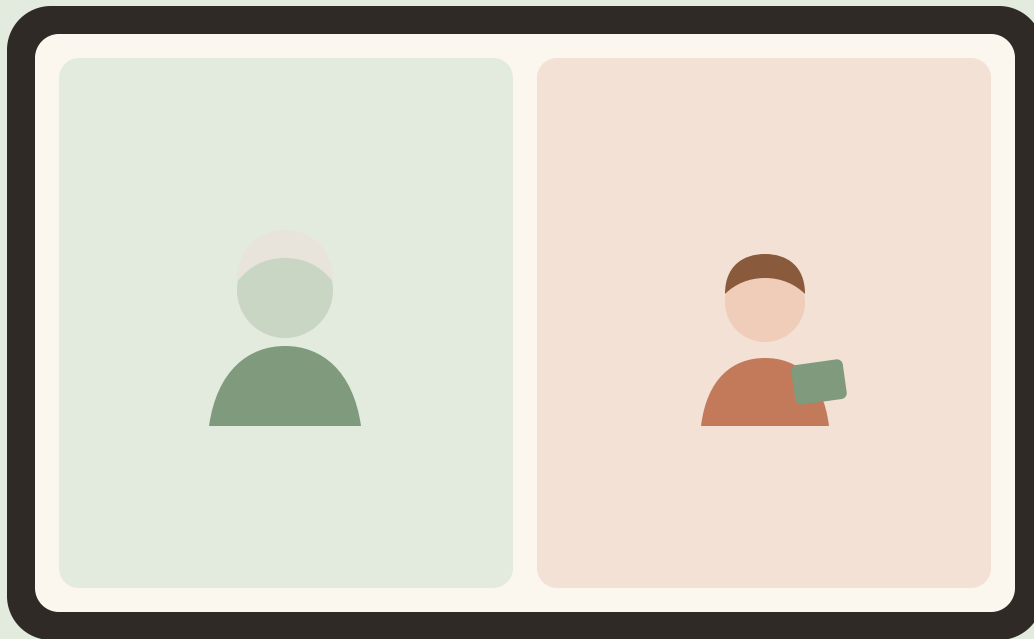


# Things to Do on a Video Call *With Your Grandkids*

12 easy activities for ages 4 to 10, a list of what to keep by your screen, and a planner for your next call.



# Before you call

Most of these activities need nothing more than what's already in your kitchen drawer. Keep a small basket by your screen so everything is ready when they pick up.

## Keep by your screen

- ☐ Paper and a few pencils or markers
- ☐ Five small objects (a spoon, a key, a button...)
- ☐ A box of blocks or LEGO
- ☐ The book you're reading together
- ☐ A stuffed animal or puppet
- ☐ A stand for your phone or tablet, so your hands are free

## Check with the parents

- ☐ When do they usually have a little free time?
- ☐ Does anything clash, like a favorite show or a friend coming over?
- ☐ Can the call happen without much setting up on their side?
- ☐ Will they need anything at home for the activity?

**Good to know.** If your grandchild is busy when you call, start by asking what they're doing. A child showing you their tower or their game will often talk for longer than one answering questions about school.

**How long?** For younger children, ten minutes of doing something together is a very good call. You can always stop while it's still fun and pick it up next time.

# Draw, build, show

Easy ones to start with. Let your grandchild lead whenever they want to.

## 1 Draw the same thing

Ages 4+

Paper, pencils

Ask your grandchild to choose something to draw. You both draw it, then hold your pictures up to the camera at the same time.

**Try this:** set a one-minute timer and see who finishes first.

## 2 Draw what I say

Ages 4+

Paper, pencils

They give you instructions, one step at a time. *"Draw a big circle. Now give it tiny legs."* Show your drawing at the end and let them tell you what it is.

**Swap:** give them instructions and see what they draw.

## 3 Build together

Ages 4+

Blocks or LEGO

If you both have the same LEGO set, work on it together during calls. If not, use any blocks you have and let your grandchild decide what you're building.

