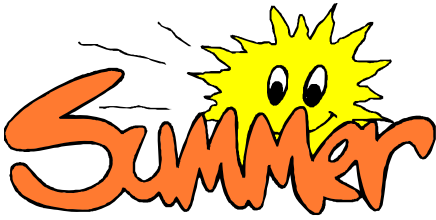


SUMMER IDEAS for BUSY PARENTS



Any time can be a great time to share the fun of learning with your child.

At home, on short trips to local attractions, or on long family vacations, you can encourage your child's curiosity, introduce exciting new ideas and subjects, and help expand your child's means of expression. This brochure gives you some hints that take only a few minutes and may help you make the most of the time you spend with your child – summertime or any time!

Let your child enjoy the anticipation and fun of planning an outing.

Children enjoy learning to use maps, tour guides, and menus. Plan a list of things to take along. Learn about the place you'll visit and what can be found there.

Read about related subjects before and after any activity.

This is always a good way to make an activity more interesting and easier to understand. Explain new concepts or words you may encounter. Show how the dictionary and encyclopedia can help anyone who needs new information.

Keep trips short for younger children.

This way, they'll stay interested. Break some outings into two trips to the same location. Plan the day with a balance of activities that involve sitting, standing, walking, and talking. Provide snacks, if needed.

Have your child make a picture or write a story about something that happened.

Be sure to display the story or art to show its importance to you. Later, perhaps include it in a scrapbook.

Encourage your child to ask questions during an activity.

You may use a few of your own to start the conversation. Afterward, ask your child what he or she liked most about the experience. What did he or she like least? Did the child learn anything surprising?

Collect a memento.

A leaf or rock (where collecting is allowed) or a picture, pamphlet or ticket stub will help your child recall the wonderful activities you shared. Put mementos into a scrapbook you make together.



DISCUSSION ENRICHES AN OUTING

Before and during an outing, discuss as many related questions as possible, at your child's level of understanding. For instance, for a trip to a lake, use questions such as the following:

Where does the water come from?

Where does it go? (Sometimes this will lead to a further outing.)

What kind of things might live in the lake?

(Have younger kids draw pictures. Talk to older ones about the type of fish actually present in the lake and how they live and grow.)

Why were people in the boats wearing special jackets? (Talk about water safety.)

What sports can you do around the lake?

(Have your child read and report to you about his favorite water sport: sailing, swimming, water skiing, fishing, etc.)

The older the child, the more specific the questions can be and the more reading and writing can be done on related subjects.



IDEAS FOR VACATION TIME OR ANY TIME

Give your child a special notebook to keep as a journal of shared activities. This could also be a series of separate pages with drawings, photographs, and short stories which can be made into a book later. If your child is too young to write, let your child tell *you* what to write. This book or journal will be fun to look back at, and it may come in handy the first day of school, when the teacher asks what students did during the summer.

Encourage your child to watch educational television: news, nature, programs, and documentaries. Have him or her ask questions about new things seen, and keep a log of new words learned.

Have your child use card games and board games with educational value:

Memory match, educational bingo, Mancala, Rush Hour, Blokus, Sudoku, I Spy, etc.

Try some newspaper and magazine activities. Cut out pictures and have your child make up his own story. Cut up a picture into a fun puzzle.

Encourage your child to write to special friends. Writing, reading, and thinking practice are just a few of the benefits!

Clip coupons and use math and matching skills on your next trip to the grocery store or fast food restaurant. Have your child look up information as needed—TV and movie schedules, store hours, etc.

Have an arts-and-crafts box or corner stocked with crayons, construction paper, glue, markers, clay, etc., which are appropriate for your child's age. Kids like using rubber stamps, coloring, and applying glitter. Decorating blank puzzles can also be great creative fun.

Take a nature walk. Have younger kids touch grass, sand, pavement, tree bark, etc.

What words describe how these objects feel?

Use binoculars and magnifiers. Look for signs of the season.

What smells do you smell?

What insects, birds, trees, and flowers do you find?

Start a small flower or vegetable garden with your child. Use a ruler, thermometer, and watering gauge to learn about measurement. Keep a daily log of plant care and results.

This could even be the basis of your child's next science fair project.

Let your child help you plan and prepare a family dinner. Together, plan menus and pick out groceries. Or try making something you usually buy, like butter or peanut butter.

Any time is a wonderful time to learn photography.

Have your child practice first with an old, inexpensive, or disposable camera. Plan photo projects about your family, your neighborhood, or places you visit. Have your child select what is most important to photograph and think about the best way to show it. Then display the results.



READING CAN BE FUN!

Reading is very important to a child's development, and studies show that children who continue to read during breaks from school continue to develop their skills while other children fall back. If you have time — even 15 minutes a day—you can give your child a love of reading and good books that will last a lifetime.

Ask your child questions:

What did you like most about that story?

Can you make up another ending that would be better?

How would you feel if that happened to you?

How would you draw a picture for the front cover?

Listen closely to what your child says.

Reading need not be limited to books. Newspapers, magazines, recipes, and even billboards can introduce important new vocabulary words and concepts. Kids love sports, music, fashion, movies, and outdoor activities. Have your child pick articles in newspapers, magazines, or comics that spark his or her interest. Let reading be fun, and your child will do more on his own.

REMEMBER, HELPING YOUR CHILD WILL BE REWARDING AND FUN. YOU CAN MAKE AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE IN ONLY A FEW MINUTES A DAY.

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