

Raising Great Kids

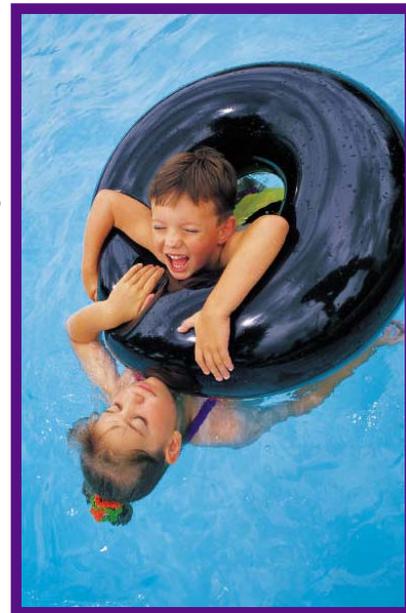


MAY

Summertime

Summer, a time when many families take vacation and go on trips, is almost here. Not all families go on a vacation, but all children are out of school on summer break. The long, hot days of summer can be very challenging for working parents and their children. Some reasons parents dread summer include struggling with childcare, and not knowing what activities to provide to keep their children occupied.

With proper planning, you and your child can look forward to summer as a time to learn important life skills ~ such as cooperation, contribution, and problem-solving. Here are some tips to help you and your child have an enjoyable summer:



- ★ **Respectfully involve your child in the planning.** This will be your key to success. Your child feels respected and important when he is listened to, and when his ideas are taken seriously. He is also more likely to follow the plans that he helped create. Ask for his ideas on some things to do, places to go. A preschooler will have several ideas, but the final decision should be yours.
- ★ **Child care.** If you must arrange for childcare, sit with your child and make a list of important things to consider ~ children his age, plenty of activities and free time, non-punitive discipline. Make another list of possible centers and then match each one with what you are looking for.
- ★ **Routines.** Make up an activities chart for the summer with your child. If you tell him what to do, when to do it, and how to do it all the time, he will not be as willing to do what is to be done. The more you involve your child in simple decision-making, the less power struggle problems you will have. You can even use pictures to represent what needs to be done, e.g., a dog and a bowl to represent feeding the dog.
- ★ **Family matters.** A very important thing to help you get through the summer smoothly is to hold regular family meetings. Children get an opportunity to look for and say good things about each member of the family. This is also a time to talk about what is not working too well, and what can be changed.

Safety Scoop

Isolation makes crime easy, especially with little children. Practice the following at all times:

- ♥ NEVER leave children alone in cars or public places.
- ♥ Go with small children to public restrooms.
- ♥ Let children wear bright colored clothing that is easy to describe and see.
- ♥ Teach children what it means to "stick as close as a shadow." Z

- ★ **Special time.** Your job might not allow you to take long periods of time off during the summer. However, this does not mean that you can't enjoy special time with your child. Spend time reading, talking, and playing with him. Take time to think about what is most important ~ having the bathroom clean, or knowing what is going on with your child, what he is thinking. Spend time watching TV with him.
- ★ **Take time to teach your child and to listen to him.** This will help bring you closer to each other. Summer, even for working parents and their children, can be a wonderful time of learning, fun, and togetherness. Z

Did You Know?

Did you know that you can teach your preschooler to share?

Preschoolers are naturally self-centered. They do not like to share what belongs to them, and they want what belongs to others. Here are some ways which you can “jump-start” generosity in your child.

- ★ **Show him that you share.** Children do what they see their parents, or other meaningful adults in their lives do. Point out examples of when you take turns with him or someone else.
- ★ **Teach the Golden Rule.** Children are more likely to share if they know why they should. Tell your child that kindness makes other people feel good. Remind him of how he felt when someone gave him something.
- ★ **Store the untouchables.** Before others come over to play, let your child put away a few favorite toys. Remind him also how sharing works, he plays with the toy first, and then his friend gets a turn. Let him know when he is doing a good job of sharing.
- ★ **Be patient.** Children learn kindness slowly, so be patient with them. Remember too, that sometimes children may return to doing things the way they used to. **Z**



My son insists on dressing himself. After ten minutes, he is still in his pajamas and has put on only one sock. Do you have any suggestions on how to deal with this problem?

First, you need to understand that your child is not trying to make you late. Getting dressed is a major task that children begin to tackle early, but may not get it right until about age 6 or 7. Children this age want independence and may reject help. Your goal should be to make things go smoothly without crushing your child’s budding independence.

- ★ **Plan ahead.** Choose two outfits the night before and allow him to decide which to wear. Point out that tags go in the back, pants snap in front.
- ★ **Allow time.** Build a few minutes in your schedule to allow for mistakes. Some children can move faster than others.
- ★ **Help without taking over.** Show him which shoe goes on which foot. You might want to write the appropriate letter for the foot (L & R) in each shoe. Buy clothes that are easy to put on and take off. Pair tops and bottoms where his clothes are stored. Practice putting on and taking off clothes quickly when you’re not in a rush. **Z**

Source: *Family Information Services*, May, 1999
Parenting, September, 1999 & May, 1999.



Macaroni Salad

- 1 carrot, sliced
- 1 celery stick, diced
- 1 tomato, diced
- 1/2 cup cheese cubes
- 2 cups cooked elbow macaroni
- 2 tablespoons plain yogurt

Place cooked macaroni in a mixing bowl. Wash vegetables and cut into pieces. Cut cheese into cubes. Add vegetables and cheese to cooked macaroni. Add yogurt and stir to mix well. Refrigerate until ready to eat. **Z**

Source: *101+ Snacktime Ideas*,
Penn State Cooperative Extension.

Kids Can Help

Children can bring and measure ingredients, wash vegetables and mix.



All children must be supervised when they are in the kitchen.

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