Introduction

It is officially summer and the change in season may have you thinking about warm summer nights, camping adventures, popsicles at the pool, or backyard BBQs. It may also be a time when you find yourself scrambling to find care for your child, particularly if your child is school-aged or in a childcare program that closes for the summer. What other ideas come to mind when you think of summer with your family?

Whether summer comes with a change in your family routine or no change at all, this newsletter focuses on the importance of routines and supporting your children’s early learning throughout the summer months.

Establish Fun Summer Routines!

Preschool and elementary school days are often structured and filled with routines. Children thrive on routines and appreciate knowing what patterns to expect each day. When there is a break in that routine, which happens for many families during the summer month, your child’s schedule may become less structured with daytime adventures, later bedtimes, missed nap times, or shifts in care providers or camps.

Parents can manage this change in routine by creating structure during family time in the form of fun routines. Hold a family meeting to discuss the new summer schedule and manage expectations. At your family meeting, discuss a plan for the time you have together, whether it is a schedule for full-days, evenings after work, or vacation time! Consider adding some of these activities to your family routine:

- Breakfast & clean-up
- Outdoor Activity: Walking, Playing Outside, Jogging, Yoga at the Park, etc.,
- Reading time: See book list on Page 2!
- Lunch & clean up
- Arts/Crafts Time: Coloring, Painting, Sidewalk Chalk, Origami, Etc.,

Sample Schedule

Post your schedule on the fridge so that everyone can see it. There will be days that you do not stick to a schedule (life happens!), but by keeping a basic routine you can ease the transition to summer and it will also be easier for kids to adjust to classroom schedules when they start or return to school in the fall. Be sure to make space for unstructured time as well. Having time for free play and exploration encourages creativity, problem-solving, and other important skills.

Find us on Facebook (Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative), Twitter (@OPECParentingEd) and our website: orparenting.org
Spend Quality Time Learning at Home!

Summer is a great time to help children learn new skills or to keep practicing skills that they learned during the school year. While routines help, according to recent research, the most valuable learning can happen in the comfort of your own home.

“New research suggests it’s family involvement, not camps or trips, that keep kids primed for learning all summer.”
Leah Shafer

According to the research, you can make the time spent at home most valuable by encouraging reading (both independently and alongside your child), and discussing the books that you read together. To get motivated, start a ‘Family Book Club’ where children choose books for the family to read. Agree on a timeline and make sure to set aside time to talk about the book and ask your child questions about the story. Here are a few websites with age-appropriate book recommendations to help get you started!

**Book List: Websites**

- [http://www.readingrockets.org/books/booksbytheme](http://www.readingrockets.org/books/booksbytheme)
- [http://www.colorincolorado.org/books-authors/books-kids](http://www.colorincolorado.org/books-authors/books-kids)
- [https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/7-books-about-feelings-for-babies-and-toddlers](https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/7-books-about-feelings-for-babies-and-toddlers)

**Fun With Your Kids!**

**Going to the Library**

Make a trip to your local library and look for children’s book about Independence Day to celebrate the 4th of July. You can bond with your child while reading and learning about our country’s history!

References

**Summer Learning Happens at Home**
[http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/17/06/summer-learning-happens-home](http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/17/06/summer-learning-happens-home)

**Summer Math Loss**
[http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/16/06/summer-math-loss](http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/16/06/summer-math-loss)