



Skip Forsyth

As a child I relished summer. Long days, lots of play. Summer light, starlit night. As Sarah Dessen said, "In the summer, the days were long, stretching into each other. Out of school, everything was on pause and yet happening at the same time, this collection of weeks when anything was possible."

Little deterred me from summer fun. The sun wasn't too hot. The dust wasn't too dry. The flies weren't too annoying. And there was always one more mosquito to swat. Summer still has a special place in my heart – I'd rather be outdoors walking a trail or tending my garden than plunking on a keyboard or watching Netflix. I sometimes lament with Shakespeare, "Summer's lease hath all too short a date."

As a child I wasn't a voracious reader. My mother was. She would read two or three books a week – thick books without pictures. She encouraged me to keep reading during the summer. She would help me find books at the library that I would enjoy, usually something about sports or the outdoors, and my books definitely had pictures or illustrations.

My father was no master fixer-upper, but summer was the time for home improvements. He always had a list of honey-do's, and I was his number one gopher. I was also his chief mathematician. We'd get out the tape measure and I'd write down the measurements. He'd help me, but I had to figure out how much paint we needed or how many pieces of siding or how much fertilizer to buy.

My parents never warned me about a summer slump, they just kept on teaching me. When we'd go on a short drive to visit my grandparents, we'd review the state capitals, and they'd show me how to read a map and determine distance. When we filled the car with gas my dad always made me calculate the average miles per gallon. My dad would help me understand the sports pages – baseball is full of numbers, percentages, and statistics.

COVID19 has greatly disrupted teaching and student learning. Therefore, parents and families need to value the summer as an opportunity to support learning. Recipes are full of measurements and a good way to learn fractions. Grocery shopping can be an opportunity for rounding and estimating. When watching a movie as a family, talk about how the movie might have had another ending and why. Look at the headlines and illustrations in a newspaper or magazine and talk about what that means and how that issue effects your family. Summer is not recess from learning; it's a time for hands-on learning facilitated by parents and families who are a child's first teacher.

Treasure your summer, and as you continue to train your kids they will be richly rewarded.

Dear Summer



Dear Summer, you're always my favorite.

I really do like you a lot.

*You come every year,
And I'm glad when you're here.
I don't even mind that you're hot.*

*Dear Summer, whenever you visit,
I love to go outside to play.*

*I get to wear shorts
And play summertime sports,
Or sometimes do nothing all day.*

*I put on my goggles and swimsuit,
And head for the beach or the park.*

*I go for a hike
Or I ride on my bike,
And stay awake long after dark.*

Dear Summer, I'm glad you could join us.

Without you, it won't be the same.

*I promise I know
That you do have to go,
But, still, it seems sort of a shame.*

I'm sure that I'm going to miss you.

*The school year is finally here.
I had so much fun
Playing out in the sun.
I guess that I'll see you next year.*

Author Unknown

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Manage Anxiety & Stress

Stress and Coping

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in.

Taking care of yourself, your friends, and your family can help you cope with stress. Helping others cope with their stress can also make your community stronger.

Things you can do to support yourself

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.

For parents

Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.

Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch for include:

- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (for example, toileting accidents or bedwetting)
- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Irritability and “acting out” behaviors in teens
- Poor school performance or avoiding school
- Difficulty with attention and concentration
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past
- Unexplained headaches or body pain
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs



There are many things you can do to support your child

- Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.
- Reassure your child or teen that they are safe. Let them know it is okay if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- Limit your family's exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- Try to keep up with regular routines. If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.

Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members.

Children react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with a disaster calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.

Additional Resources

[National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)

[The Emotional Impact of Disasters on Children and Families](#)

[National Institute of Mental Health: Coping with Traumatic Events](#)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

Summer Meals Program Helps Children Stay Active, Healthy

The Summer Meals Program is back for 2020 with healthy meals for children during the summer break. After school lunchrooms close for summer, children 18 years old and younger enjoy good nutrition at meal sites operated by non-profits, libraries, schools and other community organizations across the Lone Star State. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) administers the federally funded program in Texas and the meals are served at no cost to the child. Participation does not require any registration or application.

