

Summer Survival Kit

As summer approaches, it can be daunting to look at the long days ahead with little going on, especially if you stay at home with your kiddos. Here are some tips to set yourself and your kids up for a successful summer!

- **Set a Routine:** Even the most basic structure can be a great help in the summer. Most children feel comforted when there is a predictable pattern to their day or week. Sticking with a consistent bedtime and wake up time can be one of the most powerful factors in starting the day off right. Overtired adults and children is not a good combination. Keeping everyone well rested may not be easy, but the benefits will be worth the effort.
- **But Also Be Flexible:** Too much planning can get in the way of fun. Teach your children that it is ok to be spontaneous and to make adaptations when plans change.
- **Clarify Expectations:** Summer often comes with a laid-back attitude. Talk with your kids about any changes to chores, bedtime, routines, etc.
- **Brainstorm together:** Work together to create a list of fun activities or find solutions to conflicts. Be proactive—if you know your kids always fight over the same toy, set up a system on how to share or take turns.
- **Honor space:** Some children are emotionally drained after social activities. Give them time to recharge by setting aside time for reading, individual play or naps.
- **Help Someone Else:** If your children are complaining or bored, it may be time to focus on others. Encourage them to do random acts of kindness or sign up to volunteer.
- **Take a Deep Breath:** Not every summer day is full of sunshine and laughter. Rather than being hard on yourself, give yourself permission to take a break and relax.

Finding balance is never easy. It's especially hard when the routine changes. Keep it simple this summer. When things seem to get off track, focus on re-connecting with your kids first. Then, look at this list and see which area could be improved.