

MAKING SUMMER COUNT!

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How do we make Summer Count now that school is out? Good Question.

First we must evaluate the needs of our children and than those of our selves.

What do I mean?

- a) My child's grades, what areas were he/she weak in, recommendations from the teacher or teachers
- b) Needs of our family. Is childcare needed or is there an older sibling and or maybe a stay at home parent, if more than one child age and grades plus their interest/skill level and or experience.
- c) BUDGET can we realistic pay for the many programs that is being offered for summer time fun?
- d) Transportation

How to address the areas mentioned:

- a) Does your school district or city government, community centers, churches offer summer enrichment programs if a child is weak in certain areas or has been recommended for additional help.
- b) Are we paying for childcare and if so what is being offered by the provider. If an older sibling is responsible just what is expected of them.
- c) BUDGET scout the community for any and all free services to involve the children in – half day here or half day there.
- d) Transportation – who will be responsible for transporting to the programs? Is there anyone we know or can get to know that is participating in the same programs (carpool) – SOMETIMES WE NEED TO STEP OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONE

Look at other ways for them to learn and still have fun:

- a) Local theater group - offers socialization, music (vocal and instrumental), coordination, math (how many steps can go with that beat and or how many steps in that repetition before I proceed to the next step), reading and memory skills (learning of lines by reading and committing to memory)
- b) Recreation does the local Y's, Boy's and Girl's Club offer programs / camps do check for they will range in costs.

- c) Local parks through government offer recreation aides at certain parks which will offer various free sports, arts and crafts, swimming, etc.
- d) Local Red Cross may offer free swimming lessons.
- e) Local colleges or churches may offer free movie nights / concerts.

What if there is nothing in my community?

- a) Then you approach local government, schools, centers, churches and see what they have to offer and if not what would it take to get it started.
- b) Commit to forming bonds with other parents / parent groups and develop a plan of action.
- c) Plan family nights for instance: game night, turn off the television and get those games off the shelves (does wonder for family time and helping to develop math and reading skills), movie night in the backyard, a scavenger hunt, before school is out get copies of worksheets from the grade your child is going into plus it would not hurt to get copies of worksheets for the grade they are in at that time.
- d) Develop a hobby together arts and crafts (jewelry making, model cars/planes, collecting stamps), walking, bicycling, explore the local parks, learn your neighborhood, walk the beaches together as a family, picturing taking, scrape booking etc
- e) Encourage writing by having them keep a journal and write about their summer experiences. Visit the local dollar store and you can buy workbooks, etc.
- f) Yes there are affordable camps that offer a wide variety of activities.
- g) Visit the zoo on free days, the museums, talk to doctors, judges, lawyers and see if they can arrange a tour of their work environment. Remember elected politicians (local and state even federal)
- h) Check out places you can go out a tank of gas and back.

It is important for you as the parent to make sure the children are busy, yes they may get mad and say school is out, aw mom do I have too and the answer is yes.

Remind them of their dream / goals and encourage them to work towards it by doing things in the summer that would advance their skills in order to reach their goals/dreams.

You must also read and write even though it seems ancient writing with texting and the computers (yes surf the web) lot of free stuff.

The most important point is get the family involved in things that take you all outdoors and allow for spending time together.

The memories that you make will last a lifetime for somewhere down the line you will hear "Remember that summer mom and dad took us, or remember when we made those funny art projects or remember when we spent time together besides at the dinner table.

Make the most of your summer. Have fun and realize there is learning in playing.