



Enriching the Parent

Information & Support
for Families of Children with Special Needs
Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, & Yancey counties

Summer Issue
2009

FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK OF THE HIGH COUNTRY

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Tips for Shifting from School Year to Summer Break by Kristin Stanberry

As the school year draws to a close, you and your family probably view summer break as a well-deserved reprieve. If your child has learning and/or attention problems, it's important to recognize that the shift from school year to summer break (however welcome) represents a transition phase and may pose special challenges for your child.



Regardless of the summer plans you've made, you may want to ease into summer in a way that addresses your needs as well as your child's. Here are some tips to consider:

Tips to Help Parents

1. **Review the summer plans you've made to date.** Where there are gaps, brainstorm ways to address them, such as parents rotating days off work to stay home with younger kids on unscheduled days.
2. **Post the family's summer schedule.** Mark activities (day camp, vacations, your teenager's work schedule, etc.) on a "family size" calendar posted in a central location. Be sure to note blocks of unscheduled time as well; that way, you can anticipate free time to use as you wish—even if it's just to enjoy a break in the action.
3. **Be prepared to be spontaneous.** Keep a running list of places and people to visit when time permits and the mood strikes. Summer-free from homework and tutors is a good time to stop by the science museum, bike trail, or concert-in-the-park you can't seem to get during the school year.

4. **If you and/or your child thrive on routine, build as much of it in to your summer schedule as possible.** Even so, your routine may change every week or so; find ways to prepare for this transition. This may be as simple as mentally rehearsing the new routine (including daily wake-up time and preparation) with your child before the week begins. Remember: Transitions can be hard for parents, too!
5. **Ask other people** (spouse, family members, and neighbors) for help shuttling kids to activities and supervising them on their "days off." Trade carpooling and kid-watching duties with other parents in your neighborhood.
6. **Don't succumb to summer stress!** There is bound to be some bedlam and boredom in any household during the summer. When stress strikes, try to shrug it off and find humor in the situation.

Tips to Help Kids with Learning and/or Attention Problems

1. **Revamp—but don't eliminate—your child's daily routine.** A daily routine gives most kids with learning or attention problems a sense of structure and security. While certain tasks (like doing homework) can be dropped during the summer, new ones (like packing for daily swim lessons) may be added. For fun, you might loosen up on certain chores during the summer, like designating every Friday as "Don't make the bed" day!
2. **Prepare your child for her scheduled activities.** If possible, visit the locations where she'll be during day camp or day care in advance. Have your child talk to counselors, caregivers, as well as other kids have enjoyed those same situations and settings.



Thank you to SkyLine SkyBest for providing the postage for the mailed-out copies of this newsletter

Calendar.

4. **Involve your child when preparing for family trips and activities.** Depending on her age, she can help you map out driving routes or make a list of the clothing and recreational gear the family will need.
5. **Encourage summertime learning.** Summer outings may present opportunities for your child to learn about history, geography, and nature. Look for “teachable moments” and encourage her to listen, read, take photographs, collect postcards, and keep a journal of her adventures. This type of learning can boost the self-esteem of a child who struggles in school.

About the Contributor

In her role as Writer/Editor for Schwab Learning, **Kristin Stanberry** provides information, insight, strategies, and support for parents whose children have LD and AD/HD. She combines a professional background developing consumer health and wellness publications with her personal experience of coaching family members with learning and behavior problems.

Fit Facts

FROM THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EXERCISE



The Top Ten Fitness Summer Activities for Kids

SUMMER IS HERE AND CHILDREN

need to stay active, healthy and busy during their break from school. Parents need to encourage their children to warm up properly and stretch before each activity and teach them never to play through any type of pain or make winning the reason for playing any sport. Let them choose the activity and keep the focus on having fun. To keep kids moving, the American Council on Exercise suggests ten, fun fitness summer activities.

1. **Soccer:** This highly active game involving both agility and teamwork has grown increasingly popular in the U.S. in recent years. To keep kids injury free, be sure they are geared up in appropriate protective equipment, such as shin guards. Soccer players should also wear shoes with cleats or ribbed soles to prevent slipping.
2. **Martial arts:** With a variety of forms to choose from, martial arts are a great way to get kids involved in a sport that involves strength, coordination and mental discipline. Proper training and equipment to prevent injury are a must.
3. **Bike riding:** Bicycle riding is a fun activity for the whole family. Experts suggest children ride on sidewalks and paths until they are at least 10 years old, show good riding skills and are able to follow the rules of the road. Helmets, of course, are a necessity for both children and adults.
4. **Swimming:** Nothing beats splashing around a pool with

friends, and swimming offers the benefits of a full-body workout for both young and old. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends swimming lessons for children ages 4 and up, although classes are available for babies and toddlers as well.

