

## Tips for Balancing the Family Summer



It is Summertime again! – Children and teens cannot wait for the last bell to ring. They have anticipated summer for the last 9 long months. Parents have been agonizing over their busy schedule trying to balance home, work, and school. While children are in school they require constant assistance with most activities and the intensity varies from child to child. But whatever the situation, the balancing act is hectic and fast pace.

Parents are anxiously waiting for the break so that they can relax their schedule. They are looking forward to not struggling with the early morning hustle & bustle of preparing children for the day while at the same time attending to their own schedule of work and responsibilities at home.

### Here are some tips to help you balance your summer:

Sometimes the expectations of summer for both parents and children cause mixed emotions and conflicts. This can lead to family discord and a summer of struggling disappointment. Let this summer be a time of pleasure for the entire family. You can achieve these goals by being realistic, and most importantly, Plan, Plan, Plan! Schedule a family meeting to discuss activities. Make sure that you listen to what the children really want and balance this with what they need. You will get more progress when you include the children in the process. Cooperation is the goal.

Make sure you make a clear list of what you want the children to do in their daily schedule. Children will not volunteer for chores. You may want to reward their extra chores with activities. Make sure that the rewards are small and frequent. Rewards always work better than punishment.

Schedule weekly dinner times when everyone is together. This is important for quality time and to

discuss what is working and what is not. It also keeps you in touch with what your children are doing in a hectic schedule. Accountability is your friend. When people know that you are paying attention they are more likely to participate and take responsibility.

Make sure that you schedule fun activities weekly. It does not have to be expensive. Having family outings with other families at the park is adequate as long as they are planned. Short trips to free activities are always listed in the local newspapers or the Internet. Take the time to look them up.

Make sure to make a point to spend special one-on-one time with each child once a week. Children learn how much they are valued and loved when their parents give them what counts most: Their time.

The best way to help your children is to love each other. Couples should schedule a weekly date night with their spouse. **NO CHILDREN ALLOWED.** Reserve some time and do something fun. Nurture the feelings and friendship that first ignited your love for one another.



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