



SCHOOL TO HOME SUMMER

Stay Cool & Keep Active in the Heat

Did you know? Summer is the time when kids are most likely to gain excess weight. A national study of more than 18,000 school children found dramatic increases in body mass index (BMI) – a measure of weight relative to height – during summer vacations.

“The structured nature of the school day, with its scheduled exercise periods and limited opportunities to eat, helps students maintain a healthy BMI,” said study co-author Paul von Hippel, a health policy researcher at the University of Texas, Austin. Non-school environments, on the other hand, are more unstructured and unsupervised, and many children engage in sedentary activities and excessive snacking.

It's hard for parents to juggle work, child care and activities during the summer and with hot temperatures kids often prefer to cool down inside. Try to set some guidelines at the start of the summer to keep everyone mindful of screen time, healthy snacking and the need to stay active. Here are some tips to get you and your kids get into the summer swing.



SCHOOL TO HOME

WELLNESS – EVERY PART COUNTS!

What's the recommended amount of screen time?

- Children under 2: no screen time
- Children 2–5 years old: one hour per day
- Children 6 years and older: two hours per day

Easier said than done, especially in the summer! But if you're strict about the guidelines, kids will be forced to find other things to entertain themselves. Imagination is often ignited when kids are bored! The American Academy of Pediatrics says that digital media should never replace healthy activities — particularly sleep, social interaction and physical activity.

Make a list of non-electronic alternatives

Tired of hearing, "I'm bored"? Brainstorm a list of activities with your kids at the start of the summer and see how many they can tick off the list. Here are some ideas to get you thinking:

- Make cootie catchers
- Do arts and crafts
- Read books
- Doing puzzles
- Draw or doodle in a notebook
- Make no-bake cookies
- Make homemade popsicles
- Dance in your bedroom
- Play board games
- Learn to make origami
- Learn to weave a friendship bracelet
- Make something with clay
- Play Tic Tac Toe

Tips & Infographics

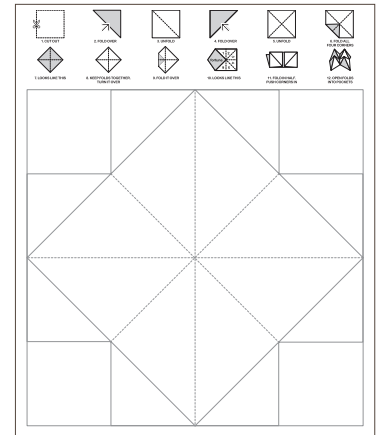
[Screen Time Vs. Lean Time](#)

[Screen Time Poster Printout](#) – to hang near home computer or TV or game console

Let's think of some ways you and the kids can take breaks from the screen and incorporate activity into tech time.

- **Take a Commercial Break:** Do your children like to watch TV after school or in the evening? Whenever an ad break comes on the TV, get everyone to jump up and exercise. The whole family can easily clock up 15 minutes during one hour of watching! Run in place, dance, do push-ups, planks or jumping jacks during each commercial. Encourage everyone in your family to do the same! Add up your physical activity during breaks and add it to your Calendar.

- **Blend Tech With Play:** Do you and the kids like video games? Try boxing, dancing, tennis or bowling games that get you in on the action! Games like Dance, Dance Revolution revolutionized the way we can play in physically active ways. Kids can do this on their own, with a family member, or invite a friend to join them for added fun.
- **Add a JAMmin' Minute to the Mix:** Have you been playing on the computer for a half hour? Jump up and do a JAMmin' Minute routine! Do four more and you can add 5 mins of physical activity to your Calendar. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6Uyru4fAoc>
- **Do a Family Jam:** Watch some of these JAMmin' Minute videos and learn the steps so you can all do them as a family. Have children be the leaders and call out the steps for family members to follow. How many minutes can you all clock together?
- **Make a Cootie Catcher or Wellness Wand:** See the printable template and instructions at the end of this letter.



Use the template on the next page to make your own cootie catcher, then choose some messages from the options below and write them in the blank spots.

Ccompliments / Positive Messages	You're so awesome you...	Conversation Starters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are friendly. You are funny (in a good way) You are a hard worker. You are kind to animals. You are a good sport. You are strong. You are never mean. You are a rock star! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choosing not to smoke. Having a great smile. Being nice to new students. Could be President one day. Can do anything. Should write a book. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is your favorite... Food. Subject/teacher. Type of music. Book. Animal. Sport!

