

Indoor Family Fun for Fatigue Days



For many families, summer is all about the outdoors—bike rides, barbecues, lake days or trips to the park.

That's great... if you have the energy for it.

Some days I do. But other days, multiple sclerosis gets in the way. Whether it's fatigue, heat sensitivity or another MS symptom, I can't always enjoy summer fun quite like I used to.

That can be difficult, especially when you're a parent living with MS. Some days you just can't do the activities your kids want to do, and it hurts to feel like you've disappointed them.

But over the years since my diagnosis, I've found ways to have fun with my kids even when I need to rest indoors.

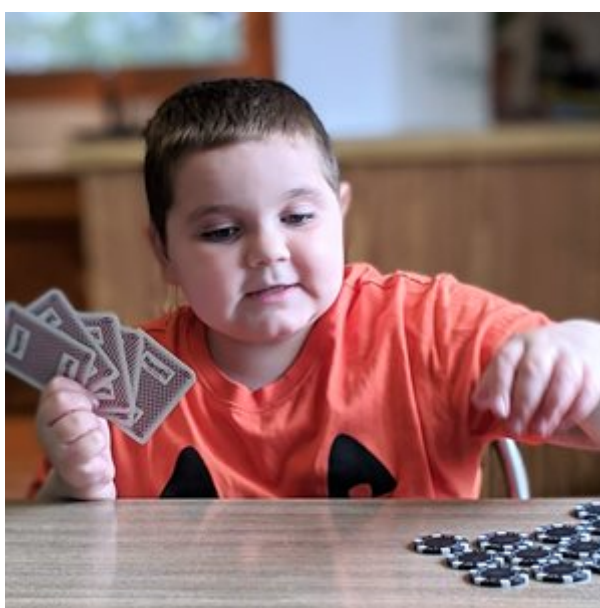
Scavenger Hunt: Park yourself on the couch and send your kiddo on an indoor scavenger hunt. Have them find items that start with each letter of the alphabet or each color of the rainbow, etc.



Games Galore: Board games and card games are always a good time, but you can also play charades, with your kiddo being the actor and you the guesser; or Simon Says, where you always get to be Simon. I Spy can be fun, especially for little kids. Older kids might enjoy theoretical question games such as: *Would you rather walk across the desert or the frozen tundra? Would you rather live where it's always dark or always light?*

Coloring/drawing: Sitting and coloring in a coloring book can be nice and relaxing. Or, try drawing portraits of each other—the sillier the better—or play a game of Tic-Tac-Toe.

Play Restaurant: My little guy loves to pretend to be a chef or server, complete with a towel draped over his arm. So make a restaurant game where your child writes out a menu for you and pretends to bring you an extravagant meal (bonus points if they bring you real snacks!).



Legos: Curl up on the floor and let them dive into a bucket of Legos while you list things for

them to build: a spaceship, a robot, a house, an airplane, a monster, etc. They will likely come up with their own creative ideas, too!

Movie Marathon: My family just had a “Christmas in the Summer” party, and it gave me another idea for fatigue days—themed movie marathons. Whether it’s Christmas movies, Harry Potter, Star Wars or superheroes, it can provide hours of (restful) family fun.

Solo Screentime: Real talk, sometimes I’m so exhausted that any level of engagement is just too much. On those days, none of these activities are possible. If your partner can step in, or a friend or family member, great. But sometimes that’s not possible. Sometimes, screentime is your best bet. I could write a whole separate column about good, educational screen options (the Wild Kratts/PBS Kids have taught my kids a lot, honestly), but for now, I’ll just say that there is nothing wrong with letting your kids be on screens when you need to rest.

I repeat: **There is nothing wrong with letting your kids be on screens when you need to rest.**

Because ultimately, we are all doing the best we can—both in parenting and in living with MS. And sometimes that means riding out the bad days until the good days come around again—and appreciating those goods days for as long as they last.