

For all styles of children or teenagers:
Creative Ways to Use Technology for Family Life



*Challenge them to come up with new adventures for family outings this summer. Be specific and firm with your parameters (cost, distance, etc.) and then let them use their imaginations.

*Encourage them to design ways to earn or save money during the summer, especially those kids who are too young to get a formal job. Again, be specific and firm with your parameters, but challenge them to think about ways to make money and cut costs. (For example, give them a percentage of each discount they find that you actually use.)

*Offer incentives for cooperation during family gatherings and events. For example, if they go along without complaining for the family event, they can host their own summer party or outing for a few of their friends.

**Let's discover and appreciate
*The Way They Learn!***

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Summer Survival



"I'm bored—there's nothing to do!"
This is dumb—why did we come here?"
"Mom! She hit me!"
"Make him stop looking at me!"

It's summer! School's out! You get to spend more time with your children! Let's admit it—sometimes spending more time as a family sparks conflict and strife along with the desired togetherness. If you hear some of the above phrases spoken by your children, we've got some ideas to help you survive and even celebrate the summer!



All of the following suggestions will make a lot more sense if you have a copy of the books *The Way They Learn* and *Every Child Can Succeed* by Cynthia Ulrich Tobias. If you don't already have a copy, you can order on-line at CynthiaTobias.com

For the child who seems to be constantly talking or making noise:



For many auditory learners, hearing themselves say the words helps them understand and remember. Their best problem-solving may be the result of talking through the whole process. If you get tired of listening to a constant stream of chatter, try using a code word. Let them know you

will give your undivided attention the moment they say that code word. In the meantime, you can practice tuning out the sounds that are merely a part of their thinking process. Remember, even the noise that seems utterly unnecessary to you may be helping your child think and learn.

For the day-dreamer who just doesn't seem to listen:

Challenge them to find brochures or other media that describe some good possibilities for summer outings. What they can see, they can understand and get excited about. Let them be in charge of a weekly family movie night. Challenge them to find creative ways to preview and decide which movie everyone will watch. Don't press them too much to talk to you if they're not comfortable. Try putting a white board or bulletin board up where the whole family will see it. Encourage your visual learner to leave notes or post interesting cartoons or articles they find. This can actually be a form of *visual* discussion.



For the highly active, restless kid who won't sit still:

If you have a child with energy to burn, there is cause to celebrate! As your child gets older, the ability to think and work on the move can be a real plus. But in the meantime, you can't let it drive you crazy. Instead of simply trying to force your active child to be still, try to *direct* the energy. Keep them moving—running errands, walking dogs, making occasional meals a “progressive” meal by eating each course in a different location. With older children, when you take them to the store with you, give them a clipboard and checklist of items to be found in the store. Have them help you with the location of each item. Maybe even have a “mystery item” listed only by description and price. If they find it, they win a small prize or an extra privilege.



For the child who needs a plan, pays attention to detail and follows a predictable schedule

What These Analytic Learners Need:

Organization

Lots of time to work through a project
Appreciation for their ideas and advice
A beginning, middle, and end

*Put them in charge of the calendar. Make and post an oversized calendar of the summer months and post it on the kitchen wall. Fill in all the events and activities you have planned, and be sure to designate certain dates as unplanned, spontaneous fun days.

*For the major trips or summer events, let these kids design a checklist for items that will be needed. Encourage them to talk to each family member about what he or she thinks she will need, and compile individual as well as group checklists to be completed before the trip.



*Ask them to design at least one contingency plan for each major summer event. For example, what will happen if it rains and we can't do the outdoor picnic for the family reunion?

For the child who seems distracted, often pays attention to what's happening to other people or is more interested in the big picture

What These Global Learners Need:

A personal reason for doing almost anything
Frequent praise and reassurance of worth
An opportunity to work with someone else to use creativity and imagination

*Let them be the “social chairperson.” Commission them to find out what would make each family member happy. Armed with the calendar and checklists made by their more analytic siblings, let them interview family members, and add a personal touch to each person's checklist.



*Let them plan for the times when having friends over along with the family would be appropriate. Help them distinguish between family times and party times, and give them a lot of input into the party times.

*Let them write in a few days over the summer that are “do-nothing days.” These are days when they can actually do absolutely nothing if they feel like it, totally guilt-free!

