



Summer Survival Strategies

Summer can be a balance between planning and “going with the flow.” These suggested activities may increase your enjoyment of each other and the season, while also supporting the further development of your child’s SEL competencies. Remember to begin with concrete needs first. Are you and your children fed and well rested? Have you had a chance to move about? If so, let’s explore some fun summer activities.

***Responsible Decision Making:** Engage your children in considering activities to do over the summer. Create a “summer bucket list” and organize your plans to do the activities. You can make this into an art project by decorating a beach bucket and by writing out each of the activities on paper. Place the activity descriptions into the bucket and take turns reaching into the bucket and selecting activities. After completing the activity, you can attach the activity to the bucket with a clothes pin to remind you of your fun summer experiences.

***Social Awareness:** Ask your children to choose one or two cultures or countries to explore. Learn about the cuisine, spiritual traditions, education system, geography, etc. and consider making a staple meal that is central to that culture. Involve your children in planning and preparing the meal (e.g., writing the list of ingredients, shopping for them, cooking, etc).

***Self Awareness:** Take your children to the beach. Ask them close their eyes and hone in on the various sensory experiences they are having. Encourage them to take turns describing what they hear, smell, and feel (physically). Encourage them to reflect on their emotional experience of being at the beach as well. Have them consider and name the similarities and the differences between responses.

***Self Awareness:** Consider using Dr. Dan Siegel’s “SIFTing” technique with your children. Have them close their eyes and encourage them to reflect on their bodily Sensations, Images they visualize, Feelings they experience and Thoughts that come to mind. This will assist them with Self-Awareness.

***Self Awareness & Self Management:** On a rainy day, go outside and dance in the rain. Pay particular attention to the feeling of the raindrops falling on your body, the sound of the rain splatting on the ground, and smell in the air.

***Self Management:** Engage your children in a conversation about ways that your family could create a routine of mindfulness. Be prepared to offer suggestions from which they can choose (e.g., use a mind jar, listen to a guided meditation, such as Headspace; practice tactical breathing through things such as bubble blowing and blowing dandelions; practice mindful eating such as savoring a small chocolate kiss or a mandarin orange, etc.).

***Relationship Skills:** On a rainy day when everyone is disappointed that they can't go outside, watch a TV show on mute. Take turns describing what you see and what you think is going on. Pay special attention to the non-verbal facial and body cues to hypothesize about what emotional experiences each person is having. Ask questions about the relationships between the characters. For example, wonder about what behavior indicates friendships, kinships, or acquaintances?

***Relationship Skills:** Use question prompts or ice breaker cards (family dinner game, Table Topics, Our Moments, How Do You See the World? etc.) during meals, car rides or picnics to engage in deeper conversations.

More Fun in the Sun

- Take an ordinary activity and add a twist. For example, have breakfast foods for dinner, have pajama day, have dress up day, have a fancy meal with your best serving dishes and fancy goblets, do a mindful walk around the block, have a picnic, do a "random act of kindness" while you're running errands, share a meal with a neighbor or someone you would like to know better, have the kids make dinner, etc.
- Take advantage of Glenview programming at the Glenview Public Library, Glenview Park District (including Wagner Farms), and Kohl's Children's Museum
- Consider taking a mini road trip. Visit museums and parks in Chicago. Consider taking a drive to the Indiana Dunes.