Families are encouraged to use these three tools from June 1-August 30 to find a meal site:

- ✓ Dial 211 to speak to a live operator
- ✓ Visit www.SummerFood.org for an interactive site locator map
- ✓ Text FOODTX to 877-877

Also, many sites offer enriching activities and serve various combinations of meals including breakfast, lunch, snacks and even supper (dates and times may vary).

Last summer, TDA collaborated with 652 organizations operating 5,711 meal sites. More than 15.6 million meals were served to Texas children in need and Summer Meals Program partners stand ready to serve healthy meals again in 2020. Encouraging families to access these meals supports TDA partners' efforts while helping children get the nutrition they need for an active and healthy summer. For more information and to access resources that can be used to increase awareness of summer meals, please visit SummerFood.org.

<http://www.squaremeals.org/Programs/SummerFeedingPrograms.aspx>



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

Walter Brewer, Writer/Editor, Food and Nutrition,
Texas Department of Agriculture



RESOURCES FOR SUMMER LEARNING

Here are a few free online resources you might access to keep your child academically engaged during the summer.

readwritethink—engage your child in literacy learning using tablet devices. Your child can download a mobile app and use it anywhere, anytime. No Internet connection is required once the apps are downloaded.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/mobile-apps/>

teAchnology—This app features 46,000 - lesson plans, 10,200 free printable worksheets, rubrics, teaching tips, worksheet makers, web quests, math worksheets, and thousands of other great teacher resources.

<https://www.teach-nology.com/>

TLSBOOKS.COM—Tlsbooks.com offers a variety of free printable worksheets to use at home.

In order to view and print worksheets from this site you will need Adobe Reader version 6 or later. You may download the latest version of the free [Adobe Reader](#) here.

<http://www.tlsbooks.com/>

IXL—offers personalized skill recommendations based on what each student has been practicing, so they can grow from where they are.

<https://www.ixl.com/recommendations/>

Waco, TX

Waco has become one of the most popular destinations in Texas and offers enough to keep visitors busy for days! Mountaintops or hike in Cameron Park, shop downtown where you'll find Magnolia Market, antique stores, and wonderful local finds. Stroll through our cultural and historic district that extends from Austin Avenue through Elm Avenue, across the mighty Brans River. Walk across the historic Suspension Bridge, built in 1870, where the chopping blocks of cords followed the Chisholm and Shawnee Trails up north. Come for a weekend getaway, a convention, tour, or simply business, and explore all that Waco has to offer.

Points of Interest

Magnolia Market at the Silos
Magnolia Table
Cameron Park Zoo
Homestead Craft Villages
Texas Ranger Hall of Fame
Baylor University

Online Registration

www.StatewideParents.com

Conference includes multiple meals!

Conference Registration Brochure will be available in mid-May.



See you in Waco!

Mark Your Calendar
December 10-12
Statewide Parental Involvement Conference

Waco Convention Center
100 Washington Ave. | Waco, TX 76701

Host Hotels

To book a room go to www.StatewideParents.com

Waco Hilton
113 S. University Parks Dr. 254-754-8484
Use group code **SDPI**

Countryard by Marriott
191 S. Washington Ave. 254-752-9886
Use group code **ADI/08228**

10 Tips for Avoiding the Academic Summer Slide

As summer vacation approaches, kids are gearing up for the season with little regard for the academics they will leave behind when the backpacks are hung up for the year. On the other hand, parents and teachers often worry about the loss of important skills throughout the summer months, which must be retaught once school rings in again. For parents' intent on avoiding the academic summer slide, there are a number of ways to keep kids' brains in the game, even as they are looking forward to their break from the classroom.

Keep Them Reading

Studies have shown that kids can lose up to 25 percent of their reading skills over the summer months, which can have a significant impact on their ability to get back into the school swing in the fall. Scholastic Books cites research that shows reading just six books over the summer months can go far in keeping students on track when they return to the classroom. One way to ensure your kids keep reading all summer long is to schedule regular trips to the library. Many have summer reading programs that encourage participants to read a certain number of books before the summer season is over.

