

Ways to Celebrate the Last Day of School

ICE CREAM!

You can set up an ice cream bar at home or venture to local favorites like Dexter Creamery or Dairy Queen to bring home.

SHOW AN OUTDOOR MOVIE

Move your TV outside or set up a projector to point toward a white sheet and watch a summer movie classic. Staying up late is always fun and even better with a movie involved.

MAKE A SUMMER BUCKET LIST

We realize that some of your usual favorites might not be an option this year. However, odds are good if you ask your kids what's on their summer bucket list, many of their ideas are going to be a possibility.

LOOK AT PICS FROM THE SCHOOL YEAR TOGETHER

This is meant to be a fun activity, not a sad one! Check out the pics from the first day of school, that annual walk-a-thon in fall, or the time your kids got to cheer with the high school cheerleaders at a football game. Whatever your memories of the school year, it's fun to look back together. If you don't want to look at pics, ask your kids what was their favorite memory and have fun talking about it together.



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Celebrating the end of the school year

The end of the 2019-2020 school year hasn't looked exactly like we wanted, but there is still a lot to celebrate!

Dexter families have persevered through three months of a shelter-in-place mandate while continuing to engage in the learning process. Virtual learning has not been easy for many, but the DCS staff has worked tirelessly to ensure our students remain connected with both their teacher and their peers. While much of DCS communication in the last few weeks has focused on our graduating seniors, we wanted to share some ways all grade levels can celebrate the end of the school year. All last days of school are worth celebrating!

HELPING STUDENTS GAIN CLOSURE

"Helping children and students gain some type of closure is paramount no matter what age or grade," says Melanie Ross Mills, PhD, a relationship counselor in Dallas. "Completion of a school year signifies accomplishment, maturing and a personal sense of pride as each child has earned the ability to progress to the next grade."

"Communicate with your child or student to let them know that their progress and hard work has not gone unnoticed," says Dr. Mills. "Although they are in unprecedented times, their education and personal development matters." Dr. Mills suggests giving specific praise. For example: "Your ability to learn your spelling words, especially while quarantined has not gone unnoticed. This is not an easy task when you consider all of the distractions you have had at home."

"If schools have well-established rite-of-passage rituals, it is only fair and supportive to both children and the community to acknowledge the impact of missing them this year," says Meghan Fitzgerald, former elementary teacher, principal and co-founder of Tinkergarten. "Even if you change the ritual, the celebration itself will give closure while teaching the life lesson of accepting what cannot be controlled."

More Ways to Celebrate the Last Day of School

HAVE A PICNIC

Dexter's last day of school is a half day, so knock off early and take your lunch outside somewhere. Some favorite places are where nature abounds like forest preserves or state parks where there's ample space to spread out.

HAVE A NEIGHBORHOOD PARADE

Parades are the "in" thing right now, right? We've seen appropriately distanced parades for high school grads; why not make it an all-grade affair in your neighborhood? Kids can walk with siblings and make signs to say "see ya third grade" or whatever they just finished. Invite neighbors (with and without kids) to sit on their porch or in their driveway to celebrate.

PLAN A DAY OF FUN

Make a list of fun things to do with your kid(s) on the first day of summer break. From that list, create a surprise itinerary. For example, chocolate chip waffles for breakfast, fishing in the afternoon, ice cream and a dance party in the evening.

SUMMER SCAVENGER HUNT

Create a scavenger hunt where they can find summer toys, such as sidewalk chalk and sandbox toys, at the end.

Even Though Times Are Different, Celebrate Your Child on the Last Day of School

The last day of school will certainly be different this year.

We won't be patiently waiting outside the doors of the school building to whisk up our kids with congratulatory hugs and kisses. We won't be wiping away the tears as they bid farewell to the teachers who have nurtured and supported our children for the last 180 days. We won't be planning big graduation parties, attending school ceremonies, or making reservations to treat our kids to dinner at their favorite restaurant. They won't even be able to give a final farewell to their friends, teachers, principals, school nurses, janitors, and all the other people who became their home away from home over the last year.

For some students, walking away from this school year means they won't get the chance to say goodbye to the people who have surrounded them for eight years of grammar school, four years of high school, or the most memorable years of their college career. It's sad. But it doesn't have to be anti-climactic.

Celebrating our children on the last day of the 2020 school year is more important than ever. Not only have they worked hard to get to this day, but they've also had to endure more in the past few months than they might ever have endured in their lives. They've adjusted, adapted, coped, and overcome something that many of us never thought we would see in our lifetime.

Even if they didn't finish off the school year in the classroom, even if we can't be around the people we would normally celebrate these milestones with, the celebration must go on.

