

# School's Out for Summer!

## (Or Not!)

I don't know about you, but I like to keep my kids occupied with wholesome fun and educational activities even during the summer. Kids, on the other hand, might find such a notion torturous. What I see is that if I don't try to channel some of their energies into organized projects and activities, they will tend to gravitate toward frivolous, mind wasting things. (i.e. screens, teasing each other, being bored)

Money-making can be a great thing to do in the summer. Many things can be highly educational as well.

- Growing a garden (my sister pays her kids for the produce they reap)
- Scavenge for odd jobs from neighbors and friends
- Start your own lawn care business
- Have the kids collect recyclables wherever they can that have cash value and turn them in at summer's end
- Babysitting jobs
- Teach the kids how to sell things on EBay, Craig's List or Amazon

If you have Scouts in your household, summer is a great time to earn merit badges. If you go to <http://meritbadge.com/> you can find a listing (and the worksheets) of numerous merit badges they can earn. Even if you don't have any Boy Scouts, you might gain some good ideas anyway!

- Archery
- Auto mechanics
- Citizenship in the Nation
- Cooking
- Electricity
- Golf
- Journalism
- Photography
- Radio
- Swimming
- Theater
- Woodwork

Educational games are a wonderful way to get learning into a day. Here are some of our favorites.

- Boggle
- Scrabble
- Brainquest
- Upwords

- Trivial Pursuit
- Mad Libs
- Chess

Sometimes screen time can work to your advantage. You can allow the kids a certain amount of time per week, of which a certain percentage needs to be educational games. There are a lot of free educational games out there on the web.

- To learn times tables in a game format – [www.timesattack.com](http://www.timesattack.com)
- Free geography puzzles -- <http://www.yourchildlearns.com/owlmouse.htm>
- Watch educational TV programs
- Practice keyboarding skills using instructional computer game
- Pick up educational videos or DVD's at the library

Summer can be a great time for fun field trips that you just didn't get time for during the school year. Here's some fun, interesting and generally inexpensive things to try.

- Historical sites
- National parks
- Hiking
- Hunting for cool rocks, arrowheads, etc.
- Museums

Time for music practice can be expanded during the summer when the kids don't have as many other demands.

- Practice your current instrument
- Learn a new instrument
- Teach a younger sibling
- Listen to classical music

Along the same lines, time for practice of any talent can be expanded during the summer.

- A sport
- Photography
- Calligraphy
- Sewing
- Cooking
- Writing for pleasure
- Scrapbooking
- Woodworking
- Gardening
- Crafts
- Painting
- Weaving
- Animation

- Drawing
- Beadwork
- Sculpting

Entering writing contests is a great way to earn money for college and other things. Kids become interested in doing it because of the money incentive. Here are a few places to look for contests.

- [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
- [www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com)
- Google or Yahoo searches for poetry contests and writing contest for kids.

Knowing summer will go by quickly, I plan to map out a somewhat flexible general plan of what I want to do with the kids for the summer using this article and the article entitled “What Do YOU Do in the Summer time?” as guides. I plan to actually jot some things down on the calendar. What isn’t calendared often doesn’t come to pass around our house! It comes down to a bunch of “We really should...” turning into “We should have...but didn’t” by the end of summer if we don’t write it down.

It is my hope that readers of this article can find a thing or two that will help them have a fun and productive summer, rather than having this article stand as an overwhelming list of things to do. Will I do everything in this article and the aforementioned article this summer? No way! I am just giving myself some ideas too!

Some of the things I have listed above, the kids are just not going to want to do. As parents, it is okay to require things of your children. ;) Just because it is summer doesn’t mean that your brain should be completely on vacation for a few months. It isn’t good for it. Keeping the mental juices flowing helps kids get back in to their schoolwork more easily when it is time to begin again.

Remember the saying, “If Momma ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy”? This Momma is happy seeing her kids progress yet still having time for pure pleasure. Here’s wishing you and yours and me and mine a fun & fruitful summer where we are all happy!

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