

20 Secrets to a Smarter Summer



**How to keep your child's mind sharp
and body active during vacation.**

By the readers of

ADDITUDE

Strategies and Support for ADHD & LD

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A trusted source of advice and information for families touched by attention-deficit disorder—
and a voice of inspiration to help people with ADHD find success at home, at school, and on the job.

ADDitudeMag.com

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“I use the summers to boost my kids’ decision-making and emotional-control skills. I allow them to have a lot of say in what they do, but they have to show that they can control their emotions when they don’t get to do their first choice.”

— WWW

“The most important thing is to keep the morning and evening schedules unchanged as much as possible. Be flexible in the middle of the day and make sure you have enough inside activities for rainy days or times when they want to be independent. We always ask the kids what they want to do so they have an input, and we always make time for free play. We give them half an hour of Minecraft time a day, since it really has helped their creativity blossom!”

— *Gimparella*

“My daughter struggles with reading, so I get her involved in a fun summer reading program through our local library. I try to not overschedule, as that can stress her out. I like to have a more low-key approach to summer. Enjoy the season and all it offers before school comes back into session!”

— *juleswiseman*

FREE WORKSHEET

Customize this hour-by-hour schedule for your child to avoid uncertainty, meltdowns, and arguments this summer:

<http://additu.de/14z>

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“Writing is a big challenge in our house, so we set aside time almost every day to write a little bit about our day, whether it’s about a fun trip, a science experiment, or just the daily fun of summer. We’re not worried about getting a certain amount written or about grading the result; we just want reasonable effort and 15 to 20 minutes spent each on the steps of writing. A little bit of writing on a fun topic keeps things calm and low pressure.”

— *quietsimilie*

“My daughter has always benefited from being around animals, especially dogs and horses, and she enjoys volunteering to care for them. Summer is a good time to get in extra volunteer work. We also look for ways to connect classroom learning with the physical world. My kids are science nuts and are looking forward to spending some time hunting for tardigrades in the forest and building a mini amusement park for their guinea pig.”

— *SnapSprite*

“I keep my 14-year-old son physically and mentally active by having him volunteer to teach tennis to younger kids at our local courts. The physical activity and the mental focus required to teach others keeps him fully engaged and enthusiastic about his summer ‘job.’ Being responsible for others has a way of putting a teenager who otherwise could not remember his own tasks in to the driver’s seat. Now his coach is singing his praises for being so prompt!”

— *RSS*

“Change is always difficult for our son. The first week of summer break, I talk through and explain our daily plans. We also put him on a swim team, so he has daily morning practice most of the summer. It’s great to get him up and going, and it gives him a little bit of a summer routine.”

— *Babs24*

“We keep a list of my daughter’s daily responsibilities on the fridge. When she completes the day’s chores, we check them and draw a star on a piece of paper, which she puts it in a jar. At the end of the week, she gets a small reward for earning all of her stars. If the jar is filled at the end of the month, she gets a larger reward.”

— *Michelle M.*

FREE CAMP GUIDE

Find summer programs for kids with ADHD or special needs, plus packing lists, transition tips, and expert insights.

<http://additu.de/camp>

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“We work on math and reading in small chunks every day. I create a daily schedule and divide it up using slips of paper I place on the table so the kids can see how the day looks. They can switch around the blocks on the schedule, but learning time always remains. They seem much more grounded with a schedule in place that they’ve helped create, even though it is different day-to-day in the summer.”

— *Donelle*

“Learning doesn’t have to mean sitting to do school work. Real-life activities stimulate the brain, too. We start the day writing a to-do list or a grocery list that incorporates the coupons my granddaughters collect and organize. On the way to the store, we practice math facts in the car.”

— *Deanne L.*

“Our daily schedule — including bed times — is uniform and covers six days a week. On the seventh day, my daughter is allowed to relax and do whatever she wants (except TV); she likes that one day of autonomy.”

