



## School's Out: Preparing for Summer Break

With summer just around the corner, many families are preparing for the transition from school to summer break. A common challenge for parents is finding ways to keep their children occupied in a fun, safe, and productive way. Whether you will be working throughout the summer or spending the days with your children, consider the following tips when preparing for summer break.

### What You Can Do

**Keep Them Busy:** Put together a complex and varied schedule in order to keep them moving and interested. The schedule may consist of daily chores, academic projects/lessons, day camps, activities with friends, etc. You can usually find low-cost, supervised camps and activities throughout the community. Try checking with local schools, colleges, libraries, and local government. Although, be sure to sign up early since they tend to fill up fast. Another option is to encourage your children to identify some careers that they would be interested in learning more about and help them find opportunities within that career, such as volunteering at an animal shelter or doing odd jobs at a fire station.

**Be Accessible:** Your children should always be able to reach you. However, having them call every 5 minutes while you are racing against a deadline at work isn't necessarily ideal for anyone. You may want to think about devising a system with your children about calling. For example:

1. The first phone call (and non-emergency), they can leave a message if you are unavailable.
2. If it is urgent, instruct them to call again immediately following the first call, and you will know to answer it.

It is also a good idea to have another person available, such as a neighbor or relative, to be 'on-call' in case a situation does arise when your children cannot reach you or vice versa.

**Set Ground Rules:** Work out a set of rules and safety measures that the entire family understands. For example, no friends over when an adult is not around, don't answer the door or phone, call before leaving the house, don't use the stove or oven, and so forth. Also, make sure your children know exactly what steps to take when faced with an emergency and practice role-playing those steps. Depending on their age, you may want to consider enrolling them in a babysitting safety course, which usually covers potential safety and emergency scenarios and will better equip them when situations arise.

Finally, when children think of summer, they usually think of fun. Try to gauge their response to their activities and be flexible, if possible, yet provide them with enough safety and structure to help them occupy their days in a fun and productive way.

**For more information about parenting or family concerns, visit the website or call the toll free number listed below.**



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