



School's out for summer. Yay!

No doubt your kids are excited about summer break. How do you keep their minds engaged during the summer months and continue building their social-emotional wellness? How can caregivers keep their stress in check when the kids are around so much? And how can the family prepare for a smooth reentry to school?

The Stay Well program created this packet of resources to help. On the pages that follow, you will find:

1. **A summer calendar** full of wellness tips and activity suggestions.
2. **A summer bucket list worksheet** to help family members brainstorm what they'd like to do this summer.
3. **Self-care tips for parents and caregivers**—because your mental wellness is key to a smooth-running summer.
4. **Family conversation-starters** for fun ways to get kids thinking, imagining and verbalizing.
5. **Back-to-school preparation tips** to make the return less chaotic.





**STAY WELL**  
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# Family Wellness Tips for JUNE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Turn off all screens during dinnertime.	Invite friends to a nearby park or trail.	Build a fort using only materials from the house or yard	As a family, declutter one space in your house today and donate any excess items.	Play <a href="#">charades</a> with family members.	
	Reflect on a major success experienced at school this year.	Send a message of gratitude to your child's school staff.	Consider making a bucket list for your summer plans.	Practice <a href="#">Taking A Pause</a> as a family.	Make chalk drawings on your driveway or sidewalk.	
	Reflect on the thing you love most about your child's school.	Practice <a href="#">square breathing</a> with family members.	Play in the sprinkler today or find a local splash pad to enjoy.	Visit a library and read for at least 20 minutes.	Plan a <a href="#">nature scavenger hunt</a> for next week.	
	Reflect on one school challenge you overcame this year.	Practice <a href="#">Taking A Pause</a> as a family.	Plan a garage sale with your family and/or neighbors.	Play with bubbles. <a href="#">Here</a> is an easy recipe.	Promise yourself at least one self-care activity this weekend.	
	Replace screen time with <a href="#">brain teasers</a> .	Enjoy a movie marathon with homemade snacks.	As a family, get outside as much as possible.	Practice <a href="#">five-finger breathing</a> as a coping skill for school anxiety.	Read for at least 10 minutes.	

# Family Wellness Tips for JULY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Recharge this week with a creative activity.	Practice <a href="#">Mindful Eating</a> during one meal.	Spend some time this evening <a href="#">star-gazing</a> with the family.	Take a picture of something and then try to draw it.	As a family project, find and try a new recipe.	
	Recharge by sharing five things you are grateful for.	Take a virtual visit to a <a href="#">National Park</a> .	Put on a comedy show after dinner.	Camp in your yard or enjoy sitting by the fire tonight.	Make and enjoy your own favorite cold treat.	
	Recharge by meeting up with a school friend.	Plan a <a href="#">Family Olympics</a> night.	Wake up early and watch the sunrise together.	Build a fort from a cardboard box.	Replace screen time with <a href="#">brain teasers</a> .	
	Recharge this week by learning a new skill.	Make <a href="#">homemade play dough</a> and have fun creating!	Create music as a family or go watch live music together.	Take a <a href="#">virtual visit</a> to the zoo!	<a href="#">Learn about bugs!</a>	
	Recharge by praising each family member.	Turn off all screens during dinnertime.	Read for at least 30 minutes.	Practice <a href="#">Taking A Pause</a> as a family.	Think of 5 things you are grateful for today.	



