

### *The Kids are Coming, The Kids are Coming...*

The countdown is on – almost the end of school. The kids are ecstatic and the parents in fear. We all have different summer memories – great times, boring times, and traveling. Summer is a wonderful time but it can certainly come with some challenges. Our children are out of school and that can mean some interesting scheduling. Unfortunately, the working world does not generally allow for holidays that mirror the local school systems. However, with a bit of advance planning parents can ensure that they avoid bored kids and maintain their own sanity.

The following tips can be very helpful in staying sane with the kids out of school:

1. Plan ahead – Look closely at your schedule now. Are there certain days or events that pop out for you? Do you have some important meetings, guests or travel for work? Are there certain events that take place in your city? Do you have company coming? Mark these events on a main calendar so you can plan around them.
2. Ask your children what they want to do - Last summer I had all these things that *I* thought we would do. My children had other plans. With over 15 children living on our cul-de-sac, they were content to hang out here and play outside with their friends. If your children do want to take certain programs, you may need to book now.
3. Research your city – Many cities offer a lot of interesting programs during the summer. These can range from free to paid programs. There may be park programs, day camps, summer camps, festivals, or shows. Your church, community center or school may run programs. The more you are aware of the more options available to you.
4. Chose and commit to a few events – Coordinate your schedule and the events in your city. If you have a busy work week this may be the perfect week to enroll your children in a bible camp or a sports camp. If there is a fun festival, maybe you can take a day or 2 off work and hang out with your children.

#### Free Events

Playground programs  
Wading pools  
Splash Parks  
Bible Schools  
Nature trails  
Hiking  
Lakes/rivers/beaches  
Biking  
Rollerblading  
Library programs

5. Enlist help – Find out what your children’s friends are up to for the summer. Our children miss their friends so see if you can alternate some childcare. Have your children’s friends over one week and then send your children to their house the next week.
6. Visit family – I have more time off than my husband so often I will head out to visit friends and family in other cities. We also will invite family to come visit us. We may all head into the mountains for the day or just stay home and let the kids play and adults relax and visit.
7. Take a road trip – Head out of town for a day or two. There is often some pretty neat stuff in close driving distance that you never have time to get to. Learn the history of your area, see the sites or relax on a beach.
8. Act like a tourist – What do tourists do in your city? Where do you send your company? Pretend you are visiting and do these things. Get to know your community and explore.
9. Alter your schedule – In the hot summer months, move the children’s rooms to the basement. Allow your children to share a room, sleep in or stay up later. Changes in routine and schedule can be a fun way to add variety to the summer!
10. Allow imaginations to soar – By adding a few new ideas and events into your summer months you can avoid boredom for the children and frustration for you. However, don’t forget that sometimes in the summer the most fun comes from the fact that we can do nothing at all. Children create amazing games with their friends while playing outside or watching the clouds.

Summer is truly a special time. Take advantage of all that is available to you and your family and have fun!

Tracy Lyn Moland is an author, speaker and consultant specializing in improving the lifestyle of Mothers by providing solutions to them and to those that sell to them. She is the author of the best selling, *Mom Management, Managing Mom Before Everybody Else* (tgot, 2003). For more information visit, <http://www.TracyLynMoland.com>.

#### Paid Ideas

Sport camps  
 Animal camps/Zoo events  
 Imagination/Science/  
 Fantasy camps  
 Movies  
 Festivals  
 Amusement parks  
 Swimming lessons  
 Waterparks