

Surviving the School Holidays

Professor Matt Sanders

ALTHOUGH SCHOOL HOLIDAYS ARE A GREAT TIME TO RELAX AND REJUVENATE THEY CAN ALSO BE A STRESSFUL FOR PARENTS SEARCHING FOR WAYS TO KEEP CHILDREN “AMUSED”. SO HERE ARE MY TOP FIVE TIPS TO SURVIVE THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS.

Tip No 1: Sit down with your kids and plan activities that they can look forward to. Make a list of free activities, activities they can do at home, and activities with a budget. Check suburban papers and local councils for free holiday programmes or log onto the internet to see what’s happening in your area. Put the full list on the fridge and refer kids to the “activities at home” section when you’re hit with the “I’m bored” syndrome!

Tip No 2: Organise a holiday budget and discuss this with the children. It’s important for children to understand that you don’t have a bottomless pit of

money and that, in fact, you don’t need lots of money to have fun. You may like to plan some activities with a dollar tag attached but there are plenty of free activities in parks, museums, and libraries.

Tip No 3: Don’t fall into the trap of “full time entertainer”. Children need to learn to amuse themselves and to find interesting and fun things to do in a safe environment. Depending on your child’s age you may need to help them start an activity but don’t take it over. And remember, it’s important to show an interest when your child is busy and absorbed and not just when they’re bored and seeking an audience.

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Tip No 4: Set ground rules for computer and TV use such as turn taking and time limits. Although it’s ok for children to watch a little more TV or use the computer more often during the holidays, it’s important that children have a balance of indoor and outdoor activities. Set a time limit and monitor programmes and computer games. If turn taking is a problem, set a timer and allocate a time limit for each child.

Tip No 5: It’s easier to look after children’s needs if we also look after our own needs as parents. Set aside some child free time. Organise a play at a friend’s house or enlist the help of relatives to give you a break. If our own needs as adults are neglected, it’s much more difficult to be calm, patient, and consistent with our children.

Find more parenting tips at: manitoba.ca/triplep or call 945-4777 in Winnipeg or toll-free 1-877-945-4777.

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