

Summer Survival and Success Guide for Children with ADHD

Every spring, parents want to know the best ways to transition from a school to summer schedule and how to have an ‘easy,’ productive, and fun summertime. The team at [Square One: Specialists in Child and Adolescent Development](#) put their heads together to bring you a SUMMER SURVIVAL AND SUCESS GUIDE for children with Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder.

Let's talk ADHD medications with Dr. Axelrod

Parents often ask if their child should take medication for ADHD during the summer months. This answer is dependent on the reason medication was prescribed. A child is given a diagnosis of ADHD when symptoms of impulsivity, distractibility, and an inability to sustain attention are seriously problematic. For most children with ADHD, these symptoms interfere with learning in all environments - academic *and* social. Minimizing behaviors that can be socially intrusive may allow a child to develop and maintain friendships more successfully. Research has shown that having friendships is a predictor of success in life.

For adolescents with ADHD taking medication on weekends and holidays can be life-sustaining. Research has shown an increased incidence of motor vehicle accidents in individuals with ADHD. Taking medication while driving helps decrease distractibility and impulsivity, two symptoms of ADHD that can certainly put a person at risk for making poor choices.

The reason medication is prescribed for individuals with ADHD is to allow them to learn to the best of their ability in both academic and social situations. Therefore, medication used daily can facilitate optimal adjustment for the child or teenager with ADHD.

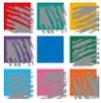
Transitioning to a Summer Schedule Hints from Dr. Causey

Let your child enjoy the break from the tight scheduling of a school, but be sure to maintain some routine as well. In other words, allow them to have some freedoms that they may not typically have during school, but don't make it a “free for all” either. Reasonable bed times, proper nutrition, and reasonable limitations on television and video games may all help to reduce the occurrence of stress. It is usually wise to discuss your guidelines about privileges at the beginning of the summer so that your children know what to expect and aren't caught off guard. Create a daily summer and special events schedule together. Exercise, interaction with peers, and educational practice time should be built into every day. You may be surprised how much they are thinking about it.

Don't over-schedule! Many families are REALLY good at being *way too busy!* Remember, it really is OK to say “No” to some activities or even adult “obligations” and not feel guilty. As a parent, some of the most enjoyable and memorable occasions will be those in which the family spontaneously does something together.

Regarding electronics, it is tempting as a parent to allow your child considerably more freedom to play them during the summer. No parent wants to hear all day, “I'm bored!” And, let's face it, allowing them to play video games is an “easy” solution to boredom. However, it's amazing how often parents will report to us that when their child wasn't able or allowed to use their ‘toys’, they magically began playing with siblings (after they, of course, fuss and complain for a while) to find more productive things to do like go outside and play, pick up the dusty guitar to play, or interact with their siblings. Also, allowing your child to play unlimited or without boundaries can really backfire when the hectic schedule of school and activities starts back up in the fall. Ultimately, it's just not psychologically or socially healthy for children to be preoccupied with electronics all day long.

More on the other side! 



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Playing with families in the neighborhood Thoughts with Ms. Stover

If your neighborhood is filled with children enjoy the fact that your house may be the “chosen” neighborhood house—that’s a compliment! Use this opportunity to be involved – you may be the one adult who is choosing to pour love into these kids’ lives. Don’t be afraid to set boundaries with children in the neighborhood (i.e. playing only in the back or front yard, not letting them play inside without parents’ permission, etc.)

Here are some ways to create summer memories without leaving town:

- Organize a neighborhood pancake breakfast – older kids could help with the toppings; younger children could help with the decorations and invitations
- Organize a scavenger hunt (ABC’s – encourage each child or team to retrieve items that start with each letter of the alphabet)
- Turn play time into an opportunity for service (make cookies to take to a sick neighbor or to a family who recently had a baby, etc.)
- Create a yard Twister game – using spray paint to create the Twister mat
- Play the ‘oldie’ games like: follow the leader, big vs. small, loud and soft.

These activities add exercise and movement into play. Relay races, tag, and repeat after me are important activities because they may help with impulse control.

Practice sounds, fluency, and articulation Ms. Redenbaugh’s summer reading list

Anytime you read with your child you are helping them hear sounds and practice saying them correctly. There are certain books for young children loaded with **sounds**.

For example, *The Cat in the Hat*, Dr. Seuss, and *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible No Good Very Bad Day*, Judith Viorst, are good books for the **sounds B, P and M**. **They are also wonderful classic stories!**

K and G can be practiced in *Cups for Sale*, Esphyr Slobodkina, *Good Night Moon*, Margaret Wise Brown, and *Who Stole the Cookies from the Cookie Jar?*, Margaret Wang.

L and R’s are letters found in the stories *Brown Bear Brown Bear what do I See?*, Bill Martin Jr., *Corduroy*, Don Freeman, *Little Blue and Little Yellow*, Leo Lionni.

The stories *Foxes in Socks*, Dr. Seuss, *Dazzle the Dinosaurs*, Marcus Pfister, and *There’s a Nightmare in my Closet*, Mercer Mayer, help your children practice the letters **S and Z**.

Some of the hardest sounds for your child to articulate might be **SH, CH and TH**. *Chicka, Chicka Boom, Boom*, Bill Martin Jr., *Sheep in a Jeep*, Nancy E. Shaw, *The Tooth Fairy*, Michael Lembeck, and *He Bear, She Bear*, Stan and Jan Berenstain, are wonderful books to read with your child again and again.

Also remember that reading can lead to great conversations or spark great comments about pictures. Sometimes just looking at pictures in a book is better than reading all of the words.

Consider using wordless picture books to generate stories. Talk about the pictures on the pages or take turns formulating sentences to create a story. Great wordless picture books include:

- *A Boy A Dog and a Frog*, Mercer Mayer
- *Good Night Gorilla*, Peggy Rathmann
- *Flot Sam*, David Wiesner
- *Chalk*, JP Thompson
- *Picnic*, Emily Arnold McCully
- *The Snowman*, Raymond Briggs
- *Trucks, Trucks, Trucks*, Peter Sis

For a great summer to remember, THE SUMMER SURVIVAL AND SUCCESS GUIDE recommends continuing your child’s medication, a predictable daily schedule, exercise, organized nutritious meals, limited use of electronics, and fun academic practice time.