

From our Mid-June, 2010 Newsletter

TIP OF THE MONTH:

Pediatric Potential's founder **Laurie Kalb** offers these tips for **helping your child enjoy the warm weather:**

The end of the structure of the school day and the beginning of time off is challenging for parents and children alike. The "lazy days of summer" are not always really so great "lazy days of summer" are not always really so great for children and caregivers. Structured time is not a punishment--it is very helpful to children, especially those who have difficulty organizing their time, sequencing, and staying focused. When there is too much "down time" we often see a rough time at home. Here are some suggestions for keeping routines flexible, yet productive, and keeping your kids more fun to be with:



Keep a calendar visible in a family space such as the kitchen. Mark any appointments and scheduled events on the calendar. Even non-readers can be told what day it is, and little pictures can represent the appointments, parties or activities that are planned for the day.

Keep a White Board In the Kitchen. Draw pictures on it or write the routine of the day.

Tell the children what they are doing first, what comes next, and what happens after that as you write out the plan for the day. If you have a day with "no plans" give the children choices and have them decide some of the activities of the day. Try to balance sedentary with active parts of the day. Kids love to write their own plans or symbols on the white board. You can call the time of planning the day "morning calendar" or circle time -- just like in school or camp! This is good to do on weekends all the year through. Believe it or not, it will help you too. If everyone has a plan and knows what is coming next, the day goes smoother.

Go to craft stores to find simple projects to store for later use during play dates, very hot days, and rainy days. Get boxes to decorate, birdhouses to paint, tee shirts to color, etc. Kids love to make something and enjoy having arts and crafts supplies around. Try storing all the arts and crafts things in one area so you can access them easily. You will be doing yourself a favor for those long afternoons with a houseful of kids. Imaginative play sometimes gets to be too stimulating, and table top time can be a way to organize and focus children.





Similar to crafts, it is fun to keep a **few recipes** that are easy to make for "centering" a play date. When kids are having a little too much time together, sometimes they need a project to anchor them. Parent or caregiver directed cooking with things like slice and bake cookies that you can decorate, cupcakes with icing toppings, or pizza making can re-group a play date and help the kids be friends again. Keep play dates short and structured and then - good luck!