**Ask:** *"Where does the dog sleep?"* Then build it, even if the answer is the roof.

## 4 Show me what you're making

Any age

Nothing

If they're already busy with something, ask to see it. Then ask about the parts you don't understand. What does this button do? Who lives in there?

**Good for:** calls that would otherwise end in a minute.

## 5 Teach me something

Ages 5+

Depends

Ask them to show you how to draw their favorite character, how their new toy works, or what you do in that game they keep talking about.

**Bonus:** next time they mention it, you'll know what they mean.

## 6 Grandma's show and tell

Ages 5+

Something of yours

Show them something from your house. An old photo, a toy their mom or dad played with, a souvenir from a trip. Let them ask questions about it.

**Favorite:** photos of their parent at the same age they are now.

# Quick games

Five minutes each, no screens to share, no apps to download.

## 7 What's missing?

Ages 4+

5 small objects

Put five things on the table and let them look for a few seconds. Turn the camera away, take one off, and show them again. *"What's missing?"*

**Easier:** use three objects. **Harder:** use eight, or move two.

## 8 Fetch it!

Ages 4-8

Nothing

Call out something to find. Something soft. Something blue. Something smaller than your hand. You both go looking and race back to the camera.

**Swap:** let them call out the next thing for you to find.

## 9 Guess the sound

Ages 4+

Kitchen items

Cover the camera and make a sound. Shake a jar of rice, crinkle foil, tap a spoon on a glass. They guess what it is, then it's their turn.

**Tip:** keep the volume up on your device for this one.

## 10 Copy my face

Ages 3-6

Nothing

Make a face (surprised, grumpy, sleepy) and they copy it. Then they make one and you copy theirs. Little ones find this very funny.

**Add:** *"Show me a face for... you just found a frog in your shoe."*

## 11 Stuffed animal visit

Ages 3-7

A soft toy

Your teddy comes to say hello to their teddy. They can talk, ask questions, tell each other about their day. Your grandchild will probably do most of the talking.

**Next time:** your teddy can bring news from your house.

## 12 One sentence each

Ages 6+

Nothing

Make up a story together. You say the first sentence, they say the next, and you keep going until someone finds an ending.

**Start with:** *"Once there was a cat who couldn't stop sneezing..."*

# Something to come back to

You don't need a new idea every week. When something works, keep it going, and the next call already has a place to start.

## A LEGO town

Build one part each call. A house this week, a pet store next week, then whatever they come up with.

## A book, a little at a time

Let them choose the book. Read a chapter or a few pages each call and stop somewhere they'll want to hear more.

## A comic you draw together

One picture per call, with the same characters. Hold up the whole strip every few weeks to see how far you've got.

## An ongoing story

The sneezing cat from activity 12 can have a new adventure every week. Ask them what happens next.

## When they don't feel like it

Some days your pencils will be ready and your book open, and they'll want to go and play. That happens to everyone.

*"All right, sweetheart. Go and play. I'm glad I got to see you."* Then put things away and try another day.

**Before you hang up,** ask *"What should we do next time?"* Write their answer on the planner on the next page.

# Our next call

Print this page as many times as you like.

| CALLING                     | DATE & TIME |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
|                             |             |
| WHAT WE'RE DOING            |             |
|                             |             |
| WHAT I NEED TO HAVE READY   |             |
|                             |             |
| WHAT THEY TOLD ME LAST TIME |             |
|                             |             |
|                             |             |

| CALLING                     | DATE & TIME |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
|                             |             |
| WHAT WE'RE DOING            |             |
|                             |             |
| WHAT I NEED TO HAVE READY   |             |
|                             |             |
| WHAT THEY TOLD ME LAST TIME |             |
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|                             |             |

# Calls we loved

Keep track of what worked. After a few weeks you'll know exactly what they ask for.

| DATE | WHAT WE DID | WHAT THEY SAID OR DID |
|------|-------------|-----------------------|
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**More ideas for grandparents** at [thegrandparentscorner.com](http://thegrandparentscorner.com). And if your grandchildren have a favorite video call game, tell us. We'd love to hear what they keep asking for.