Our kids have faced a roller coaster of emotions as they shifted to distance learning. The last day of school marks a milestone, the rite of passage into each new phase of life, that we can never get back again.

Whether they got every bit of school work done to perfection or simply skated by in the best way they could, the fact that they made it through despite all that was going on definitely calls for a special day.

Too many kids are missing too many things today, and while we can't control that, we can make sure they still get a day of fun to celebrate the completion of the 2019-2020 school year. It's a good time to pause and reflect on everything our children have learned, accomplished, and overcome — then make a plan to make the last day of school special in whatever way we can.



Yearbooks: Virtual Signature Pages

One of the highlights of the end of the school year is receiving your yearbook and passing it around for signatures. However, with the current situation students aren't able to hang out and sign each other's yearbooks as they traditionally do.

To fill that need, DCS has created Dexter-branded virtual yearbook pages that can be downloaded and sent to friends and teachers and then printed and inserted into your student's yearbook. Students can use their @dexterschools.org email to view and download the pages at the following link: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/u/0/d/1cZWuPS0NRMznn-h6ZatGdHIYXrjCyWCj4lGB2-snM4s/edit?usp=sharing&pli=1>





Summer Activity Resources

From Camping To Dining Out: Here's How Experts Rate The Risks Of 14 Summer Activities

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/05/23/861325631/from-camping-to-dining-out-heres-how-experts-rate-the-risks-of-14-summer-activit>

43 Fun Things to Do This Summer While You're Social Distancing

<https://www.realsimple.com/holidays-entertaining/entertaining/seasonal-events/summer-activities-during-covid>

Can't Head Up North This Summer? Virtual Northern Michigan Events & Activities During Summer 2020

<https://mynorth.com/2020/04/online-northern-michigan-events-activities-during-covid19/>

Huron-Clinton Metroparks Virtual Programs and Activities

https://www.metroparks.com/virtual/?utm_source=Google&utm_medium=PaidSearch&utm_campaign=VirtualResources

Fun Virtual Events for Teens in Metro Detroit and Ann Arbor

<https://www.metroparent.com/daily/family-fun/family-events/fun-events-for-teens-in-southeast-michigan/>

Special Needs Events for Kids and Parents in Metro Detroit

<https://www.metroparent.com/daily/parenting/special-needs-resources/special-needs-events-for-kids-in-southeast-michigan/>

Free Kid-Friendly Events in Metro Detroit and Ann Arbor

<https://www.metroparent.com/daily/family-fun/family-events/free-southeast-michigan-events-for-families/>

Baby and Toddler Virtual Events in Metro Detroit and Ann Arbor

<https://www.metroparent.com/daily/family-fun/family-events/baby-and-toddler-events-in-southeast-michigan/>

Sources

5 Ways to Celebrate the End of the School Year

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/kids-activities-and-printables/activities-for-kids/holiday-and-seasonal-ideas/5-ways-to-celebrate-end-school-year.html.html>

13+ Fun Ways to Celebrate the Last Day of School

<https://www.chambanamoms.com/2020/05/12/celebrate-last-day-of-school/>

19 Super Fun Ways to Celebrate the Last Day of School

<https://indywithkids.com/last-day-school-ideas/>



Even Though Times Are Different, Celebrate Your Child on the Last Day of School

<https://www.popsugar.com/family/how-im-honoring-my-kid-last-day-school-amid-covid-19-47477014>

How to Celebrate the Last Day of School

<https://www.parents.com/parenting/better-parenting/positive/how-to-celebrate-the-last-day-of-school/>

With no last day of school, kids will need help with closure — here's what experts say parents should do

<https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-help-children-feel-closure-last-day-of-school-2020-4>

Even More Ways to Celebrate the Last Day of School

NOW AND THEN

Spend time noticing changes and accomplishments with your child. Are they taller? Stronger? What and who do they know now that they didn't when school began? What do they predict for next year? Write down their answers and make it an annual tradition.

SUMMER SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Replace and freshen up arts and crafts and other school supplies. A fresh box of crayons or brand-new fancy notebook will do wonders to keep your little one reading and writing all summer.

MAKE A TOP 10 LIST

Examples include "Top 10 things I learned this year," "Top 10 memories from 2019-2020 school year," "Top 10 things I want to do this summer."

LAST DAY OF SCHOOL PICS

Decorate your door for background and have your kids put on the same outfit they wore on the first day of school. Many of them have outgrown their pants or shirts and the pics are hilarious!

PLANT SUNFLOWERS

Plant sunflower seeds on the last day of school. When the sunflowers have grown really tall and are ready to bloom, that's about when it's time for a new school year.

