

2021 February Staycation Funtivities: Hygge with Children

Although we have shared many ideas for indoor and outdoor activities to keep your children busy this week, sometimes the most memorable moments are the simplest ones, requiring little preparation—only that of your time and attention, enjoying each other’s company in a special way.

The Danes—known for being the happiest and most content people in the world—call this mindset/feeling/experience, “Hygge” (pronounced “hoo-gah”). The key ingredients of hygge are togetherness and connection, presence and mindfulness, leisure and relaxation, gratitude and moderate indulgence, and comfort and coziness.

This cozy atmosphere of hygge appeals to the five senses, and you can set the stage in your home through soft lighting, relaxing background music, comfy clothes, warm throws, layered textures, natural décor, natural scents, warm drinks, comfort food, and sweet treats. In other words, try replicating the atmosphere of a “rustic winter cabin” combined with a relaxing and fun family activity, and you will be on your way to hygge.



How to Hygge with Children

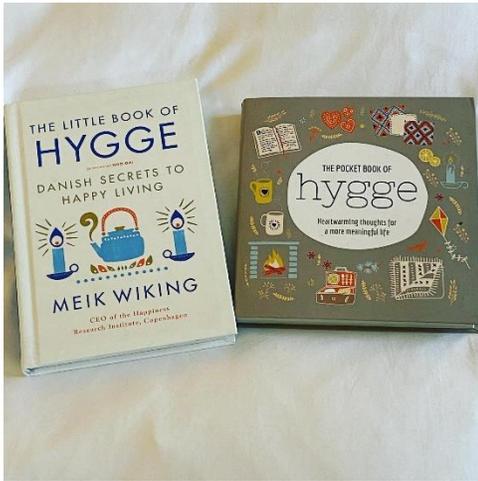
- 1) Give yourself permission to relax and have a slow, leisurely morning or an unscheduled day.
- 2) Make a concerted effort to set aside all electronic devices and spend quality time as a family or 1-on-1 with a child, even for a short time.
- 3) Arrange for all family members to work cooperatively together, such as making dinner, organizing an area of a room, decorating or rearranging a room, completing a project, making homemade gifts or cards for relatives, etc.
- 4) Create a soothing ambiance with soft, warm lighting by using candles, lighting a fire in a fireplace/firepit, hanging string lights, dimming ambient light, using a mixture of floor/table/wall lights, etc.
- 5) Build your family’s cold-weather wardrobe: warm sweaters, comfy clothes, thick socks, fuzzy slippers, etc.
- 6) Create cozy spaces with natural elements, such as reading nooks with pillows, extra cozy blankets, dried flowers, essential oils, herbs, natural decor, etc.
- 7) Create an outdoor living space and enjoy each other’s company.
- 8) Establish routines that emphasize self-care for both you and your child(ren).
- 9) Make ordinary day-to-day moments memorable.
- 10) Enjoy each moment and have fun!

Examples of Hygge Moments with Children

- Play outside in the snow, then warm up inside with hot cocoa, a snack, and soft music.
- Go for a scavenger hunt and collect natural elements (pinecones, sticks, rocks, evergreen leaves, etc.); create a table centerpiece around candles that can be enjoyed at dinnertime.
- Play “I Spy” looking out a window while eating popcorn.
- Sit and color with your child(ren) while listening to a podcast.
- Make a tent or fort with your child(ren) using furniture, cushions, pillows, and bedsheets; then spend time in the tent reading with flashlights, listening to a meditation app, or listening to a children’s podcast.
- Create a cozy reading nook near natural lighting (if possible) and read with your child(ren) as an afternoon down-time activity; at the same time, light a scented candle, diffuse essential oils, or run a humidifier.
- Have Family Quiet Time—with dimmed lighting or perhaps a flickering fire, each person snuggles in his/her own space in the living room to read, quietly play, color, or relax/nap (offer an hygge-like incentive).
- Snuggle on the couch with a warm, fuzzy blanket and look through photo albums with your child(ren).
- Play simple games with your child(ren), such as balloon volleyball, a paper airplane flight competition, American Ninja Warrior Obstacle Course or The Floor is Lava using couch cushions, etc.
- Do bath time in the middle of the day! Get dressed in pjs early!
- Make bath time special with unique elements: glow sticks, Legos, popsicles to eat, shaving cream, etc.
- Organize the puzzles or board games in an accessible storage location; make it a routine to play at least one game or work on a puzzle as a family on a Sunday afternoon (or whatever day/time fits your family).
- While cooking, allow your child to “wash dishes” (i.e., play in the sink).
- Eat dinner as a family under candlelight and play soft music.
- Sit by a fire and share childhood stories (of your child(ren) or your own childhood. Alternatively, play a story-telling game with each person adding onto the plot.
- After dinner, enjoy a small dessert and then burn off the sugar with a dance party.
- Put pajamas in the dryer before bedtime, or warm up the bed with a hot water bottle or microwavable heat pack.
- Hang string lights in your child’s bedroom; read books under the lights.
- Start a Family Gratitude Journal; record each person’s reflections at the end of a week.



Hygge is not just for the fall or winter seasons. You can hygge during the spring and summer, too! For more info on Hygge, check out these books and sites:



- [The Little Book of Hygge: Danish Secrets to Happy Living](#) (The Happiness Institute Series) by [Meik Wiking](#)
- [Hygge: Unlock the Danish Art of Coziness and Happiness](#) by [Barbara Hayden](#)
- [The Art of Making Memories: How to Create and Remember Happy Moments](#) (The Happiness Institute Series) by [Meik Wiking](#)
- [The Secret Joy of Hygge: A Practical Guide to Cultivating Happiness in the Everyday](#) by [Alexandra Amarotico](#)
- [Hygge House](#) (blog)
- [“The Year of Hygge, the Danish Obsession with Getting Cozy”](#) an article in The New Yorker (Dec 18, 2016)
- [“Tired of Winter? Here’s How to Make Your Home a Haven”](#) an article in the New York Times (Feb 7, 2020)

Recommended Podcasts, Apps and Games

<p><u>Podcasts for Children</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wow in the World • But Why: A Podcast for Curious Kids • Million Bazillion • Smash, Boom, Best • Goodnight Stories for Rebel Girls • Stories Podcast • Storynory 	<p><u>Meditation & Mindfulness</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About Mindfulness for Kids • Mindfulness Activities • Sleep Apps and Meditation Apps that Relax Kids • Meditation Apps for Kids • Tips for Keeping a Gratitude Journal • Calm Down Kit • 50 Calm Down Ideas 	<p><u>Card Games</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uno • Go Fish • Old Maid • Memory • War • Slap Jack • Six Card Golf • Rummy • Hearts • Solitaire
<p><u>Board Games (Ages 3-6):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candy Land • Chutes and Ladders • Connect 4 • Zingo • Richard Scarry’s Busytown • The Sneaky, Snacky Squirrel • Enchanted Forest • Twister • Sequence for Kids <p>Don’t forget Puzzles!</p>	<p><u>Board Games (Ages 6+)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quirkle • Tenzie • Yatzee • Dominos • Checkers • No Stress Chess • Battleship • Battlesheep • Guess Who • Game of Life Junior • Monopoly Junior • Catan Junior 	<p><u>Quirky and Cool Games for Older Children</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labyrinth • Dragonwood • Bears vs. Babies • Exploding Kittens • Organ Attack • Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza Card Game • Settlers of Catan