

A few ideas to support your child's development and learning during the summer.

Downtime Builds Executive Function Skills

Getting used to the rhythm and relative slowness of summer can be fun for the first few days, but let's face it, it can get old once the novelty passes, especially if there are stretches where your children are not at camp. An interesting [study](#) highlights the connection between children's unstructured time and their executive functioning skills. In other words, **when children are engaged in play or unstructured activities, they develop skills such as imagination, creativity, planning, organization, and self-regulation.** [Summer Activities](#)

Engage Your Children in Planning Activities

Enlist your child's ideas and brainstorm together the many things they can do or learn. Get creative and turn it into a [Summer Bingo game](#), with words or pictures to help your child. There are many great ideas online and it's a playful way to offer choice and self-direction. *Make sure to include a free space on the bingo board to encourage creativity and spontaneity!

Develop competency around the house

Over the summer, support your child's growing confidence by asking them to contribute around the house. Ideas include cooking (shopping for, preparing, cleaning up), cleaning out the car or watering the flowers. Young children are great helpers, and they can take on a lot more than we give them credit for when given appropriate tools and instructions. Here's a great [list](#) of age-appropriate chores and some tips from WebMD. Remember, the way they do it might not be exactly the way you do it but **make sure to tell them how grateful you are for their help.**

Expand Interests and Learn a new skill

Summer is an excellent opportunity to develop new skills and expand children's interests. Invite your child to think about a couple of things they would like to learn this summer. Share something that you would like to learn too and let them see you learning and developing that skill. Whether it's magic tricks, a musical instrument or learning to ride a bike, a new skill builds confidence. As a reminder, if your child is a little timid it's helpful to think of a family goal to work on together - **there is both safety and courage when working as a team!**

Consider starting an allowance

Young children ages 4 or 5 years old can start getting allowance (one rule of thumb is their age=allowance). There are many great piggy banks online with dividers. It's a great way to start teaching kids about money and your values, encourage decision-making and help them think about themselves as well as others. For a great book to read about allowance, I encourage you to read [The Opposite of Spoiled](#) by New York Times Money Editor Ron Lieber. It's a great read and summer is a perfect opportunity to explore this idea together. **In speaking with a GV parent, she encouraged her daughters to clean out the car to earn money for the bagel sale.**

Be Present Together

The summer goes so fast. It can be helpful to remind yourself and your children to be present and to soak in all what summer has to offer. Put down the cell phones and other technology! I love this great [list](#) from Left Brain Buddha, especially the popsicle challenge!