

Summer activities for small children that keep them active and entertained

We are now in the second week of summer vacation, and I continue to look for ways to entertain my 2-year-old and 4-year-old while I gestate an enormous and very active baby. Preferably, that entertainment involves me sitting in a chair, my swollen feet propped up in front of me. Alas, with two small children in my charge, opportunities for foot-propping are few and far between, so I've had to refine my expectations of ideal summer entertainment. And at this point, all I'm really looking for is air conditioning.

Looking for entertainment of your own? Well, today is your lucky day, because I'm going to share with you, lucky readers, Betsy's List of Summer Activities Appropriate for Small Children and Especially Appealing to the Very Pregnant or Otherwise Incapacitated.

1. Pet store. Don't have the energy for the zoo? I sure as heck don't. And the zoo is hot. But you know what place isn't hot? The pet store. And guess what? They have animals there! No white tigers, but they do have fish and gerbils and sometimes cats from the animal shelter. My kids love it.

2. Library. It's air conditioned, which is great, and they have sofas and



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comfy chair you can park yourself in while you read to your children to their little hearts' content. My kids spend much of their library time being entirely too loud while running in circles around the bookshelves, but I can usually burn up at least 30 minutes to an hour with them at the library. Much to the other library patrons' dismay, I'm sure.

3. The car! It's amazing how much easier it is to manage my children when they are strapped into their carseats. When things get really rough around my house, I pop my kids in the car and DRIVE. To nowhere in particular—the destination is not the point, people. It's the ride. I toss crackers at them and turn up the radio so I can't hear them hollering at me, and I might even treat myself to a frozen coffee drink because I am 34 weeks

pregnant in 90 degree heat, and overpriced frappuccinos make me

4. My mom. When things get really bad—meaning my feet are so swollen they no longer fit into my flip-flops—I call my mom. As for you, you can call your own mom. Mine's busy with my kids, so leave her alone. If you are lucky, and you call your mother, she will rush right over and entertain your kids while you hide in the bedroom and nap. If you are unlucky, she will tell you she's busy, and besides, you've brought this whole situation on yourself, anyway, what with being pregnant in June and all. Thankfully, I am lucky, and my mom comes right over.

5. Bible study. My church offers a women's Bible study on Tuesday mornings, complete with child care. It is FABULOUS. I get to chat with great women about interesting topics, and did I mention there is child care involved? I'm not saying one should attend Bible study just to mooch off the free child care, but hey, free child care doesn't exactly send me running in the opposite direction, either. Just saying. That's all I've got. And it must be said, my most favorite summer activity thus far is calling my mom. Don't judge. I'm tired, and there's a basketball in my stomach.