

Making it a Great Summer

With the end of the school year right around the corner, we have another chance to make it a great summer. Busy schedules and loads of homework and activities will soon take a back seat to a more laid-back pace.

Schools Out!

Do you still feel stressed out? Could be. Children, and parents alike, often find that the transition from school to Summer changes, ie: routines and structure, can be difficult and unnerving.

Many parents go into summer with certain expectations, but lack a plan to make the best of it. The result can be a chaotic household with whining children that complain about boredom, fight, and end up being very disruptive to others around them. The following are a few tips to help your family transition into summer with the least amount of disorder.

Have a Plan

A successful summer is a well-planned one.

- * Encourage your kid(s) to give you input when planning summer activities. Suggest outings such as day trips to the aquarium or picnic lunches at a park to stimulate their imaginations, then ask them for some ideas.

- * Keep them informed of camp dates, family trips, and other plans by giving them a detailed calendar. This helps them visualize what's on the agenda and how to best prepare.

- * Be sure to set up regular play dates now before you hit the road for vacations. In many cases, kids lose touch with classmates since they may only interact with their friends during school time.

Routines

All children benefit from some structure and clear expectations during the summer months. Having set wake-up and bed times, maintaining regular meals, establishing daily routines, and avoid over-scheduling will help you, and them, make the transition BACK to school more manageable.

- * Kids need proper amount of sleep for their development, irrespective of the time of year. Have set wake-up and bed times.

* Maintain regular meals too. Poor summer habits such as skipping breakfast or excessive snacking will come back to haunt your kids next school year.

* Establish daily routines, such as family game time after chores or morning walks for the dog.

* Don't over-schedule! Children need some downtime to explore, create, and relax.

Stimulate the Brain

Academics take a back seat for many children during the summer months, which can make it difficult for them to get back on track when school starts again. Fight academic amnesia by keeping kids intellectually engaged throughout summer.

* Keep your children physically active by limiting video game, computer, and TV time. Take family walks, play catch, or share in a bicycle ride.

* Set aside a regular reading routine. Many libraries offer children's reading clubs with a theme, such as detective books or science fiction.

* Maintain kids' writing skills by encouraging them to keep a journal of their summer experiences.

Above all, just have fun together. Before you know it, it will be school time again.