

## What type of day trips could we plan?

While at home, you can take your child on mini-holidays by planning day trips for local activities.

- Arrange for swimming lessons or camp days to help your child learn to become independent and gain new skills.
- Visit museums or local art galleries to learn about your community's history and culture.
- Take in a matinee at a theatre.
- Go to parks, beaches or conservation areas.
- Attend plays or musicals put on by community groups.

Enjoy many fun-filled days with your child during the holidays. Choose some of these suggested activities or make up your own. You may enjoy acting like a kid again!

# Summer Activities for Children

A guide for parents and guardians



time for your child to write down a few sentences to help remember the experiences. If your child is not yet writing, have him or her dictate a few ideas each day. Your child can illustrate the journal.

- Teach your child how to use a camera and how to plan some pictures with it. Inexpensive disposable cameras or 'first time' cameras work well.
- Have a family holiday discussion each day, in which family members tell what they thought was the best or most interesting part of the day. Plan the next day together as a family with your child's input.
- For long car trips, plan some surprises to help pass the time. Bring games, puzzles or toys that can be used in the small space of a back seat, without damaging the seats or distracting the driver.
- Collect the interesting shopping bags from your holiday. You can make a 'bag' book from these with the outside of the bag serving as a page in the book. This makes it easy to remember family activities in the summer and can be a great story starter once school starts.
- While on vacation and in crowded tourist areas, remind your child of the safety rules. Make sure all family members know what to do if they get lost or separated from the rest of the family. Have a plan and rehearse it.

**D**uring the summer holidays, young children should play and enjoy their family and friends. Soon into the summer, however, children may begin to say, “What can we do now?” This brochure will provide you with some fun activities to keep young minds and bodies active.

## What can we do at home?

On days at home, parents can plan a variety of fun, outside activities to keep children active.

- Plan a scavenger hunt for the whole family or for your child and some friends. Make a list of some common items to find (a stone, weeds, leaves), and hide a few surprises.
- Visit the closest public library regularly and make extra time to read together.
- On hot days, run through the sprinkler or visit the community swimming pool. Use a beach ball to play sprinkler volleyball.
- Teach your child how to garden. Even young children can help with watering. Planting together and watching things grow is very satisfying.
- Have a back yard picnic. Lie back and look at the clouds.
- Clean out the garage. Sort the recycling together. Outdoor family chores can be fun in the summer.
- Have a family yard sale and let your child run a lemonade stand.
- Go for a bike ride or neighbourhood walk as a family.
- Let your child cover your driveway in chalk games or drawings. They wash off easily in the next rainfall and provide hours of fun.



Plan ahead for your next outdoor day. Ask all family members what they would like to do and choose activities together.

## What can we do when it rains?

Having materials at home in advance of a rainy day is the secret to providing many fun filled and positive learning activities for your children. The following provides some alternatives to television or video games.

- Play board games and card games. These are excellent ways to use math skills and involve the entire family.
- Buy or make some play dough; recipes are available on the Internet. Cover your table with a plastic cloth and let your child's imagination go wild.
- Set up a table for a family jigsaw puzzle or search-a-word.
- Bake cookies, cakes or other treats. No-bake cookies are also fun to make. Decorating muffins or cupcakes provides laughter, and

everyone will enjoy eating the results.

- Make snacks together. Give everyone half of an english muffin, cheese, vegetables or fruit for decoration (celery sticks, pepper slices, raisins), and you have a healthy snack that is fun to make.
- Draw pictures using crayons or markers on plain paper. Frame the pictures with home-made frames (styrofoam meat trays, cardboard).
- Take time to read. Try a quiet reading period and then ask family members to talk about their story. Read a book aloud, a chapter a day.
- Make bird feeders by spreading peanut butter or another edible material on paper rolls, and then rolling them in bird seed. Hang them outdoors when the rain stops.
- Use all the building toys in your house and work together to make a huge village or building. Take a photograph of it when you finish.
- Make an alphabet book or recipe book by cutting out pictures or recipes from magazines and pasting them in a scrapbook or notebook.

## What are some things we can do while on vacation?

On trips away from home, children need activities to keep them busy while travelling or in between planned activities. If you bring a few things along and plan ahead, the vacation experience will be more pleasurable for the entire family.

- Pack a scrapbook or notebook. Use this to help your child create a journal or memory book of your holiday fun and sightseeing.
- Talk about what you did each day and build in