

THIS WEEKEND'S FAMILY ACTIVITY

The Fix-It Round

BUILD CHALLENGE

SKILL: HANDS-ON LEARNING

50 MINUTES

RECOMMENDED AGE RANGE

Ages 8–14 — old enough to use basic tools safely and young enough to still find the discovery phase genuinely exciting.

WHAT YOU NEED

3–5 household items needing minor attention

Basic toolkit: screwdrivers, pliers

Needle and thread (optional)

Tape or a ruler

Paper and pencil per player

A timer

ACTIVITY STEPS

- 01 Pick Your Item.** Lay out 3 to 5 items that need minor attention: a loose screw, a squeaky hinge, dull scissors, a fallen button, a sticky drawer. Each player picks one without help. On paper, write: "What do I think is wrong?" and "What would I try first?" No researching yet.
- 02 First Round: Work Alone (15 min).** Set a timer. Each player works alone using only the tools in front of them. The rule: try three different things before asking for help. It does not matter whether any of them work. Stay in the problem long enough to gather real information about it.
- 03 Midpoint Check (5 min).** Each player explains what they tried and what happened. Other family members can ask questions but cannot give solutions yet. Listen and understand the problem — do not solve it.
- 04 Second Round: Continue or Swap (15 min).** Players can continue on their item or swap to a different one. Same rule: three attempts before asking. If something requires specific knowledge, look it up together — then the player does the work.
- 05 Debrief (10 min).** What actually fixed it? What surprised you? What would you do differently? If something did not get fixed, ask: what did you learn about the problem that you did not know before you started? That answer is the whole point.

THE DEEPER LESSON

A new survey found that 85% of Gen Alpha kids still want hands-on careers even as AI handles more knowledge work. The reason may be simpler than anyone expects: physical problem-solving feels good in a way that asking an AI never quite does. The Fix-It Round practices the moment between not-knowing and knowing, the exact phase that builds real competence. A kid who can stay in that gap, even for fifteen uncomfortable minutes, is building a skill that no chatbot can replicate for them.

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is something in this house that you always assumed an adult would fix, and do you think you could learn to fix it yourself?