

# MAKE THEIR BREAK

Need inspiration for what to do with your kiddie crew during the winter school holidays? We've gathered some great ideas to keep the gang occupied, interested and inspired

School holidays are fast approaching, with midwinter weather close behind – but cold wet days and restless kids aren't always the ideal combo for a good time! If you're staying at home this term break and feeling a little daunted by the prospect, we've come up with some holiday ideas to help you plan ahead. There's a nice balance of adventure and downtime here so everyone – including you! – can recharge as well as have activities to look forward to.



## MOVE

School-age and daycare kids are constantly socialising, learning and sharing with heaps of other children. So having the freedom to play and explore without having to factor in the needs and whims of others can be liberating.

Rain or shine, hit up your nearest beach, mountain, reserve or farm park and just let the kids roam. Don't forget raincoats and keep a few spare clothes

and a towel in the boot for the usual mishaps. It may be necessary to set some simple safety rules but, if the youngsters are in sight, you can probably let them off the leash a bit. Collecting treasures for future crafting can be a fun side project – shells, leaves, twigs and pebbles, whatever sparks their imagination.

Back in the city, nothing beats a 'playground hop' for kids of all ages.

Print out a map of your area, circle the playgrounds within driving distance, and commit to visiting five of them over the holidays. You could even attempt a full morning or an entire day of it!

For older kids, an invigorating bush walk or bike ride through nature will provide a healthy challenge and the poor cellphone reception offers an opportunity to digitally detox.

## EAT

Enjoying family meals together is a great way to reconnect with the kids after a busy school term, and makes a refreshing change from repetitive lunchbox fare. Change it up and enjoy one or two meals that are out of the ordinary during the break. Cook a special feast with the kids' help and get them to decorate the table; you could even eat it by candlelight if you like. Or splurge on a meal out; there are loads of eateries that allow children

to dine for free, so do your research online first. Eating out is also a great chance for kids to practise their dining etiquette, and the best part is: no dishes.

If keeping it simple is more your style, pack a picnic treat to be devoured after a planned adventure. Cook up a batch of pikelets and get the kids to pack some jam, butter, cutlery and a blanket. If the weather turns foul, picnic in a sheltered spot on the deck, or in the lounge!



WORDS Holly Jean Brooker. PHOTOGRAPHY Getty.



