

NEWSLETTER

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Make room in your children's summer for DO-NOTHING TIME.

Sure it's important to keep them busy enough to avoid those two dread summer problems: boredom and being-bad.

But our world is in such turmoil that we all need some down time. Plus during the school year the pace of most households is too hectic.

But summer gives us breathing room. We can slow down the pace.

Let your kids sleep a bit later if they want to. Sign up for only one or two activities at the neighborhood center instead of a whole bunch. The piano teacher demands an hour of practice during the school year? Let your child skip some days or cut practice time by 15 minutes.

What can your children do with the extra time? Absolutely nothing if they want to. Or they can read, daydream, play by themselves or with friends.

My fondest memories of summer are sitting on the swing my father built in the old apple tree lazily moving back and forth without pumping and fantasizing about my future life. I kept a diary, I wrote stories. My friends and I wrote a play we put on. My daughter dressed her obliging cat in doll clothes and paraded her down the street in the doll buggy.

What can your family do with this extra time? Hang out together. Share do-nothing time by lying on the grass together and watching the clouds or stars. Tell your kids about when you were little and what summers were like for you then. Sing songs. Make up silly songs or poems.

Play at relaxing together. Do deep breathing or muscle-tense-and-relax exercises. Show your children how to give a neck or shoulder rub and have them reciprocate.

And finally, remember there is no TV in do-nothing time.