Summer BreakSpots

If your child usually eats breakfast and/or lunch at school or his child care program and will not be enrolled this summer, you may need assistance with meals. Look for Summer BreakSpots in your community to help you provide nutritious breakfasts and lunches for him during the summer. Summer BreakSpots are locations where children and teens can get free meals while schools are out for the summer.

In Florida, the Summer BreakSpots are sponsored by the Florida Department of Agriculture and located in many communities across the state. Summer BreakSpot locations are a place for kids and teens, 18 and under, to go and enjoy free meals while school is out. Summer BreakSpots are supervised meal sites! Many are located at places like parks, libraries and churches and offer breakfasts, lunches, snacks or dinner. At most sites, there is no application necessary and any child 18 or younger can simply come during meal times to receive a meal. To find a site near you dial 2-1-1 or text “FoodFL” to 877-877. You can find a site online at https://www.summerbreakspot.org/

More information on BreakSpot:
- Provides nutritious meals at no cost to children 18 and under while school is out for the summer.
- New sites are added daily so be sure to check back regularly #FLBreakSpot.
- Operates at schools, nonprofit organizations and government entities, such as parks and libraries.
Outdoors in Florida - A Perfect Place to Learn

There is no better way to keep your child learning during the summer than exploring nature. Since June is Great Outdoors Month and June 8, 2019 is National Get Outdoors Day, take advantage of state and local opportunities for your child to explore and learn about nature. The Get Outdoors Florida campaign brings partners together to engage communities, families, and individuals in outdoor experiences to promote healthier lifestyles and an appreciation for Florida’s natural resources. Their website has information for families on fishing, hiking, birding trails and gardening.

Walking around your yard, neighborhood or a local park is a great way to teach your child about nature. Talking about the trees, plants, insects and birds you see is an opportunity for your child to learn new words as well as science and math concepts. Counting the birds or flowers you see during your walk or finding patterns in the leaves on a bush or flower is practicing math concepts. Talking to your child about the way the rain and the sun help plants grow is helping your child learn science concepts. After your walk, read your child a book about birds or insects you saw on your walk or find pictures of the birds or insects on your computer. Visit a local library or children’s museum to learn more about wildlife in your community.

Visit a state park or a national park with your family during the month of June. There are special events and different types of trails and activities in each park. Your child can become a Junior Ranger by completing 6 Core Activities from the Junior Ranger Kit.

There are 11 national parks in Florida. Most cities and many communities have parks with activities for children and families.

Contact your local parks and recreation department to find the nearest parks and the activities schedule for the summer.

Florida has many rivers, springs, lakes, pools and great beaches where families can enjoy the water. Boating, canoeing, swimming, snorkeling, fishing or tubing can be a wonderful way to get out and enjoy activities as a family. Be sure to teach your child how to stay safe around and in the water. For brochures on pool safety and to learn how to be a water watcher visit WaterSmart FL. Watch a video on pool safety to learn about layers of protection, barriers and how to be a water watcher. If your child has special needs, make sure you know how to protect your child in any type of water.

Spend the summer exploring nature, exploring Florida and your local community, keeping your child safe and healthy and showing him how much fun it is to learn!
Counting on Dads

The Daddy Factor is so important in the lives of children! From the prenatal period until adulthood, children reap the benefits of a dad’s positive presence in their lives! Research has shown that a positive relationship between a child and their dad supports the child’s development in all areas especially in physical and social-emotional development and thinking skills. Dads as partners in childrearing begins before birth and extends until the child is an adult. Dads who read to their child, help with daily tasks such as bathing, feeding, or dressing them and have conversations with their child throughout the day are setting their child up for success in school and in life. Zero to Three focuses on five ways that dads and father figures make a big difference in the lives of their children.

When dads are involved in the daily care of their children, the children are more confident and have stronger social connections with peers as they get older.

Fathers or male role models, who engage in rough and tumble play with their children, help them learn to regulate their feelings and behavior and teach them how to deal with aggressive impulses and physical contact in socially acceptable ways.

The more time dads spend in enriching, stimulating play with their children such as sharing stories and pretend play, the better they perform in reading and math at ages 10 and 11.

Children whose fathers are more involved in their lives learn to handle stress and frustrations, have less depression and are less likely to get in trouble at school or in their neighborhoods.

Children whose fathers are physically and emotionally remote during the first 12 months of their lives are more aggressive when they enter preschool.
Daddy Play & Talk

As a dad or male role model for a young child, in addition to helping with daily routines and reading to your child, there are other ways to support your child’s learning and development. If an activity looks like child’s play, it is probably the best way to support your child’s learning. Think of the things you enjoyed as a young child and use those activities to help your child learn new skills and concepts. Choose the activities that work best for you and your child to support his learning. Make boxes of materials that you can quickly take out for a fun activity.

