

Parent Talk

JULY 2025

Summer Schedules

Summer vacation can be a fun and relaxing way to spend time with your kids. However, kids who have a mental health condition may struggle with the extended time away from school and return in September feeling unprepared and lost without some kind of routine and structure. Below, we provide some tips on establishing a summer routine so that kids can feel ready when school starts again.

Establish a Routine Early

To be the most effective, a summer schedule should be started as early as possible. Throughout the year, kids will have gotten used to waking up a certain time and progressing through their school days in the same way. To build this same consistency, make sure you set a routine up in advance and stick to it for most of the summer. Things like making sure you kid is still waking up and going to bed at consistent times, eating meals at the same times, or doing chores at the same times are great places to start.

Make It Fun

Even with a schedule, summer vacation is still meant to be fun! While your schedule is important, it's equally important to not present it as if it's a punishment for your kid. The emphasis should just be on building a sense of consistency each day in small ways, rather than forcing your kid to do something they may not consider fun. You can sprinkle in a routine to normal, fun summer activities like going to the beach, taking nature walks, visiting family, and more.

Try Structured Activities

Some kids may need some additional support outside of just a daily routine. Try thinking about activities that are highly structured and come with a clear set of rules and expectations. For example, taking your kid to a theme park will remind them of things they may have learned in school such as needing to take turns for things, being patient, and getting along with others.

Encourage Socializing

An effective way of building structure over the summer is to encourage socialization with friends from school. Making plans with classmates will help your kid practice some of the behaviors they may have learned at school or while in therapy. Adding in playdates to your larger summer schedule not only helps develop a routine but also serves as an important way to keep the emphasis on fun for your child.

Need more help?

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CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE THERAPY →

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CAMP BAKER →

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Featured Resources

An Introduction to Parent-Child Interaction Therapy

In this seminar, we will discuss the uses for Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, the research behind the approach, and some basic skills.

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Back to School: Communicating with Teachers about Mental Health Concerns

A new school year means a new team of teachers and school professionals to partner with you in supporting your child. For caregivers with children experiencing mental health issues, communicating with the school team can be useful for ensuring everyone is on the same page.

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Back to School: Preparing for A Successful Start to the Year for You and Your Kids

Kids must go back to school every year once summer wraps, so why can it feel so hard for the whole family each time it comes around? Even though most of the year is taken up by school, the transition back can often feel challenging for kids and parents for a variety of reasons.

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Vacation Mode: Balancing Fun and Wellness in the Warmer Months

The sun has come out, school is wrapping up, and vacation plans are on the horizon! Living seems to be getting easier as our schedules open up with a bit more freedom and flexible time. We often feel a natural improvement in our mood, motivation, and general sense of well-being as the weather gets warmer and summer approaches, but for kids, summer can introduce a unique set of challenges that can impact their mental health.

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