

Top 5 activities you can play with your kids

 By [Shellee-Kim Gold](#)

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Who said your inner child's disappeared just because you're all grown up and have kids of your own? My five favourite activities to re-acquaint yourself and that you can do with your kids include exploring an unusual edutainment centre, playing a live escape game and navigating aerial obstacle courses.

1. Acrobranch, Stellenbosch

I'm dangling in mid-air – ten metres above ground and from a single cable between bluegum trees. I've fallen off the DNA Bridge.

The paralysing shock's turned my brain and body to mush. But course instructor, Sifiso's soothing voice tells me he's coming to the rescue. Like Superman, he scoops me up to safety with a single arm.



Source: Acrobranch

On all four aerial courses at Acrobranch, Stellenbosch, instructors constantly tell you to 'hook up' to the carabiners on the safety cable. Important, though an irritating distraction.

Adults and kids alike here are challenged to reach new heights-and overcome fears of the same – as courses progressively increase in difficulty.

Taking on the most advanced Red course, as I did, also meant dealing with The Rings: stepping into small metal rings to progress while holding ropes to keep your body from splitting apart! Up here even grown men have involuntarily begun urinating in fear, leaving the course unfinished.

Negotiating the Log Bridge with more rope and less log and getting your legs in a wobbly twist on the Rope Walk are no walk in the park, either. Par for the course are bruised and aching bodies afterwards.

Taking a breather on a treetop platform I'm enviously watching and listening to the children's thrills and spills on the easier Green and Blue courses.

Under sixes have a cute yellow course. Their most loved activities: the 12 metre long zipline – where parents sometimes become an extra ground harness – and the four-wheeled aerial scooter on two cables.

My eventual reward is the Red Zipline, followed by an even better 130 metre long Big Zip experience, which descends and extends across the park. Eyes open, I'm almost enjoying it.

Back on terra firma Sifiso's rated me an eight out of ten. "You're calm and confident up there." Who would have thought it?

2. Cool Runnings, Tygervally

If you think tobogganing is exclusively northern hemisphere fun that requires snow, think again.

Cool Runnings is an African version that combines a three-hectare green, grassy hillside with a long, ground-level steel slide your toboggan sits in.



Source: Cool Runnings

Big girls and their riding thrills and big boys and their toys don't need excuses here. Though the under seven's are required

to ride with an adult on the almost 1.5 kilometre track.

Snake your (automated) way uphill, prepare to work your joystick, lean into the curve and brake downhill for an exhilarating ride. Speeds up to 40km per hour can be reached.

Stick to staff-outlined rules for safety, though a 25 metre distance between riders does apply.

Non-participating family may prefer to cheer on from the upper covered spectator station.

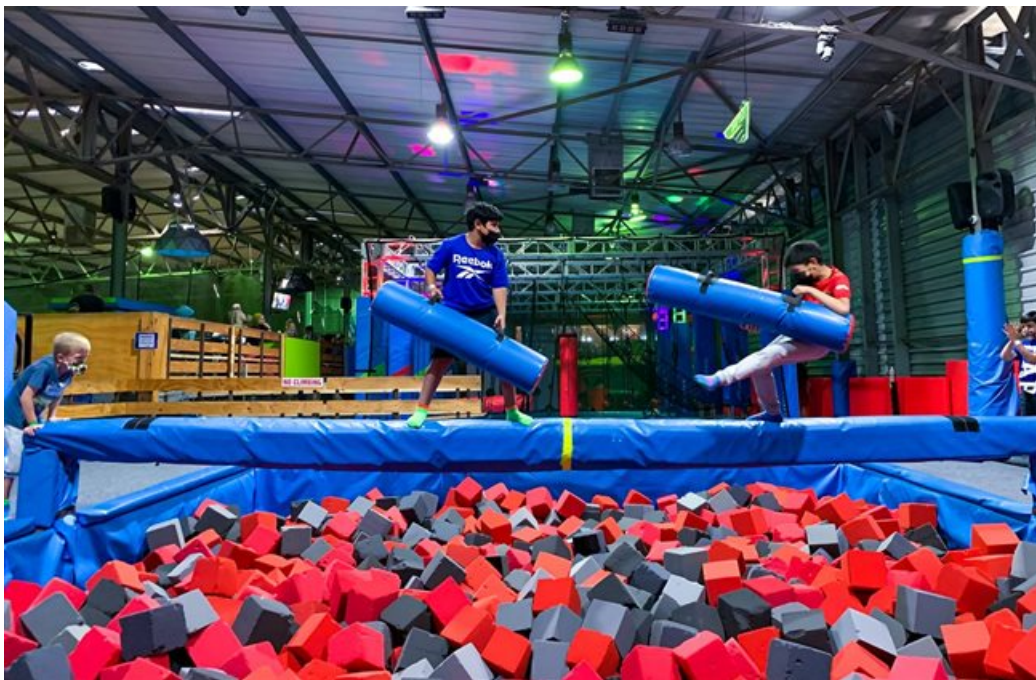
Cool Runnings attracts corporate teams, honeymooners, adrenalin-crazed couples, kids and adult celebrations who all share a single common trait: a sense of adventure.

