

Summer! Making it Fun and Easy

As summer approaches, most parents are filled with a mixture of dread and anticipation. Although we Montanans love this short season, parents can find it stressful to make sure children are safely cared for and not just sitting in front of the “tube”. Here are some ways to help make summer easier and to keep children learning:

- Plan ahead! Make a calendar with your care arrangements and notice where there are gaps that need to be filled. Involve the kids in planning so that they feel as though they have some “say” about their vacation.
- Make a list of things you want to do as a family that will expand your children’s horizons and help them continue learning over the summer. Some ideas might be to go to a science or children’s museum, take in the county fair, attend a concert at the park, or ride bikes on a trail along the river. These activities give parents many opportunities to help kids learn more about the world around them. Why don’t people fall out of the Zipper ride when it goes upside-down? How do water skippers walk on water? If you don’t know the answers, show your child how to look them up at the library.
- Find ways to work on readin’, writin’, and ’rithmetic as well. Read, read, read wherever there are words—on billboards, packages, etc. Writing can be practiced outside with sidewalk chalk or paintbrushes dipped in water; postcards can be written to grandparents. Count and measure everything you do—the number of steps to the mailbox, how many rocks you throw in the water, and so on.
- Routines are comforting and make children feel safe, so try to keep at least some semblance of your regular routine, especially the bedtime books!

To print out a calendar of learning activities over the summer, go to:

www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Calendar/index.html