# Here are some ideas to keep kids busy, happy

Ah, those long summer days ... stretching out on a lounge chair at the beach, sipping a cool drink, inxily sonking up the sun as you read a book, nop, and chat with other sun wornhippers. Oh sorry, that's the article I'm writing for adults who don't have children.

All kidding saids ...

writing for adults who don't have children.

All hidding aside, summer is a time to unwind and change gears. The daily atructure and routine of school is over. The sun is shining. No more worries about being on time for school, getting the homework done, studying for tests and keeping track of dealdines. Now our focus shifts to answering the big question, "What do I do with the kids?" What do I do with the kids?" The "experts" tell us that summer is a time for kids to grow and be exposed to new experiences. They say that summer is a time to reinforce the three Ricrading, writing, and arithmetic). They say to plan the summer as that your children are revitalized and ready to start the next school year. But just how are we supposed to do these things? They don't say!

Ideas are what we need. Well, here are some ideas to help make your summer with the children both nurturing and enjoyable.

#### Some ideas

Some ideas.

A helpful way to start planning out a summer routine is to consider your children's interests. Kids will be much more receptive to learning new skills if you include them in the decision making. Look at class fliers with your children. When children have a voice in the decision-making process it gives them a vested interest in following through.

wasted interest in following through.

Ask your kids, "What would be fun to do that you don't know how to do now?" There are a multitude of activities available in the summer from a wide variety of sources, including your public schools and community colleges. Just a few of the many options open to you are: swim lessons, nature walks, crafts, camps, skating, astronomy, tennis, golf, baseball, along with other sports and interests. Keep in mind that the focus should be on fun. We'll keep the fact that they're learning something of a secret between you and me. secret between you and me.

secret between you and me. Weekends are a great time to have regular family outings. Consider planning picnics at the park or metro beaches. Plan outings to places like the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Henry Ford Museum, Greenfield Village, the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum, the Detroit Zoo. Cranbrook and

Museum, Greenfield Village, the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum, the Detroit Zoo, Cranbrook and the Marquee Theater.

If your children love crafts, consider a trip to The Scrap Box in Ann Arbor. Compare notes with other parents to discover and share a wide variety of enjoyable outings. Exposing your children to new experiences can have a big impact on their personal growth.

Bo sure to check out the Summer 2000 Fun series each Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. in downtown Farmington. A series of free children's events from puppe shows to yo-yos will be sponsored by Farmington Downtown Development Authority.

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#### Teaching independence

Remember, even a small new experience can be exciting and esteem-building to a child. Childens strive to be capable. One of the first sentences children say is 'I do it.' Being capable gives a child a sense of personal power. This is an essential part of being a successful person. If you are on vacation, let your child use the key card to unlock your botel room door. Let the child fill the ice bucket, and give the tip. Give your children an area in the garden to grow vegetables. They can be responsible for watering and weeding their own area.

When my son Alox was 7 years old, I pulled up to the bakery and asked him to go in and buy a banana cream pie to take over to grandma's house. At first be froze and asked, 'Can kids just go in and buy a pie?' With a little encouragement, in he went as I watched. He waited in line, ordered the pie, paid for it, and out he came with the pie and a big smile on his face. It turned out that a fully costumed clown was in line behind him and was also buying a banana cream pie! What a great experience. To this day, he tolks about how you was in line behind him and was also buying a banana cream pie! What a great experience. To this day, he tolks about how your child the money to pay for an ice cream or pay the pizza delivery guy. Indirectly this will help them in the next school year. Keep in mind that it takes courage to raise your hand in class when you don't understand something. It takes courage to volunteer to 'take a part in the school play. If summer is filled with positive courage-building activities, think of the impact it will have on the following school year. We want our children to get used to saying, 'I can do it.'

Helping your child retain what they learned during the school year. We want our children to get used to saying, 'I can do it.'

Helping your child retain what they learned during the school year and pressive and friends, Supervised in commercial and friends. Supervised to summer is a vital way to keep up reading skills. If your child is resistant to read

Cet more details by calling (248)
473-7283.

Taking regular trips to the library enhances your family's summer experiences. The library enhances your family's summer experiences. The library enhances your family's summer experiences. The library enhances to the library triple of the library triple of the library that reference their latest experience. Find a book book in the library that reference their latest experience. Find a book about horses, shearing sheep, growing crops, or whatever places their interest.

Teaching independence

Be sure to include simple unstructured time for playing in your own back yard on the swing set, in the sand box, or jumping rope with friends. These moments can become some of your children's fondest childhood memories.

Marilyn Suttle is a Farming-ton Youth Assistance Family education facilitator and an independent speaker on parenting and self-improvement issues. She has appeared on The Possible Parent cable television show and provides businesses with on-

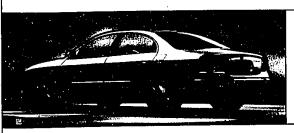
■ 'Helping your child retain what they learned during the school year can be rel-atively painless if you keep a positive and friendly attitude.

Marilyn Suttle -parent facilitator





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