

Creating Memories

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What do you remember about your childhood and the special times you spent with your family? It may be a visit to a theme park or a day at the beach. It may simply be playing monopoly or reading a book with your parent before bedtime. Whatever it may be, I'll bet you can clearly recall that time with special feelings.

Summer time is when many families take vacations or visit relatives out of town. It's the perfect time to make memories that will last for a lifetime. Our children grow so fast we wonder where the time has gone. There is no time like the present to create family memories. This does not require an expensive trip to Disneyworld or New York City. Some of the most special memories you have may have cost little or nothing. Consider doing some of these things with your children this summer:

- Ride bikes
- Go swimming
- Play a board game
- Read together
- Play catch with a ball
- Assemble a jigsaw puzzle
- Build an inside "fort" on a rainy day with blankets, chairs and pillows

When you hear "I'm bored" from your child, use that as an opportunity to create memories. Brain storm with them about what they want to do. Offer suggestions but don't force your ideas upon them. Allow them some "down time" and don't insist that they do something productive with every minute of their time.

Use the summer time to help them decompress from the time pressures of the school year. Also help them complete some fun reading or math tasks without calling it "learning". Let them add and subtract with almonds or raisins that they can eat when they finish. Let them read a comic book or magazine if they want instead of an "assigned" book.

Remember that the best thing you can give your child is your time and undivided attention. That is the best way to give them the feeling that they are special and worthy. Play with them, read to them and be sure to tell them specifically how special and how loved they are. This is the way to create special memories that your children will keep long after they become adults.