

## School Is Out - Keeping the Kids Busy

It's the end of June, school is out and the kids are ecstatic. You may be a bit overwhelmed not knowing how you are going to entertain your children for the entire summer. They are used to being in school for the majority of their days and now they are free and clear to do as they please and it is up to you that they stay busy. Or is it?

Yes, children need activities to learn and have fun but it is also just important for them to have some free play time too. So while you are planning all of the activities and outings for them to participate in remember that they need some free play time too. Depending on the age of your children and their level of independence the free play time may take different forms. For younger children independent time will have to be supervised but for older children it can be a nice break for both of you to let them play alone in their room or outside in the yard.

Let your kids have a say in what goes on too. Have a couple of options ready; let them help plan how you will spend the day. Letting your kids plan what goes on in the day is a sure way to get their buy-in and participation. Just be sure that if there isn't any wiggle room in what you have planned for the day you make it clear from the beginning. When there are choices (limit them to two to three) ask and when there isn't a choice simply tell them what is planned for the day.

A good balance between planned activities and free play or independent time will make for a fun-filled summer for the kids and for you too.