

Holiday breaks mean different things to different people. For many, holidays are approached with much anticipation and high expectations for what will happen. For others holidays are a time to relax and reconnect with oneself and others. And, yet, for another group, the changes from a regular routine to less structure, travel or too much free time can create stress.

Families are encouraged to explore the expectations that each member has and to discuss the excitement and concerns.

EXPLORING EXPECTATIONS

Regardless of age, people communicate how they are feeling through their behaviours and words. During times of transition and when routines change a child or teen may have difficulty with expressing him/herself clearly. Parents may see children acting out their feelings (upset/tired/lack of control/hungry/frustrated/etc.) through a variety of different behaviours (crying/lashing out/easily angered/withdrawn/overly tired).

One thing that can help is to talk about what each person is expecting from summer. Often each person may have a different idea of what makes the holiday fun or what may be worried about. Children and teens feel more secure and in control when they know what to expect.

Family discussion questions for exploring one another's expectations:

- What do you think summer will be like?
- What would make summer 'great'?
- What might be difficult for you?
- What are you worried will / won't happen?

When setting holiday break expectations, consider clearly establishing specific expectations around things like screen time limits, time with friends, attendance at meals, learning activities, household chores, spending money, etc. The more clear parents are about family expectations, the better children are able to adjust to the changes.

SETTING ROUTINES

Routines are important for helping people feel safe and in control in their daily life. Parents may also feel more organized, prepared and in control when there are routines in place. A routine does not mean that everything needs to be exactly the same everyday, but making sure there are enough consistent structures and defined expectations will help children know what to expect. They usually mean less stress for everyone!

Identify routine changes and new routines so that you can begin talking with children early. Some of the common routine changes that cause difficulties during holidays include:

- Bedtime & wake-up hours
- Travel
- Sleeping arrangements (hotel, sharing a room, staying with family/friends)

Making the Most of Your Holiday

Museums in Singapore

- **Singapore Art Museum**
Free on Fridays 6:00-9:00pm
- **National Museum**
Free-guided tours with paid admission at set times throughout the week.
- **Civil Defence Heritage Gallery**
Admission in free, and on Saturday mornings there is an open house at the fire station.
- **Peranakan Museum**
Family friendly Sunday programs with events and tours.
- **Air Force Museum**
Free admission all the time
- **National Gallery Singapore's Keppel Centre for Art Education**
Activity calendar with events and crafts for kids
- **Art Science Museum**
Discount admission for Marina Bay Sands rewards

- Summer school or camp hours
- Caretaker changes
- Increased free or unstructured time
- Time with friends
- Screen time

FAMILY TIME

Holidays can be a wonderful time for families to plan activities together. Involve children in helping decide what to do during family times and consider picking a time during the week that is set aside to do something fun together. If it is not planned, family time may not happen as often as we think it will. Consider cooking together one night a week, have a game night, pick a book to read aloud as a family, or let each family member plan a Saturday morning outing during the summer.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Make a game out of brainstorming ideas with your family for things to do over the summer holiday. You can even create an "I'm Bored" jar for those times when children say they have nothing to do. If you like surprises, put big activity ideas in a jar and pull one out each week throughout the summer.

- Pack a picnic lunch and go to Botanical Gardens
- Use recyclables around the house to build something.
- Make up your own game board with rules to teach the family.
- Write a short story or draw a comic strip of your day
- Design an outfit for your pet/sibling/doll/action figure.
- Paper airplane competition
- Fold origami cranes
- Put on music and make a dance routine
- Take the obikes for a ride

Idea Jar



THEME IDEAS

It can be fun to pick a theme for each week or to assign each day of the week an activity.

- ❖ Science Theme: conduct science experiments at home, a visit to the Science Centre, have a paper airplane making competition, learning about insects
- ❖ Make a meal together Mondays - include children in all aspects of the planning, grocery shopping, preparation and cooking of a meal
- ❖ Library Tuesdays
- ❖ Water Wednesdays - Visit the different beaches or parks around Singapore, play water games (water balloon toss, squirt guns), make your own bath soaps, spend time at the pool
- ❖ Friend Fridays – make a play date with another family or plan sleepovers

RESOURCES

- www.littledayout.com Ideas for families in Singapore with preschool to upper primary aged children
- www.Pinterest.com Search for a range of ideas such as family friendly cooking, art projects, science experiments, etc.