



From our June 2013 Newsletter

Ways to Make This a Better Summer For Your Family!

Our therapists have lots of great tips to help make this a better summer for your family and your child. Take a look at the June 2012 handout “Quick Summer Tips”, where we've compiled suggestions you need NOW on getting prepared for both day camp and sleepaway camp, spending time at the beach, and planning a successful family vacation.

And -

OT Director Laurie Kalb suggests these additional tips for preparing for the first days of camp:

1. If possible, take kids to the camp to see it one more time before they get on the bus. Show them the bathrooms, the lunch space, and, if possible, where their group will meet.
2. Practice getting dressed and undressed quickly, especially with a wet bathing suit. Let your child know how difficult this is, even for you! Let them wear a bathing suit in the bathtub to make sure your child can manage a wet suit themselves.

The end of the structure of the school day and the beginning of time off can be challenging for both parents and children. Lots of down time can be difficult for children who have trouble organizing their

time, sequencing, and staying focused. To make your family's summer time more fun, try these ideas:

- Keep a **family calendar** in the kitchen that shows kids scheduled events.
- Use a white board to create a "**schedule of the day**". When there is no pre-planned activity, write in "free play" and use that time to do an art project, watch TV, do an outdoor activity, or read. You can use symbols or stickers for non-reading children.
- Keep a stash of **art project ideas** around. Go to a craft store and get boxes to decorate, birdhouses to paint, tee shirts to color, etc. Kids love making something and enjoy having arts and crafts supplies around. Try storing all the arts and crafts items in one area so you can access them easily when you need to organize and focus your kids. Michaels' Arts and Crafts Stores have great coupons, kits and classes each week.
- Keep **food supplies** around for re-focusing your child. Snacks are handy when your child has a playdate with a friend. Simple ideas like decorating slice-and-bake cookies; making faces with peanut butter, raisin and nuts on apple slices; making fruit kebabs (and yogurt dip); and creating English muffin, pizza dough or pre-made crust pizzas are always a hit!