

Parenting Tips

How to Keep Your Cool This Summer

Children need structure to feel safe and secure. Although kids do not have to go to school in the morning, set a time for them to get up and a time for them to go to bed. Make a list of age appropriate chores for your child to accomplish during the day. This will give them structure, along with a sense of accomplishment.

Schedule a time for children to do quiet activities by themselves, like reading or drawing.

Leave plenty of room for lazy days. It is good for you and your child to have days where nothing is planned. Sit outside in the shade and have a picnic. Turn on the sprinkler or fill a small pool and splash around.

Be aware of your child's limits. Don't try to cram too many things in one day. When it is hot and muggy out, children and parents tend to tire out easily. Make sure to have plenty of water and snacks on hand as well as sunscreen and hats. Find a tree with lots of shade to sit under and take a break.

Make a list with your child of all the things you would like to do over the summer and prioritize the three that you absolutely want to do. Write the rest of the ideas on a piece of paper and put them in a hat. When your child is bored, have them pick an activity out of the hat.

Plan indoor activities for summer days when it is too hot to go outside. Some ideas that are in keeping with the summer theme: press flowers or make designs from shells your child has collected or build a castle out of recycled popsicles sticks that have accumulated over the summer.

Safety First. Make sure to have a first aid kit full of summer emergency supplies portable and ready to go. In it include sunscreen, bug repellent, water, snacks, band-aids and antiseptic wipes.

Keep learning. Incorporate learning into the summer to keep your child's mind active. Take note of the different species of birds, bugs and flowers that arrive and grow in the summer. Look them up on the Internet or in a nature book and find out all you can about them.

Make a memory box with your child. A great summer project is to have your child create a summer memory box. Give your child an old shoebox and have them decorate it with stickers, glitter and markers. Inside, your child can put shells, ticket stubs and pictures. For an older child, a scrapbook may work better to store memories.

The last few weeks of summer should be used to get your child ready for the school routine again. Have your child get out of bed and go to bed a little earlier than usual. Have them review flash cards or read a book to get them in the school mode and limit their television/video game time.

Finally, enjoy the summer. The long warm days will be replaced by shorter, cooler days before you know it!