But be warned – unless you're adrenalin-addicted relatives purchasing the Happy Family Combo of 18 rides – this is pretty pricy pleasure, specials notwithstanding.

3. Rush, Claremont

Jumping from a trampoline directly into a pit of massive foam cubes garnered the most laughs for us at trampoline centre, Rush.

Falling in was great fun but trying to tread on the sea of foam to exit the pit was like being trapped in quicksand. However, assistants are always close.



Source: Rush

The brave can jump into the pit from an even dizzier height by climbing an adjoining diving board.

A trampoline volleyball-playing teenage girl gang help orientate my adult daughter, Yajna and I. My best was the ultra-springy 'advanced' one – though I never even mastered jumping into an upright position on it!

If you've mastered the art of air somersaults and beyond, there's a foam-padded curved platform to enhance antics. Whatever your level, the rule is only one person on a trampoline at a time.

I never tire of jumping but need frequent breaks in between. A great dirty chai latte from the café upstairs – with its spectator balcony filled with family members – helps us refuel and plan our next strategy.

Yajna and I meet face-to-face in the middle of the battle beam upstairs, armed with foam swords. I'm thrilled to have wobbled my way at snail's pace to the centre. Yajna barely taps me and a second later I'm in the foam pit below. She's visibly unhappy to be deprived of bashing me about a bit.

Assistant Asheeq helps us make our way across the Ninja Warrior Course. We're expected to jump onto, over and through swings, loops and hoops.

For those looking for an extra rush, you'll likely find the colourful climbing walls pretty challenging.

4. Wonderdal, Stellenbosch

If your little darlings are between 5-13 you'll likely want to join them in their two-hour romp at Wonderdal edutainment centre on Hazendal estate.

Combining technology with educational resources in an interactive environment, kids (and their adult companions) play and learn about science, technology, nutrition, life skills and nature across the eight zones.



Source: Wonderdal

Though fully supervised, I wasn't planning to miss out. Wild horses couldn't pull me away from the Wonder Garden, much to our eight and ten year old's dismay.

A virtual garden on ceiling-to-floor screens gets you interacting with real items, such as watering cans as you learn to create plants from seed. Guiding you along in all you do is your digital friend, the colourful Amuki creature.

Another favourite is cranking up Kora, the Tree of Light. Learning about motion energy, you create your own beautiful light and sound display. You can even clamber into Kora's 'boughs' if you develop a serious attachment.

There's also a Health Kitchen showing you how to digitally plan and cook healthy meals, a Tinker Workshop for junior scientists and the outdoor Wildlands playground.

My junior companions eventually succeed at dragging me for some downtime to listen to and read stories in the pods and Story Cave.

Note to adults: you can't access Wonderdal without a child.

5. HintHunt, V&A Waterfront

You'll easily be able to wipe that scowl off your teen's face in this more-cerebral dose of fun. Described as a mix between 'living' Cluedo meets 30 Seconds, live escape rooms at HintHunt were more popular attractions than Table Mountain for two years running.

You'll initially think you've wandered onto the movie set of Pirates of the Caribbean in the minimalist Shipwreck Room, complete with similar-themed background music. There's a shelf, a wine barrel, wall pictures and not much else.



Source: HintHunt

Your objective: To puzzle the clues with your team leading to the recovery of lost treasure before a coming storm. You've got 60 minutes. The ticking of the clock over the exit door is a constant reminder.

Requiring all manner of skill sets, this is where you pull together as a team. In larger groups communication is key to opening the 'invisible' rooms.

Halfway through and you and said teen are a hot mess – stuck and frustrated. Enter the gamemaster. Well, actually, she's been spying on you via camera all along. Now she's gracing you with a clue. Will it help?

Dispelling myths that this is a kids game, only 40% of teams manage to successfully escape in time. Don't blame the game. Next time you can try the Old Hotel or the Cursed Treasure, a sequel to Shipwreck.

My guaranteed escape from feeling frazzled? A double rum down the hatch.

ABOUT SHELLEE-KIM GOLD

A long-time globetrotter, Shellee-Kim spent seven years travelling through 43 countries.

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