Additional ideas to incorporate reading into the regular summer routine:

- ✓ Find something to read every day. Encourage kids to read the comics in the newspaper every morning, or online resources while playing on the computer.
- ✓ Find things your kids want to read. Ask the librarian at your local library for recommendations based on your child's age, reading level or interests. Peruse book lists at the Scholastic website or from your child's school. Kids who like what they are reading are sure to read more.
- ✓ Read out loud. Ask your child to read a paragraph from his current book to you at night or read to him before bed. Children of all ages – including teens – can benefit from hearing books read aloud to them, especially children who are currently struggling with their own reading skills.

Hang on to Math Facts

Math is another subject that tends to get lost in the summer shuffle. The Texas Instruments website cites research from the National Association for Summer Learning, which shows that students lose approximately two months of math skills in the summer if they don't participate in some sort of educational activities over their break. Research also shows that losses in math tend to be even higher than those in reading, forcing math teachers to spend a significant amount of time at the beginning of the year on review, rather than new subjects.

Fortunately, there are many options for students who want to retain their math skills over the summer months. Texas Instruments is a great resource which offer a number of ways for students to hone their math skills while playing fun games and participating in activities. The following tips can incorporate math learning into summer activities:

- ✓ Look for summer camps that utilize skills learned in math, such as robotics or space camps.
- ✓ Find ways to add math to daily activities, such as calculating the volume of water in the city pool.
- ✓ Cook with your children and have them practice measurements.
- ✓ Play sports and have them calculate distance.
- ✓ Help student practice fractions by cutting an apple up in 1/2, then 1/4, and then 1/8, etc.
- ✓ Let teens get in on the trip-planning action by setting a budget, calculating fuel needs or figuring the distance between destinations.
- ✓ While driving around town practice the times tables.

"Summer learning should not be separate from summer fun," Holly Larrison, a math subject matter specialist from Texas Instruments. "Activities can be enjoyable while still adding educational value to a teenager's summer."

Research places you will be visiting over the summer.

From discovering silly laws to exploring the geography and culture of the area, this activity encourages students to read and learn while getting them excited about upcoming trips.

Set aside time to work on academic skills every day.

Give your family one-half hour every day to read, work math problems or indulge in fun activities like brain teasers or crossword puzzles. If the whole family gets involved, the children may not mind the thinking part of the activity quite as much. Brain teaser books can often be found at the dollar store, resale shops, or at the library and can serve as a fun activity for the whole family.

Collect books or games for children to enjoy in the car.

Instead of playing on electronic devices, entice kids on road trips with comic books and games specifically designed for the road. Use time in the car to talk with your kids as well, or play old-fashioned games like the license plate game as a family.

Give them alternative activities that inspire the imagination, and your children's minds are sure to grow throughout summer vacation time!

Article by Grace Chen, Public School Review



CYBERBULLYING

How You Can Take Control

CYBERBULLYING is the use of electronic communication to harass, threaten, or embarrass others.



Who are the cyberbullies?

Cyberbullies are often people who lack the courage or strength to confront someone face to face. While bullies who attack others physically or verbally are looking for power and control, cyberbullies are often motivated by anger or revenge.

Sometimes cyberbullying is unintentional. Classmates start out playing around, or think they're just teasing. They don't realize that the things they say are hurtful and could cause serious problems.

Tips to prevent cyberbullying

- ✓ Be polite when posting on social media. Don't send a message to someone else when you're upset or angry.
- ✓ Post only what you are comfortable with the world seeing forever.
- ✓ Delete anything you receive that's hurtful to another. Don't respond to it. Don't forward it.
- ✓ Photos can be altered and posted in ways you might not like. If you do post a photo use one that your parent(s) would approve of.

Remember, there is no such thing as privacy online!

CYBERBULLY SURVEY

Have you ever done the following?

YES NO

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Sent a mean, insulting, or threatening message. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Spread gossip, rumors, or lies about another student online. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Excluded others from an online group in order to hurt them. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Pretended to be someone else in order to get that person in trouble. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Sent or posted a photo or information that would be embarrassing to another. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Shared someone's secret online. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

All of the above are examples of cyberbullying. If you have done any of these, think about how your actions may have affected others.

It's Time to Host a "YES" Day.

Here's How to Do It.

No matter what kind of parent you are, we're betting you find yourself saying the word "no" more often than you ever thought you would. Give that word, and yourself, a break by surprising the kids with a Yes Day.