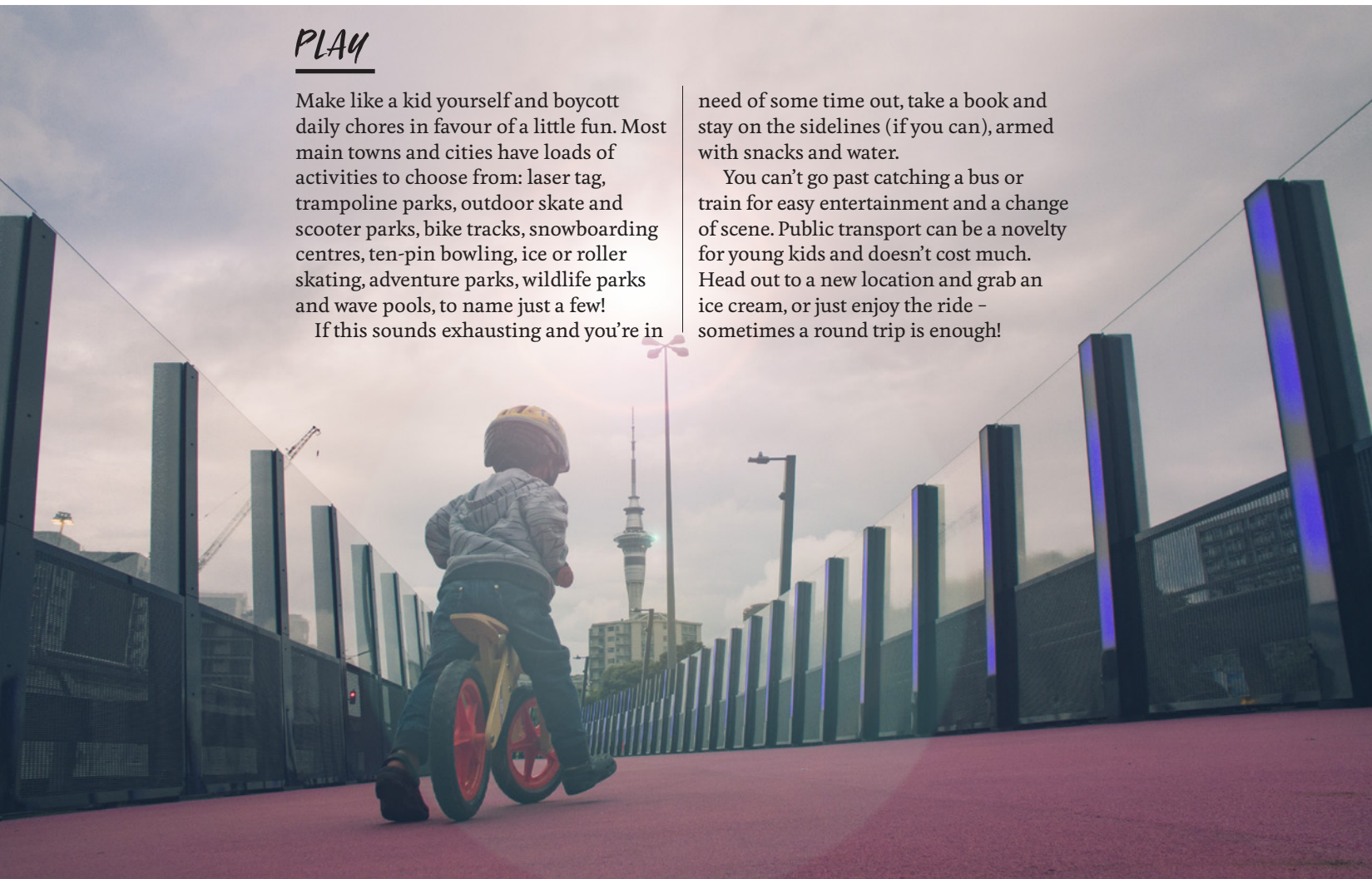
## PLAY

Make like a kid yourself and boycott daily chores in favour of a little fun. Most main towns and cities have loads of activities to choose from: laser tag, trampoline parks, outdoor skate and scooter parks, bike tracks, snowboarding centres, ten-pin bowling, ice or roller skating, adventure parks, wildlife parks and wave pools, to name just a few!

If this sounds exhausting and you're in

need of some time out, take a book and stay on the sidelines (if you can), armed with snacks and water.

You can't go past catching a bus or train for easy entertainment and a change of scene. Public transport can be a novelty for young kids and doesn't cost much. Head out to a new location and grab an ice cream, or just enjoy the ride – sometimes a round trip is enough!



“Take time out when you need it so when you are back with your family, you can truly savour the good moments together”



## REST

Term time is usually hectic. The combo of jam-packed school days, after-school and weekend sport, play dates, homework, birthday parties and school events, not to mention family commitments, makes it hard to keep the show on the road, let alone leave time to properly connect with the kids.

That's why having dedicated home days during the holidays is good for the soul as well as family relationships. Connection can occur in the simple moments when you're blobbing out on the couch, reading, pottering in the garden, crafting, making playdough, playing games, washing the car together, or watching movies. As we foster a slower pace, these everyday activities can provide a beautiful opportunity to let conversation flow naturally.



## DROP OFF

Sometimes taking time off work isn't an option, but you can rest assured that the kids will still have fun without you at one of the many epic school holiday programmes available – in fact, you may get FOMO. And if you're not working, sending the kids off for a day or so will give everyone some breathing space because, let's face it, hanging out with anyone 24/7 can be hard work. If your kids are keen, consider mixing it up by selecting a couple of different programmes that comprise a full week of daytime care to suit your family.

Themed school holiday programmes include sports such as soccer, netball, rugby, tennis, badminton, golf, futsal, hockey, karate, swimming and skiing. STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) programmes include 3D design and printing, robotics, coding and Minecraft. For arts and music lovers there's drama or circus school, hip-hop dancing, beat boxing, orchestra and choir. These programmes can be a great chance to let the kids try something new for the whole week or on a one-off basis, and even half-day sessions are often available.



## GIVE

Sharing with others feels good and kids get a genuine buzz from it. You could simply set aside time to take part in a community initiative, donate clothes or toys to a local op-shop, or plan to visit grandparents or a friend in need with a homemade meal or baking.

However you choose to spend your midwinter break, be kind to yourself. Stay present but take time out when you need it so when you are back with your family, you can truly savour the good moments together. •

## FUN EXCURSIONS

Some kid-friendly events happening around the country during the school holidays and beyond

### AUCKLAND

21 JULY

#### THE GRUFFALO & THE GRUFFALO'S CHILD AOTEA CENTRE

Catch these two movie adaptations of the prize-winning children's books written by Julia Donaldson and illustrated by Axel Scheffler. Accompanied by a live performance by the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra.

[AUCKLANDLIVE.CO.NZ](http://AUCKLANDLIVE.CO.NZ)

3-5 AUGUST

#### DISNEY ON ICE: 100 YEARS OF MAGIC SPARK ARENA

Everyone's favourite Disney and Pixar characters are brought to life in a two-hour ice-skating spectacular. Expect pyrotechnics and remember to rug up warm. Fun for all the family.

[DISNEYONICE.COM/NZ](http://DISNEYONICE.COM/NZ)

### WELLINGTON

JULY

#### KIDS' NIGHT WALKS AT ZEALANDIA ECO-SANCTUARY, KARORI

Experience the sights and sounds of weta, glow-worms, kiwi, takahe, tuatara, kereru, tui and ruru/morepork at Zealandia at night. A great trip for families with younger children to witness our native species that only come out at night.

Special red-light torches provided.

[VISITZEALANDIA.COM](http://VISITZEALANDIA.COM)

### CHRISTCHURCH

7-21 JULY

KIDSFEST

KidsFest is an annual two-week festival for children aged 13 years and under. Started back in 1992 to entertain children and families during the winter school holidays, it now reaches across much of Canterbury with hundreds of events also held in Waimakariri and Selwyn districts.

[KIDSFEST.CO.NZ](http://KIDSFEST.CO.NZ)

7 JULY

#### THE MUSIC OF MOANA ISAAC THEATRE ROYAL

Performing their hit music from the award-winning Disney blockbuster *Moana*, Te Vaka join the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra for a magical night of music inspired by the songs and stories of the Pasifika region. This early evening concert is guaranteed to delight.

[ISAACTHEATREROYAL.CO.NZ](http://ISAACTHEATREROYAL.CO.NZ)

10-12 AUGUST

#### DISNEY ON ICE: 100 YEARS OF MAGIC HORNCastle ARENA

See above!