



THE INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES OF NORTH TEXAS

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Ten Things to Do with Your Family this Summer!

With public and private schools ending in late May or early June, now is the time to plan family activities over the summer months. Unless children are continuously engaged in informal learning activities, they may lose educational and academic ground when school resumes in the fall. Here is a list of suggestions that might help you plan your summer. Please note that the list is not exhaustive—it only serves to help you think of ideas.

1. Plan a **road trip** with your children. A four-day long weekend or a two-week vacation provides lots of opportunities to learn something new, brush up on geography locations, visit historical sites and interactive museums, and to renew relationships with extended family.
2. Check out **library cards** for your children depending on their ages. Check your library schedule of special events and request reading lists.
3. If you are so inclined, contact **your church** to see if they are scheduling Vacation Bible School or a church youth camp. In addition to the spiritual values, the camps will offer unique experiences in outdoor education.
4. Or, if your child belongs to a **youth organization**, such as Boy or Girl Scouts, check out outdoor education activities and camping opportunities to learn new skills.
5. If your city recreation department is offering **swimming lessons** for youngsters, sign up! Make sure that the lessons are taught by Red Cross certified personnel. If your child is already a proficient swimmer, sign him or her up for a competitive swim team. Check with your **city recreation department** to see what else is offered that may be of interest to your child—golf lessons, horseback riding, archery, art and music lessons, etc.
6. Encourage older youth to be a **teen age entrepreneur**. Girls may be interested in organizing birthday parties for younger children or plan similar events such as family reunions. Older teens can always find work in childcare, landscaping, pet sitting, delivering newspapers, and teaching swimming, or tutoring.
7. Whether your child is gifted, average or academically disabled, your school district may offer **summer academic classes**, some of which are offered for credit and others for enrichment. In most cases, the classes are offered at a nominal fee and give students an opportunity to schedule an additional elective class during the school year.
8. **Volunteer opportunities** abound and offer career exploration for older youth and teens. For example, a teen who is interested in animal welfare may be able to volunteer at SPCA or for a local veterinarian who boards animals.
9. For high school and college age students, **summer foreign exchange programs** sponsored by civic and service clubs such as Rotary International, Lions Club, Kiwanis, etc. provide great mind expanding opportunities. In most cases, the organization pays the full tuition for a mini exchange of six weeks except for incidental spending money.
10. Check with the local Chamber of Commerce to learn about corporations and businesses that offer summer **Internships** for high school and college students at no pay but provide experience. Start the application process early as internships are highly competitive.

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