# Family Wellness Tips for AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Invite friends to a nearby park or trail.	Write and send at least five letters of gratitude.	As a family, volunteer your time or donate goods.	Pack a lunch and take a real or <a href="#">virtual</a> field trip.	Do a puzzle together as a family.	
	Refocus your self-care needs with help from <a href="#">this worksheet</a> .	Practice <a href="#">Taking A Pause</a> as a coping skill.	Write and/or draw a story and then share it with the family.	Read for at least 10 minutes.	Instead of screen time, play card games as a family.	
	Learn about <a href="#">growth mindset</a> goals by watching this video.	Have a family talent show after dinner.	Practice <a href="#">five-finger breathing</a> as a coping skill for school anxiety.	Go berry picking as a family.	Read for at least 20 minutes.	
	Think about how you will show kindness to others this school year.	Family challenge: How long can each person go without screen time?	Read for at least 30 minutes.	Practice <a href="#">square breathing</a> as a coping skill for school anxiety.	Enjoy a movie marathon with homemade snacks.	
	Refocus on your goals for a successful school year.	As a family, get outside as much as possible.	Play a new game together as a family -- outdoors or indoors!	Instead of screen time, do <a href="#">brain teasers</a> as a family.	Take a picture of something and then try to draw it.	

# Make a Summer Bucket List!



Involve your kids in planning some new adventures and experiences for the summer months. Use the categories below—or dream up some of your own.

**Places I want to go.**

**People I want to see.**

**Activities I want to do.**

**New things I want to try.**

**Things I want to learn about.**

**Places I want to help out or volunteer.**

**Your categories go here.**



# Summer Self-Care for Parents and Other Caregivers

**Summer break** often puts additional stress on parents and caregivers because school is no longer providing their kids with daily structure, meals and things to do. To deal with this extra stress, it is important to take part in self-care—especially if you're juggling work along with family obligations and summer vacation activities.

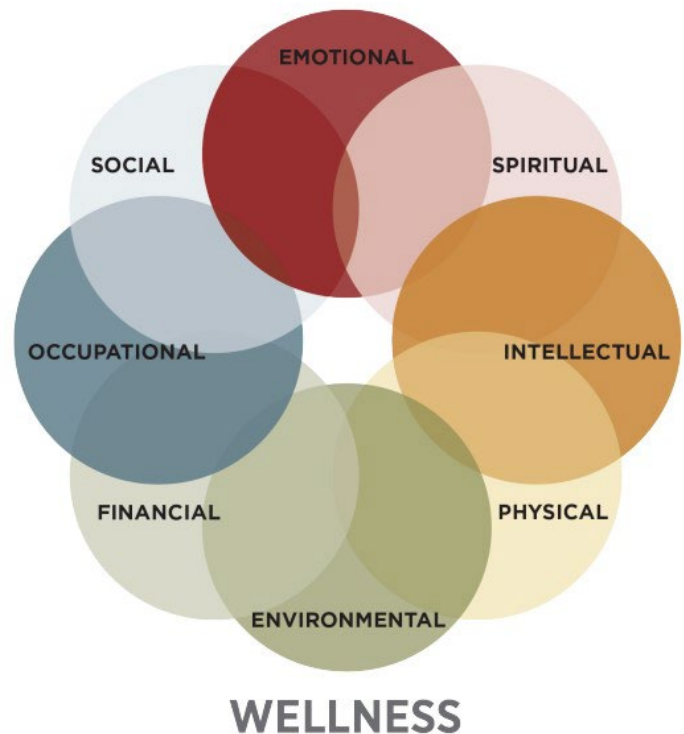
What do we mean by self-care? Time spent doing things that **nourish your mental wellness**. This can include activities such as physical exercise, journaling, stretching, deep breathing, meditation, a relaxing hobby or pampering yourself. Self-care can also include setting personal boundaries, asking for what you need, forgiving yourself and practicing other behaviors that promote personal well-being.

Here are suggestions for ensuring your self-care this summer:

- Set a summer schedule to create consistency and routine. The schedule should include sleep and wake times, mealtimes, down time and maybe even indoor vs. outdoor time. Establishing (and sticking to) a routine can help you find time for yourself.
- Try pairing self-care with other scheduled activities, such as a child's lesson or practice. During this time, allow the coaches/volunteers/assigned adults to do their thing while you do yours!
- When scheduling a child's activities, be careful not to overbook yourself. Creating a busy and memorable summer break for your kids is nice, but it can quickly overshadow your own needs.
- Plan self-care into each day, just as you would a meeting or appointment, by putting it on your to-do list or daily planner.

