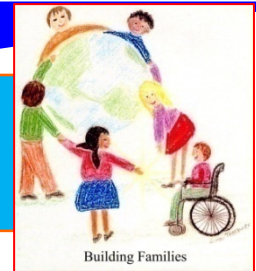


Building Families Empowerment
Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful.



Parenting Pal-Summer



In this Issue:

- Low Cost Summer Fun
- Is your child old enough to leave home alone for the summer?
- Tips to Curb the Summertime Teen Blues



CARES IS: a big family, making new friends, giving back to the community, fun for the whole family, focusing on the positive, having a voice, learning about resources, nonjudgmental, a network of people who care about you, supporting each other and changing the mindset of the community to make sure it is everyone's business to protect and help families and children. Making friends on purpose across all cultures, races, and social classes! Free meal and child care provided! Call Kim Mohr at 515-890-1128 for more information.

Asbury Methodist Church in Webster City at 5:30

June 11th and 25th

July 9th and 23rd

August 13th and 27th

Faith United Methodist Church in Humboldt at 5:00

June 8th

July 13th

August 10th

Congregational Church at 5:00pm

June 22nd

July 27th

August 24th



Low Cost Summer Fun

- Have a garage sale and use the earnings to take a vacation
- Go to a movie in the park. Many communities have movies which play in local parks. It might be one you have already seen but got to get out and meet new people
- Check out programs at your local library or churches. Story time and vacation bible schools help kids learn and meet other children
- Go to the Farmer's Market! This is a great produce and items for less. Take your children along to talk about the color and shapes of new vegetables and fruits or plant a garden with vegetables that you usually buy at the store
- Keep reading books during the summer. Get your child involved in a summer reading program or make some goals with each other. Set an example and read your own books too!
- Take advantage of local fairs, 4-H, or community recreation
- Go indoor camping on those rainy days by building tents and sleeping in them over night or an indoor picnic be spreading out a blanket on the floor
- Star Gaze. Lay down in the back yard and look at the stars. Have the kids make up their own stories about what shapes the stars make
- Before you take off on a vacation, visit the city's chamber of commerce website to find out about free activities the community is having while you are there
- Make a scrapbook of the things you do together this summer. Add as you go!



At what age should you feel safe in knowing that you may leave your child at home alone for the summer?

Here are some things to consider when deciding if your child is old enough to be home alone without a sitter:

- Generally speaking, a child must be 12 years of age or older before you are legally permitted to leave him home alone for any period of time. In some states and municipalities this may be different, and before you even consider doing so, check with your local law enforcement agency to know the laws.
- Your child needs to be responsible. Age does not matter, if your child is not responsible enough to know that he needs to sit down and start on his homework rather than playing video games. Additionally, does your child have good judgment and reasoning abilities, making it possible for him to remember not to open the door when the doorbell chimes, or not let a stranger on the phone know that you are not there?
- Does your child want to be left home alone? Some children are afraid, even if they are legally and otherwise ready to stay home alone. Do not force your child into this until he is sure that he is ready.
- How are siblings getting along? If you have an older child who likes to torment a younger one or vice versa, this is a recipe for disaster if you put the older child in charge. There is always a bit of bickering, but if the bickering is more or less physical fighting, this is a bad idea.
- Is your home safe? If you live in a safe neighborhood, your windows and doors are in good repair, and your child knows how to work the burglar alarm and call the authorities if necessary, you could say that it is by and large safe for your child to be home alone. On the other hand, if your home is near to venues that attract unsafe characters and if your neighborhood is prone to gang violence, leaving your child home alone is unwise.
- Have you trained your child in proper safety procedures? In other words, does your child know what to do if there was an attempted break-in, a fire, or other emergency?

If you answered yes to all of these questions and you believe that you and your child are ready to move into this next phase of the parent and child relationship, follow these simple steps to make this a positive and rewarding experience.

1. Start small. At first, leave your child alone for 30 minutes while you walk the dog. Gradually increase the amount of time to an hour. Over time, keep increasing the amount of time so that the child may explore his own comfort levels.
2. Reiterate the rules. Your child must be clear on the house rules and on the expectations you have when he is home alone. This may include responsibility for younger siblings, the notion that homework is to be started at a certain time, the rule that friends of the opposite sex may not visit in your absence, and a host of other do's and don'ts.
3. Prepare for emergencies. Your child must know what to do. If he is to be in charge of younger siblings, he needs to know infant and child CPR. Sign up for a class together. Additionally, your child needs to know how to operate a fire extinguisher, dial 9-1-1, and also give succinct instructions to emergency personnel who answer the telephone. Moreover, make sure your child has your mobile number and the numbers of other adults for backup.
4. Model what being home alone is all about. Your child should know what to do in several scenarios, such as losing a house key, having a stranger come to the door, getting hungry, needing help with homework, having you or the other parent running late, answering the telephone, and also dealing with getting lonely.
5. Prepare siblings for the inevitable power games. If you anticipate the squabbles and problems before they occur, you can most likely prevent a lot of bickering. Identify who is supposed to do what, who is in charge of what and of whom, and also who the ultimate authority is to make that phone call to you when all else fails.

<http://www.parent.net/article/home-alone.shtml>

Tips to Curb the Summertime Teen Blues



Summer is a time when teenagers are especially a challenge to manage. School's out; parents are at work, school-based clubs and organizations rarely meet, and there are fewer opportunities to find jobs due to age or transportation restrictions. For many teens, this adds up to a long, hot summer with nothing to do except spend time with their friends and possibly get into trouble. With time on their hands, restless teens may fill the void with unhealthy and risky behaviors such as alcohol, tobacco, illegal drug use, or sexual behaviors. That is when your help and encouragement can go a long way toward helping your teen find interesting things to do, making sure that your teen is occupied and supervised, suggesting ideas and prompting them to become involved/engaged in activities/work/volunteering, communicating expectations, and most importantly spending family time together.

Many parents wrongly assume that teens would rather spend summertime doing just about anything else than hanging with their parents. Not true! Recent surveys have shown that teens today actually crave the family experience more than they ever did. They are probably eager to spend quality time together or re-establish a relationship if you have drifted apart. Here are some ideas on how to make your time together memorable:

Movie night: Alternate choosing movie genres and share a bowl of popcorn

Outdoor Activities: Take advantage of the great outdoors by going fishing, camping, boating, etc.

Bowling: Often local bowling alleys have crazy bowl or "rock-n-bowl" where you can have fun as a family and win prizes

Make-a-pizza night: Shop together for ingredients and make the dough from scratch

Game Night: Apples to Apples, Catch Phrase, Phase 10, Taboo, or even Wii are all good ideas

Scrapbooking: A time to look back at family photos or answer questions about your heritage

Gardening: Include your teen in the vegetable decision-making process or as to what flowers you want planted on the side of your house

Home Improvement Projects: Be creative and start painting walls, wallpapering, or even refinishing those treasures found at garage sales or flea markets

Staying in Shape: You could go walking, hiking, riding, jogging, join midget league, or even go swimming

For additional information or ideas, please feel free to contact Tiffany Larson, Community Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (CAPP) Coordinator, at tlarson@hamiltoncountymhsb.org or 515-832-1791 ext 204.