What is a Yes Day? It's a day where your answer to your kids will always be, "yes." Ice cream for breakfast? Yes. Wearing pajamas all day? Yep. Movie marathon? You got it. Before you decide this is a miserable idea, hear us out. With a few simple ground rules and a little prep, this day will become one that everyone in the family loves.

Sounds like a kid's dream, right? But guess what? Saying yes to your kids teaches you something, too. Parents who indulge in a Yes Day actually report a feeling of closeness and connectedness with their kids. And guess what that results in? Kids actually listening better. One mom discovered just how many times she automatically said no, to herself and her kid, when she didn't really need to.

Lay out the boundaries. The first thing to remind kids is that a Yes Day is one day, and the requests cannot be something that causes harm to themselves or anyone else. Second, you also get to ask the kids to do things; but your ground rules are that you shouldn't ask them to do additional "boring" stuff beyond their normal chores, homework, etc.

Ease into Yes Day by trying a Yes Morning or Yes Afternoon. Pick your day in advance to encourage kids to plan ahead. "Mom, can we have a jump rope competition?" Save it for Yes Day? Besides, the anticipation is half the fun.

The real golden rule? Don't do it on a weekday, school day, workday.

Cool Ideas for Your Yes Day

~ Consider a family game night, and get a new board game or two to have on hand.

~ Head to a local park where you swing with them on the swings, or play that endless game of tag.

~ Eat dessert before dinner.

~ Keep a bunch of crafting supplies on hand and be ready to create.

~ Do crazy, messy science experiments.

~ Build an epic fort.

Remember, the key is for the kids to see you enjoying yourself doing the things that they value.

Hearing no all the time can be a little defeating, for both you and them. Giving them authority for one day actually teaches them how to use it. Not only that, but also giving yourself permission to be relaxed and carefree one day a year prompts you to live in the moment, much like kids do everyday, and enjoy every minute. You're making memories that will last a lifetime for both you and the kids, full of giggles and most importantly, time spent together. That's definitely a win/win.

Taken in part from an article by Jesseca Stenson:
<https://redtri.com/yes-day/>

3 Skills That Good Parents Have (Backed by Science)

Parenting skill #1: Focus more on your children's positive behavior than negative behavior.

The more parents scold or reprimand, the more the bad behavior gets repeated. When they receive a lot of scolding, children start to internalize the belief that "I'm a bad child who misbehaves and gets scolded". As such, they don't feel motivated to correct their behavior, because it has already become a part of their identity. Effective parents understand that the better approach is to acknowledge or describe their children's good behavior when they see it. You may have to go out of your way to do this, but you'll soon observe your children's behavior improving.

Parenting skill #2: Teach your children to focus on the needs of others.

Children find happiness through giving to others. In fact, children find greater happiness when they give to others *acrificially*. These are interesting findings, because most of us are naturally self-centered. We look out for our own needs before the needs of others. But the research indicates that if we overcome our selfish nature and focus on the needs of others, we'll be happier. If you want your children to lead joyful, fulfilling lives, teach them to serve others and contribute. Involve them in activities where they get to help others and make a positive impact. When your children think more in terms of contribution and less in terms of achievement, they'll be on the path of building a meaningful life.

Parenting skill #3: Don't shout at your children.

You've probably already told yourself that you shouldn't shout at your children. But when your children are driving you up the wall, it isn't easy to stop yourself from yelling. The more you shout at your children, the more their behavior will worsen. Instead of trying to control your children's behavior, understand their perspective and feelings. Then use logical reasoning to get through to them.

If you have trouble controlling your anger, try these tips:

- Make a firm decision that you won't shout at your children unless it's a matter of safety
- Decide beforehand what you'll do if you start to become angry
- Walk away from the situation, if necessary
- Take five deep breaths when you become agitated
- Avoid using threats
- Analyze the role you have to play in the conflict

Think about what unmet needs your child has, so that you can get to the root of the issue, e.g. he might feel as if he has no control over his life, which explains his rebellious behavior.

Taken in part from an article by Daniel Wong, *Good Parenting Skills*.



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The Parent and Family Engagement Connection

Home & School

"Together We Can Make a Difference"

The Parent and Family Engagement Connection is posted on our website four times a year for parents and educators of Texas. This newsletter is available in Spanish, Vietnamese, German and Korean.



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