5. **Basketball:** Whether it's a round of HORSE, a game of one on one, or a full-court competition, basketball is ideal for developing hand/eye coordination and teamwork. Encourage children under the age of seven to use a smaller foam or rubber ball, and lower the height of the basket if possible.
6. **Obstacle courses:** Challenge kids to use a variety of different skills by setting up an obstacle course at the park using playground equipment or other items, such as jump ropes, balls and cones.
7. **Dancing:** Whether your kids like ballet or hip-hop, dancing encourages them to be creative and move their bodies freely. For video arcade fans, an innovative new game challenges opponents to follow a dance routine while watching the video. Kids can spend time learning new moves while also getting a great workout.
8. **Board sports:** Whether snowboarding in the winter, surfing in the summer, or skateboarding year-round, kids love to be on the board. Injury risk, however, is higher for these sports. For both snowboarding and skateboarding, kids should wear helmets to prevent head injuries, and surfers or boogie-boarders should always be accompanied by an adult.
9. **Jumping rope:** Jumping rope is still a favorite on most playgrounds. Whether alone or in a group, jumping rope challenges both coordination and stamina.
10. **Ice-skating/inline-skating:** Ice-skating, inline-skating and hockey can be both fun and safe as long as appropriate protective gear such as a helmet, wrist guards and kneepads are worn. Hockey players should wear a helmet with foam lining and a full-face mask, a mouth guard, pads for shoulders, knees, elbows and shins, as well as gloves.

Article courtesy of the American Council on Exercise.

Indoor Summer Activity: Treasure This

This clever treasure box, which is organized around the principle that anything goes, has ample room for plastic bags of beach sand, seed packets, subway tokens, maps, sea glass, photos, finger paintings, invitations or even a tiny book of best friends' autographs.

Start with a sturdy cardboard box (one with a lid), which your child can label with his name and the date. As he amasses odds and ends, he can tuck them inside or, if he prefers, glue some onto the outside of the box. To give the box a durable finish, brush on a coat of white glue thinned with water or cover with Con-Tact paper.



Recipe Corner:

Strawberry Yogurt Smoothies and Pops

For a nutritious and easy after-school snack, serve up a round of these fruity shakes. Customize your smoothies to suit your children's tastes (you can omit the banana, for example, and add blueberries in its place). You can then freeze the smoothie into Popsicles that are fun to make and to eat.

KIDS COOKING SKILLS: Use this recipe as an opportunity to teach your children how to slice and puree fruit and how to operate a blender safely. Then use the Strawberry Pops recipe as an opportunity to teach your child how to make molded frozen treats.

RECIPE INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 pint strawberries
- 1 banana
- 2 8-oz. containers nonfat strawberry yogurt
- 1 cup lowfat milk

1. Ask your child to wash the fresh strawberries, hull them, and pat them dry. Peel the banana and slice it in half or in quarters, then place all the fruit in an electric blender.

2. Spoon the yogurt into the blender, then pour in the milk. After sealing the lid, press the puree button and blend until smooth and thoroughly combined, about 1 to 2 minutes.

3. Pour the shake into four 8-ounce glasses. For a creative presentation, have your child garnish each drink with a fruit kebob (a strawberry and banana slice threaded on a bamboo skewer) and a colorful plastic straw. Makes 32 ounces, or four 8-ounce shakes.

4. **TIP:** An adult should always be present when children use a blender. Keep the blender away from water and make sure the lid is tightly shut before pressing the puree button.

5. To make Frozen Strawberry Pops, pour smoothie mixture into a Popsicle mold or into small paper cups, cover with foil then insert a craft stick.

6. Carefully pour the Strawberry Yogurt Smoothie mixture into a plastic Popsicle mold. Freeze for 4 to 6 hours. Dip the mold in warm water, then unmold the Popsicles. Makes 6 to 8 Popsicles.



Local Area Support Group Information:

• **Alleghany County:** First & Third Thursday of each month at 6:00 pm at The Family Resource Center, Sparta. For more information or to RSVP contact Norma at: 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122.

• **Ashe County:** Last Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm at Midway Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, 1670 Mount Jefferson Rd, West Jefferson. For more information or to RSVP contact Norma at: 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122. Meal provided with RSVP.

• **Mitchell & Yancey:** First Tuesday of each month at 6pm at the Spruce Pine United Methodist Church. For more information or to RSVP, contact Teresa Emory at 682-4772 or 1-866-448-5781. Meal and childcare provided with RSVP. A group in Burnsville will be starting soon. Contact Teresa Emory if you are interested.

• **Watauga County:** Second Friday of each month at 6:00 pm at Unitarian Fellowship "House" 381 E. King Street, Boone. (Beside the Playhouse) For more information or to RSVP contact Kaaren at: 828-262-6089 or 1-866-812-3122. Meal and childcare provided with RSVP.

• **Wilkes County:** Last Thursday of each month at 6:00 pm at "Our House" 203 E. Main Street, Wilkesboro. For more information or to RSVP contact Norma at: 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122. Snacks will be served.

Become a "FRIEND OF FSN-HC"

Help us grow and increase our community connections. It is simple! We are looking for individuals in each of our counties who would like to help "spread the word" about Parent to Parent FSN-HC. Our Friends of FSN-HC support our Advisory Board and staff by making a commitment to talk about the work of our program on a regular basis with their network of friends and co-workers. The Friends members will receive our newsletters and regular communication from staff so they will always have news to share. Call today to volunteer!

866-812-3122

Family Support Network-HC
2359 Highway 105
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Please support our program so that we can continue to serve families and the community. Any help you can give will be very appreciated. Please detach this form and send any donations to the address below. Donations are tax deductible.

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