# Summer Self-Care for Parents and Other Caregivers

- To help hold yourself accountable, adopt the saying “You can’t pour from an empty cup.” Or remind yourself “You’ve got to nourish to flourish.”
- Wellness is comprised of eight different dimensions (see diagram, right). While summer is a great time for increased physical activity, enjoying the outdoors and being with other people, make sure you are also taking care of your need for intellectual, financial, emotional and spiritual wellness.
- Self-care is a practice that we want to become permanent, rather than perfect. Be patient with yourself.



Source: Adapted from Swarbrick, M. (2006). A Wellness Approach. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 29(4), 311-314.



## Conversation Starters for Families

Once school is out, kids often have fewer opportunities for meaningful social interaction. As a result, social skills may weaken—especially if kids indulge in too much “screen time” (TV, video games, social media, etc.), which doesn’t require putting thoughts into words.

A good remedy for this is to generate fun and interesting conversations between family members. You can do it during meals together, while waiting in line, while traveling or whenever the mood seems right.

Engaging in regular conversation helps children sharpen their ability to socialize, gain self-awareness, learn empathy and expand their vocabulary.

Here are some questions to get a conversation started:

1. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
2. If you could have one superpower, what would it be?
3. What’s something you really want to learn how to do?
4. If you could wish for three things, what would they be?
5. Would you rather have the ability to fly high in the sky or swim deep in the sea?
6. What do you think your parents do for work?
7. What three words do you think describe your personality best?
8. Name one time you had a problem and didn’t know how to ask for help.
9. What’s one of your happiest memories?
10. What do you think is the best part about being a grown-up?



11. If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?
12. What is one way you want to make the world a better place?
13. How many feelings can you name in one minute?
14. What is the difference between fair and equal?
15. What do you think people like most about you?
16. What is special to you about our family?
17. What is one thing you want to accomplish this summer?
18. What is the best thing you've had to eat this week?
19. What made you smile today?
20. Do you know any funny jokes?
21. What is the difference between easy and simple?
22. How do you show someone you care about them?
23. What should we do for our next vacation?
24. If you could do any job in the world, which one would you pick?
25. What has been the best part of summer so far?
26. Describe the best school year ever.
27. If snow could have a flavor, what flavor would you choose?
28. What are your five favorite movies and why?
29. If you wrote a book, what would it be about?
30. If you could pick any animal to be a pet, what one would you pick?



## Back-to-School Preparation Tips

The transition back to school after summer break is full of big changes and big feelings. But there are ways to prepare for the transition to optimize your family's experience. Consider the suggestions below.

- A few weeks before the first day of school, start making bedtime occur earlier.
- Start scaling back screen time and substitute activities like reading and writing.
- Visit libraries, museums and other places that engage the “learning brain.”
- Start eating breakfast and lunch at the expected school-day mealtimes.
- Review parent and student needs for homework and teacher correspondence through email, websites or special apps. Round up the right passwords and troubleshoot any problems now.
- If you don't know your child's bus stop and school location, find out and visit them.
- To ease back-to-school anxiety, consider having your child write a “social story” about it. [Learn how here](https://bit.ly/45fr1W5) (URL: <https://bit.ly/45fr1W5>).
- The week before school starts, talk with your child about how school can be enjoyable and why it will be good for them. Be sure to highlight the social aspects of new experiences and seeing friends.
- As parents and caregivers, be sure to review how this transition impacts your life.
  - Spend time charting out your new routine(s).
  - Shift your own curfews, mealtimes, self-care and work needs to allow for a smoother transition.
  - Prepare yourself for the attitudes, mood, and emotions that accompany the end of summer and the resulting grief that individuals often feel as summer break ends and families spend less time together.
- As a family, practice patience and be sure to remind each other that transitions often come with an adjustment period that can bring on a host of unpleasant feelings, such as anxiety and frustration.