensive, one-purpose toys sold today.



IDEAS FOR SUMMERTIME FAMILY PLAY WITH MUD

INTERNATIONAL MUD DAY



JUNE 29

International Mud Day is celebrated each year in late June, sponsored by the World Forum on Early Care and Education. Begun in 2011 in Nepal, its mission is to connect

children around the world through the earth. Play in mud! Find out more at:

www.worldforumfoundation.org/working-groups/nature/international-mud-day/



MUD ART

- **Mud Hand Prints.** Find a patch of dirt. Add water and stir with a stick or spoon until it is liquid. Make handprints on heavy paper or sidewalks.
- **Paint with Wet Mud.** Use fingers, paint brushes, or "print" with potato mashers or other kitchen utensils.
- **Fancy Mud.** Add glitter to mud and then create something.



WHAT DO THE EXPERTS SAY?

Mud play offers unique **tactile, sensory experiences** that help develop a child's brain. Research shows that children who play in dirt develop **stronger immune systems** that can pave the way for better health throughout their adult lives.

Certain microbes found in soil activate neurons in your brain which produce serotonin, a **natural anti-depressant**. Playing in dirt, causes children to laugh more resulting in happier children. - *Kaboom*

MUD PROJECTS

- **Mud Track for Cars and Trucks.** What could be more fun than gathering dump trucks, cars, bulldozers, and other vehicles and playing with them in real dirt or mud!



- **Mud Pit.** If you don't have a handy supply of mud available, you can make your own mud pit in a plastic swimming pool or dishwashing basin. Fill with potting soil, add water, and enjoy!

- **Mud Kitchen.** Set up a mud kitchen outdoors. Make a stove, sink, oven, table, and whatever else you can think of out of boxes, boards, or perhaps from an old play kitchen set. Equip with pots, pans, bowls, spoons, and mud. For more ideas, check out www.muddyfaces.co.uk. This website even has mud kitchen recipes for mud soup, mud stew, mud muffins (put out an old muffin tin), mud birthday cake, and, of course, mud pies!



TRUCE FAMILY PLAY TIP

Develop a family screen turn off ritual.

Here are some ideas:

- Count all the screens that are on as you turn them off.
- See if you can turn off all the screens in a minute or less.
- Have a bin or basket where you put all portable screens during family play time.

