



SCHOOL'S OUT



One of the biggest problems for working parents is what to do with their children once school is out for the summer. This can be a very stressful and challenging time as parents not only want to have safe child care for their children, but they also need to manage the extra cost. Unfortunately, for many parents there is no option other than having their children stay at home during the summer months. It is estimated that the average child aged 6-12 spends between 4 to 12 hours a day at home alone during the summer months. While there is no scenario that fits every working family, following are some ways families have addressed this issue:

- Find other families in the same situation and make arrangements with them to cover as many days of the week as possible alternating days off.
- Work with your spouse to rotate vacation schedules so one of you or the other can be at home as much as your work schedules allow.
- Utilize community programs such as park and recreation programs that your children can attend to keep them active.
- Locally the United Way helps lower income families with programs through the “*Connecting Kids*” program which offers free and reduced vouchers for activities such as golf, bowling, swimming, tennis, etc.
- Consider using older neighbor kids to help supervise your children. Some high school and college aged students may be able to count this toward community service hours for their classes.
- Finally, on the days you do not work, have activities scheduled that the children will look forward to. Planning trips to the lake, the park, a community concert, or even a marathon movie night give your children something to look forward to.

Depending on your work situation you may find that if you and your spouse or significant other take just a few vacation days each summer, this can ease the child care burden. Enlisting the help of two or three other families to help you this can take a huge chunk out of the summer without using all of your vacation time.

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