Cootie Catcher

Family Connection: Home Activity Make a Wellness Wand

Materials for Lesson Plan:

- Yarn balls, a variety of colors
- String, ribbon or crepe paper may also be used
- Craft sticks (or coffee stirrers or reed sticks will also do)
- Scissors

This is similar to Ojo de Dios, a traditional Mexican craft that's been a popular activity of American summer camps for many years. The simple process of making this craft — a gentle, repetitive winding motion — is as appealing as the colorful product. This requires fine-motor skills and coordination, so you hold your sticks in one hand while weaving with the other. Once you get the hang of it, we hope you'll find the activity satisfying and relaxing.

Instructions:

1. Cut a long piece of yarn, at least two arm's lengths.
2. Place one stick across the other in an X shape. Join them together by wrapping yarn around the middle where they intersect.
3. You can make a knot at one end of your yarn to start, or just tuck the end under the yarn as you wrap.
4. Do a few wraps in one direction, and then do a few wraps in the other direction to keep your sticks in place.
5. Once you get into the groove, it's easy! Keep going as long as you like.
6. You can switch colors of yarn or add different weaving methods as you go.
7. Tie a knot to secure your yarn when you're finished and leave enough of a "tail" to hang it in a window if you like.
8. Give one to a friend, teacher or neighbor to hang in their window. (That's good for your social health and for theirs as well!)

Note to Parents and Caregivers:

At school our children are learning about wellness. We now recognize that wellness is made up of three main parts: physical health, social health, and mental/emotional health. All of these parts are important — and interconnected!

The Wellness Wand craft project is one of the simpler activities we're doing in this unit. Why is it called a Wellness Wand? Because it has separate parts, all connected together. It's a way to remind us that our thoughts and feelings and relationships with people affect our physical health, and vice versa, and it's a fun craft to do when you're feeling bored or worried or over-acted because it helps you to focus and be calm. Psychologists refer to the groove one gets into while knitting and doing similar crafting activities as "flow" — that brief period of time when you are so absorbed by an activity that you forget any worries. Adults enjoy this type of activity just as much as kids!

Make a Wellness Wand



SCHOOL TO HOME

WELLNESS – EVERY BITE COUNTS!

Every Cup Counts Too!

Kids and adults should aim for 8 glasses of water a day, and more during hot weather or when playing sports and running around. Make water or milk the first choice of beverage in your house and read these tips to make healthy choices easy for kids:

Tips for getting kids to drink more water:

- Fill up pitchers of tap water and keep them in the fridge. Cold water is much tastier than lukewarm!
- Fill up ice-cube trays so you have a supply of ice on the ready.
- Fun cups and straws entice kids to drink. Stock up at the end of the season sales.
- Drink lots of water yourself. Make water the thirst-quencher of choice for the family.

Make Fruit Spritzers

Mix one cup of 100% fruit juice with one cup of sparkling seltzer water. You'll get the same fruity flavor but half the calories.

Make Slushies

Crush ice cubes by putting them in a zip-top bag and banging them with a rolling pin. Be sure to do this on a hard surface like your outdoor steps — and not on a countertop or kitchen floor that might get damaged! Keep banging gently at the end until the ice pieces are crushed into fine pieces. This will keep kids busy and make them “work for their snack”! Now fill a cup with crushed ice and pour fruit juice in. Have kids experiment with more than one type of fruit juice and see which combos they like best.

“Cool Down” Snacks

Did you know that more than half your body is made of water? We use up a lot whenever we run and play or race around doing chores, then we need put water back in bodies.

Along with drinking water and milk, there's another way we can add water to our bodies: By eating fruits and vegetables that are high in water! Which ones are the most hydrating?

1. Cucumbers are made of almost all water! (96%) Iceberg lettuce has just as much. So they are tied for first place.
2. Celery comes in second place. (95%)
3. Watermelon is very high in water, too! (92%) Strawberries have just as much. Green peppers, too! So watermelon, strawberries and green peppers are tied for third place.
4. Cantaloupe comes in fourth. (90%)
5. Oranges and pineapple come next, tied for fourth place. (87%)

Take an International (Food) Vacation!

You don't need to buy a plane ticket to sample foods from around the world. Summer is a great time to take a bus or train to a city neighborhood that specializes in a certain type of ethnic cuisine. You can also spend time in your local library finding recipes from different regions and then go see what you can find at your local farmer's market or store.

The following book, video and song are wonderful ways to open up the discussion and open students' eyes to the rich cultural diversity of foods and traditions in our country.

[Book: Everybody Cooks Rice](#) by Norah Dooley

A child is sent to find a younger brother at dinnertime and is introduced to a variety of cultures through encountering the many different ways rice is prepared at the different households visited.

