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# Replace late summer blahs with 'aahs'

"I'm sick of summer — there's nothing to do, Mom."  
If your family has the summer blahs already, don't fret. There's plenty of activities for mom, dad and the kids around town, in the neighborhood and at home. Most ideas are low on cost and high on creativity.  
Begin at home where there is an emporium of fun and educational projects. Your own backyard is the perfect nature center for science fun from identifying weeds to planting a garden. Vegetable printing, mosaics and tin foil sculptures can be done in the kitchen. Look in the garage or attic for supplies for puppets, woodworking and collages.

craft supplies: crayons, paper, glue, paint and scissors. But the main ingredient is imagination.  
Your neighborhood also is the place to picnic, swing at the school playground and attend library programs.  
Don't forget downtown Detroit: the Science Center, museums, art, trolley rides, history and cultural events.  
Here's a list of ideas that will occupy mom, dad and the kids for the rest of the season. There's still time to have the best summer yet.  
Some family vacation projects can be accomplished without ever leaving home:  
**COLLECTIONS:** rocks, insects, weeds, flowers, stamps, pine cones, etc.  
**GARDENING:** Plan a garden with

your child, sharing more than just the pretty blooms. Teach little ones to plant seeds, recognize weeds and use a hoe. Plant a window box with fall flowers.  
**PAPER FLOWERS:** They require less watering than the ones in the last suggestion. Take eight pieces of tissue paper and fold like a fan. Tape the middle and then curve the ends cutting with scissors. Gently spread the layers apart.  
**VEGETABLE PRINTING:** Take potatoes or other vegetables and cut them. Etch out a design with a knife and dip in paint. Press down on a piece of paper with an up-and-down motion.  
**RUBBINGS:** Really, a variation of vegetable printing. Place a sheet of paper over bricks, coins, leaves, tree bark or even the sidewalks in the backyard and rub the paper with the side of a dark crayon.  
**PUPPETRY:** Decorate small paper bags. With old gloves stuff the tip and tie it with a string. Sew on yarn for hair, sequins and felt for faces and get ready to introduce 10 finger puppets.  
**MODEL NEIGHBORHOOD:** Using different sizes of empty milk and egg cartons, either make a replica of your home town or come up with a wildly innovative city of the future.  
**CAMP OUT:** Become acquainted with your own real-life neighborhood. Camp out at night with the kids. Remember reading stories by flashlight? If you want to drag out the full camping regalia, fine, but on a hot August night, sleeping bags would probably be just right.  
**BIRD FEEDER:** If do-it-yourself kits aren't your forte and you don't want to buy an elaborate feeder, string some Cheerios on a hanger, or dip a pine cone in peanut butter and roll in bird seed. Hang on a tree.  
**MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS:** Oatmeal containers and coffee cans can be transformed into drums. Tumblers filled with different amounts of water can be gently tapped to produce different sounds. Resurrect an old standby from granddad's day — fold a tissue paper over the teeth of a comb and use it like a harmonica to make music.  
**WATER ACTIVITIES:** Children seem to have a natural attraction to water. Enjoy an old-fashioned run through the sprinkler on a hot afternoon. Let loose with some water-filled



Discovering farm life can be an exciting experience to Upland Hills Farms is a chance to let a bored child get someone else's goat for a change.

balloons. Or use their fascination with water to get some help washing the car.  
**GIFTS:** Make some holiday cards, placecards or wrapping paper. Pass on your skill in a craft, such as woodworking or crochet to your child and use the project to make a gift.  
**COLLAGE:** Paste newspaper clippings, magazine pictures or objects such as pieces of material, lace or even twigs to cardboard. Try assembling on a theme, such as favorite sports, hobbies or a special event.  
**PIÑATA:** It doesn't have to be someone's birthday or Christmas to enjoy a piñata. Blow up a balloon and cover the outside with paper mache (strips of newspaper or paper toweling covered with paste) leaving a small hole. Let it dry for a day or two. Pop the balloon

and fill the piñata with candy and small gifts. Decorate the outside.