Pretend play:
Gather old hats, clothes, tools, discarded wallets, purses, cell phones, toy animals, toy vehicles. Use these to “pretend” you and your child are storekeepers, doctors, teachers, mechanics, cooks, restaurant workers, post office workers, veterinarians and a variety of other roles. Switch roles if your child gets bored or restless.

Art:
Gather different types of paper, crayons, markers, safety scissors, glue and paste. Have an “art outing” or stay at home and create art together. Visit a park and create pictures of what you see or do at the park. Stay at home and create pictures of your family and friends or draw places you would like to visit.

Blocks:
Use wooden or plastic colored blocks or empty boxes to build together. Choose the ones that are best for the age of your child.

Work together to create buildings, roads, farms, zoos, and make signs to go with your creations. You can build outdoors or inside. Building together and talking about what you are building and how you are building it increases your child’s vocabulary and her science and math skills.

Math:
Use board games, playing cards, puzzles, rulers, measuring tape, dice, empty egg cartons or ice cube trays, pennies and buttons to practice math skills (sort, count, make patterns, measure and compare). Make up your own games or use games you have on hand. Measure and compare how far you and your child can jump, run in one minute, toss a ball, hop on one foot and how high you can build a tower. Use the items to make different kinds of patterns or look for patterns in nature (leaves, butterfly wings, flowers, rocks).

Water Play:
If you prefer to stay inside, use the bathtub, kitchen sink or a plastic tub filled with water or go outdoors and use plastic bins or tubs to have fun with water. You can put a few drops of food dye in the water so your child can experiment with mixing colors. Have different sizes of plastic cups, pitchers, and other containers for him to fill and empty, compare and spill, or find small plastic ocean animals or fish for him to use in pretend play. Counting, measuring, comparing and making up stories about the animals or fish are all important school readiness skills your child will practice as he has fun with you and the water.
Child Drowning in Florida for Ages 0–19
SURVEILLANCE DATA: 2017
FLORIDA VIOLENCE AND INJURY PREVENTION

There were 107 non-fatal hospitalizations from unintentional drowning. Children ages 1-4 accounted for 63% of these hospitalizations.

There were 101 deaths from unintentional drowning. 60% of these deaths were children ages 1-4. Nationally, drowning is the leading cause of death in this age group. Florida’s rate is the highest in the U.S. (2016).

The Layers of Protection
Make Pool Time a Safer Time

EVERYONE IN THE FAMILY SHOULD KNOW HOW TO SWIM.

WATCH Designate an adult water watcher when children are around or in the pool.

USE BARRIERS Make your home pool safer with a 4-sided fence that includes alarms, gates and locks.

EDUCATE Teach children how to swim. Not every child is ready to swim at the same age so ask your family doctor.

BE READY Learn CPR and get re-certified every 2 years. Keep a phone and safety equipment near the pool.

LEARN MORE:
WaterSmartFL.com
PoolSafely.gov
ndpa.org
SafeKids.org
BlackKidsSwim.com
Summer Learning Adventures at Family Friendly Libraries & Museums

Many libraries and museums across Florida reach out to families, inviting them to visit and discover all of the ways they can help families support their children’s learning and development. You may think of libraries and museums as places where you have to be very quiet and children are not welcome. But, today’s libraries and museums are family friendly and are eager to have your family visit.

Take your child to visit the library and find out what your local library has to offer. You may be surprised by the number of programs and resources the library has for families. Your child will enjoy the children’s book area where she can select books to check out and take home. The children’s area usually has places where your child can play, listen to stories and learn to use a computer. Most libraries have special programs for children and their parents or grandparents, including story time, classes on how to use the resources available at the library, access to computers and free internet access, digital media classes, literacy classes, Grandparents as Parents Meetings, parenting classes such as Parent Cafe’ or Strengthening Families, English language classes, GED classes and other classes to support families in the community.

The library is a great place to meet other families and enjoy talking with other parents.

This summer, libraries across the state will celebrate space exploration in the 2019 summer reading program. The slogan “A Universe of Stories” was selected by library professionals to help inspire children of all ages to dream big, believe in themselves, and create their own story. Families are encouraged to check out the local public library and participate in all of the fantastic activities as well as discover the wonder of books.

Many museums are designed specifically for children and families or have a family area in the museum. Museums offer places for your child to explore, be amazed and fascinated by the things he sees, hears and experiences. Some museums offer summer camps for children or special events for children and families during the summer. If you or someone in your family is in the military, you and your family get free admission to museums across the country from Armed Forces Day (May 18) to Labor Day (Sept. 2) in 2019.