[Video: Let's Eat Dinner | PBS Learning](#)

It's fun to try new foods with a friend! Follow our narrator as she tries traditional dinners with families from Kenya, Japan, and Lebanon. This animation teaches students about friends and foods from other world cultures, helping them recognize that diversity exists and that people differ in language, dress, food, and more!

[Song: Take Your Taste Buds on a World Tour](#)

Listen to this song about foods from around the world — falafel, gyros and more.

Make a list of foods you read or hear about, and then talk about which ones you'd like to try over the summer. More examples:

Snacks such as:

Hummus and pita bread (Middle East)

Quesadillas (Mexico)

World Fruits:

Pomegranate (Iran)

Kiwi (national fruit of China)

Mangoes (national fruit of India, Philippines and Pakistan)

Lychee (canned) – Japan



SCHOOL TO HOME

WELLNESS – EVERY MOVE COUNTS!

Keeping Active!

Healthy Eating

Whether you're planning for kids to be home with a caregiver while you work through the summer, maintaining the school year day care routine or you'll be staying home with the kiddos through vacation, summer vacation can be a great time to reinforce healthy eating choices.

1. Keep healthy food choices on hand and within reach for everyone in the family – precut fruits and veggies, a fruit bowl, small containers of nuts, whole grain crackers, low-fat cheese sticks, turkey rolls and more not only make easy self-serve snacks – they can also mix and match into a well-rounded meal to grab on the go.
2. Leave the work to your favorite local restaurants. Not only is eating out fun, but it's easy to find Healthy Dining and Kids LiveWell choices that everyone can be happy about... all without heating up the kitchen on a hot summer day.
3. Get kids involved with family meals and food. Task kids with planning, shopping for and cooking meals with your help for the week based on MyPlate recommendations (even restaurant meals!). Kids learn valuable skills and gain some control in meals while you, hopefully, get to spend more time on something you love.

Keep Moving

Summer is loaded with opportunities for kids and parents alike to move more, but it can also be easy to fall into a less-active lifestyle. Head off the urge to laze away the days or evenings with fun ideas like these from SuperKids Nutrition:

4. After every 30 minutes of chores, summer reading, or video games, take an activity break! Skip rope, do jumping jacks, or jog in place for 5 minutes to get your blood flowing.
5. Hop scotch: Make use of your driveway, sidewalk or nearby pavement at a park and draw a game of hop scotch – make it as big as you can for more hopping!
6. Have a water balloon toss! Fill up a bucket of water balloons and have your friends pair off into teams of two. Have each pair line up equal distance apart and toss the balloon to their teammate. Each time a teammate catches the balloon, he or she must take a step back to increase the distance between the players. Keep going until there is only one team left with an unbroken balloon!

Read more at:

[12 Tips to Keep Your Family Healthy This Summer](#) | Together Counts Blog

When you run out of ideas... Play tag!

Many generations of kids spent their childhood playing endless games of tag. How many types can you remember? How many types have your kids played? Make a running list. When you run out of variations, come up with some original ones of your own!

Tip: If kids get hot, put on a sprinkler if you have a yard. If not, keep a water station on hand with a cooler full of ice. If they ask for a popsicle break, allow it but make a rule that they need to play two more games of tag after. The point is to have fun, of course, but you also want to get your 60 minutes of physical activity accomplished at the same time.

- **Freeze Tag:** Players who are tagged are “frozen” and must stand in place like statues until they are unfrozen. Any “unfrozen” player can unfreeze them (by tagging them), and round and round it goes.
- **TV Tag:** The same rules as above, except the frozen player must also call out a TV show or movie or sports team (whichever category is chosen for the game) in order to be unfrozen. A show, movie or team name can only be used once.
- **Shadow Tag:** Rather than physically tagging players, the person who’s “it” tags others by stepping on their shadows. Easier said than done!
- **Team Tag:** Cops and Robbers, Manhunt and Sardines are all popular types of team tag. Search on the Internet for rules if you’d like to learn about one or all of these.
- **Pickle:** Also called Stolen Bases, this is a popular form of tag played with a tennis, kickball or other soft ball and two bases. (Rocks or trees make good bases, but anything will do.) Players take turns being runners or base guards. Two players guard the bases, one a piece, while the others run between them. Guards throw balls and try to “tag” the players with them. If players touch a base, they’re safe. If a runner is hit by the ball, he/she takes that guard’s place, and that guard becomes a runner.

Home to School Worksheets

None required! Relax, it’s summer! Enjoy yourselves and see you in the fall. :)