Although the suburbs are usually thought of as bedroom communities, don't be fooled, there's still life in the old neighborhood. Here's some suggestions for taking advantage of it:  
**LIBRARY:** There are more ways to have fun than sitting around the television playing home video games. Try reading. Visit the library and investigate the programs offered at the one nearest you:  
• Birmingham Public Library: 351 Martin; 647-1700.  
• Bloomfield Township Library, 1099 Lone Pine; 642-5800.  
• West Bloomfield Township Main Library, 5030 Orchard Lake Road 682-2120.  
• West Bloomfield Township West-

ces Branch Library, 7321 S. Commerce Road; 353-4022.  
• Avon Township Public Library, 210 W. University, Rochester; 651-1426.  
• Troy Public Library Main Branch, Children's Services, 510 W. Big Beaver; 324-5541.  
**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION:** Call for information about community events and shows:  
• Birmingham Department of Parks and Recreation Information; 645-0731.  
• West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation; 334-5669 / Bloomer Recreation Center; 353-9456  
• Troy Parks and Recreation Hot Line Program Status; 689-9756.  
**EXERCISE:** Even Richard Simmons was flabby, once. Use local bike paths,

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Choosing a book can be just the thing to chase away boredom on a late August afternoon.

## 'Sometimes children just want a friend'

# Imagination adds a little sparkle to those waning days of summer



By Carla Jean Schwartz  
special writer

"I'm praying for September," confided Marie Blum of West Bloomfield, the mother of two children.

September heralds the start of another school year and an end to coping with bored children.

Blum isn't alone in praying for relief. By the middle of the summer, many moms, dads and kids are experiencing the summer blahs — boredom and irritability.

How do you cure the summer blahs on a hot, boring August day?

SHELLY MOSS, program director of Bloomfield Nursery School and Day Camp has many fun and educational ideas to entertain the family for the rest of the summer. While daily planning for 230 campers between the ages of 2½ and 9, Shelly learned that a balanced program of physical and restful activities works best.

"I plan an organized activity and a free choice allowing campers to have an input," Moss said.

She advised parents to learn their children's favorite activities.

"Sometimes children just want a friend," Moss said.

Many low-cost activities are at home — in the kitchen, back yard or garage.

"Parents overlook the obvious," Moss said. "In the kitchen, parents can put salt on a cookie tray and children can etch a design with their finger."

Vegetable printing, mosaics and tin foil sculptures can be prepared in the kitchen. In the back yard, parents can help children collect and paint rocks, identify weeds and flowers or plant a garden.

Look in the garage or attic for supplies for puppets, woodworking and collages. Children also can entertain themselves with old blankets, making tents, forts and camping outside.

THE CRAFTS cabin at Bloomfield looks like a delightfully messy base-

"Parents overlook the obvious. In the kitchen, parents can put salt on a cookie tray and children can etch a design with their finger."

— Shelly Moss

ment. It is scattered with ordinary craft supplies: crayons, paints, paper, glue, scissors, scraps of material, empty shoe boxes and paper bags. But these ordinary supplies turn into sock puppets, colorful paper plates, watercolor paintings and other special projects which can be displayed on the wall.

In the middle of this collection of odds and ends, 4-year-old Aaron Mann was busy making an orange hat. As he glued his last pieces of styrofoam on his hat, he said, "I just love swimming."

But he made his favorite project last week when the camp celebrated "Say Yes to Michigan." "A brown car . . . I think it's a Buick," Aaron said very seriously.

"Each week, the camp picks a different theme which is something parents can do," Moss said.

Some campers created a copy of the Renaissance Center out of tissue-paper rolls for the Michigan theme.

But children and their parents don't have to be part of a class to enjoy such creative projects in the summer. A little imagination, a dab of glue and a heaping of cooperation can provide a family with entertainment. Most projects mentioned require some guidance from Mom or Dad.

There's no need to pray for September, because there's still time to make the remainder of vacation time exciting.

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