— *Sbean*

“I use ‘sneaky’ tactics to get her reading in the summer. I ask her to read signs on road trips, help find things on paper maps, read song lyrics — anything that she’s interested in and has words attached, she reads.”

— *Beth P.*

“My son is a pre-teen now, so I’m trying to find a balance between maintaining routines and letting him be more responsible for himself. I let him help decide which summer camps to attend, and I work with him to plan some fun yet worthwhile activities so he doesn’t have a lot of unassigned time. This summer, he is doing a week-long camp to learn stop-motion animation. If he wants to play computer games, he can do it while learning a possible career skill!”

— *JA Murphy*

“We practice the exact same morning routine that we’d follow on a typical school day. We get up and leave at the same time to do fun learning activities. The time-management factor is the same; just the activities are different.”

— *A.L. Rake*

SUMMER READING LIST

Looking for fun books your child can really relate to? Check out this parent-curated list:

<http://additu.de/books>

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“My 9-year-old daughter chose to do a project on lollipops. It’s become more about candy-making since it was hard to find books on just lollipops. She got books, will make candy, probably do a craft — and we’ll top it off by visiting the Jelly Belly factory near San Francisco in August! She reads constantly and is occasionally playing math games online. Summer should be fun, and that goes for summer learning as well.”

— *Patti R.*

“Our summer rule: No video games or on-screen entertainment is allowed until you do some reading.”

— *Poole*

“My secret is to encourage my children to commit to their own routines, whatever they may be, and then I hold them to it. I let them play when they like, but they must also must spend time on chores. I give them lots of worksheets, similar to what they receive in school, to keep them busy. They usually enjoy having the freedom to choose their own schedules!”

— *Johnny Boy*

“Sticking to routine sleep and wake times, making exercise a priority every day, and using cell phone calendars and reminders religiously keeps our summer fun and cuts the stress.”

— *kristi-stl*

“You’ve got to schedule in fun time. During the school year, we have Friday family movie night if there are no sports commitments. During the summer, we add to that a Saturday family game night. We usually play a board game, but we have also played on the iPad, the computer, or a video game console. We also plan a trip somewhere fun every so often, even if it is to the local pool/water park. Making sure there are fun days is important!”

— *Leetles*

MINECRAFT AND THE ADHD BRAIN

Learn more about the impact of video games on our kids’ academic and social skills:

<http://additu.de/minecraft>

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“Since school is all about ‘their’ requirements, we try to make summer about our child’s requirements. We let her choose the programs, activities, or sports she’d like to do. We also make sure we do something outside for at least 30 minutes a day. In order to not fall behind academically, we do at least 20 minutes of learning a day during the week, but weekends are still free.”

— *keepmysanity102*

“I keep my 16-year-old daughter on a schedule that we both agree to. She has done her usual morning routine for years now. If she slacks off, I simply write what needs to be done on her dry erase board instead of nagging her about it. Once it is written, she knows that is a warning. If it doesn’t get done, her electronics privileges are revoked (this hardly happens). If she is bouncing off the walls, I send her to do extra chores.”

— *Msquare*

Tell us: How do you keep your kids’ brains sharp during the summer?
<http://additu.de/bl>

SUMMER LEARNING GUIDE

For more on stimulating your child’s brain during vacation, visit our online guide:

<http://additu.de/ss1>

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> ADHD/LD Help Is Here

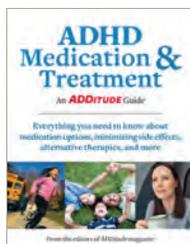
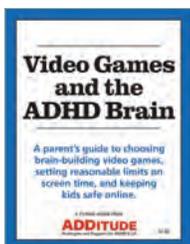
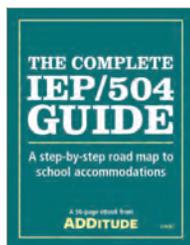
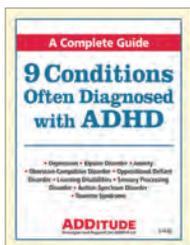
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