



ChildCareGroup

SUMMER CARE OPTIONS FOR YOUR CHILD

Summertime often presents special challenges for working parents who must make different arrangements for child care. Fortunately, many options are available during this time of year for you to explore. You may have to combine several types of care for the summer to fulfill all of your family's needs. The following are varying options and ideas to keep in mind during the summer months.

Day Camps

This type of summer care arrangement is usually found in a child care facility or offered through a Parks and Recreation Department. Many YMCA and YWCA programs offer weekly summer sessions for school-age children. Day camps generally include field trips, swimming, arts and crafts, and other planned activities. Field trips are often offered at additional costs.

Specialized Programs

Camps of this nature are centered around a specific theme or idea, such as Girl Scout or Boy Scout camps, sports camps, computer camps, fitness camps, educational camps, or overnight camps. Field trips are usually to places that expand or reinforce the theme of the camp. The costs of field trips in this case are usually included in the total cost of the camp. Counselor-in-training programs may also be available at some specialized camps for children over the age of 12.

Relative Child Care

Relatives who are unable to visit or provide child care all year long may enjoy spending time with the children during all or part of the summer. This may provide your children with moments to connect with their family members and provide you with peace of mind.

High School or College Students

High school or college students may be able to provide transportation for your children to planned events, such as soccer practice or swimming lessons. They will be able to prepare meals, do crafts, play sports, and keep your children entertained.

Shared Care

Consider sharing the cost of hiring a caregiver with a neighborhood friend. These "summer buddies" could provide supervision, companionship, and transportation to activities.

At-Home Activities

During the summer, try to plan one learning activity per week for your child. You may want to develop a "grab bag" of activities and have your child pick a fun activity the two of you can do together, such as:

- Choose a color of the week: find red pictures from a magazine, make red Jello, or wear something red for the day.
- Use homemade play dough to make letters, numbers, or simple figures. Add cookie cutters, plastic knives, rolling pins and other items that can be used to cut and mold the dough. You may also want to let some of them dry and paint them later. If you adhere a magnetic strip to the back, they can be used on your refrigerator or a cookie sheet to spell names or words.

Summer Care Options For Your Child

- Prepare a simple snack together or make a simple meal for the entire family. Children can help with stirring, pouring, measuring, washing vegetables, setting the table, and other simple tasks. This is a good time to introduce new foods and talk about their textures and colors. Your child may even eat better and try some new foods.
- Use shaving cream to paint a mural on the patio door or chalk to draw on the sidewalk. A garden hose makes for easy clean up.
- Go on field trips together. Most local public libraries participate in The Texas Reading Club, which is designed to encourage youth to read for pleasure and to promote library usage, with a new and exciting theme each year. Visit the local zoo, museum, theme park, pizza parlor, post office, community pool, or even a thrift shop to look for dress up clothes.

After researching options throughout your community and seeking advice from other parents, you will have many options for summer care. Summer care varies considerably and every child is unique. Choose an option that will fit your family's needs and provide a safe and fun summer experience for your child.

Call ChildCareGroup's Resource and Referral service at 214.631.2273 or 1.800.441.7865 for more free tips on choosing child care, other parenting resources or assistance in finding child care. Or visit us at www.ChildCareGroup.org/rr.

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