



## Making Summer Memories

By Jane Argiero

Did you know that creating family memories increases bonding and attachment as well as joy in our lives? It's also a way to help children heal from trauma.

Adding special family traditions to occasions such as birthdays and holidays is one way of creating happy memories. We can create special moments out of almost anything. My family had a tradition of going out for donuts the first day of school and ice cream on the last day. You can put a candle in the meatloaf when a child passes a test they've studied hard for or have a tradition of going to the beach every Labor Day.

We don't need to rely on special occasions to have special family times. Summer allows most families extra free time for recreation and togetherness. If you view this as an opportunity to build a catalog of happy memories in your mind and with your children, it will help you through the hard times and draw you closer together.

Of course there are big things, such as going to a theme park, but it's the daily opportunities which are often overlooked. Here are some ideas to help you make the most of those ordinary Summer days and create lasting, happy memories for your family.

- Go outside after dusk and catch fireflies in pickle jars.
- Roast marshmallows over the grill or a fire pit.
- Pitch a backyard tent and sleep in it or just use it for play during the day.



- Check out a book on constellations from the library. Take a blanket outside after dark on a clear night. Lie down and look at the sky, identifying the stars.
- Go to a local pond with little fish nets and jars. Catch tadpoles and watch them turn to frogs.
- Make a bonfire on the Summer Solstice or cover a cake with blazing candle.
- Create routines such as Saturday morning trips to the farmers market, evening story time on a blanket under a shade tree, or Sunday barbecues.
- Go to the same summer cabin, campground or hotel in a place you love for a weekend every year, and your kids will have great memories of "the place they went each summer."
- Take up a family hobby or choose an activity to do together on a regular basis such as a bike ride after dinner or fishing on Saturday mornings.
- Make it a family tradition to go to a pro or semi-pro baseball game each summer.

Having fun together brings a family closer, helps to relieve stress and helps family members like and appreciate each other. It gives us a break from thinking of our children as a project and our daily lives as work. As adults, we remember some of the harder things in our childhood, but it's the happy memories which keep us committed to one another and give us a sense of what our own family can be.

Give your children happy memories of special times with family this summer.

# Summer is for Reading!

By Jane Argiero

Many parents notice that their children seem to regress academically over the summer. This is particularly worrisome if your children are already behind in school. Much of this is normal and expected. Parents should not be too concerned because the first month of school is spent reviewing what was taught the year before. But, there are ways to help prevent that summer slide. The number one advice from teachers is to READ.

**Establish a solid bedtime story routine with younger children.** Summer may offer the opportunity for a later bedtime and one more story. You might give a flashlight to your independent readers and tell them they can stay up a little later if they are reading. Keep electronics out of bedrooms after bedtime. Even if your child is a good reader, keep the routine of reading to them for as long as you can. One father I know read the whole Harry Potters series aloud to his 10 and 13 year olds.

**A weekly trip to the library can be really motivating to all readers.** When I had a house full of kids, we would often check out 30 books at a time! Many libraries have summer reading programs where kids of all ages can earn prizes for reading. Library story times can be wonderful for younger kids.

Some libraries may be closed due to COVID-19 but offer pick up services or virtual programming.

**Don't forget audio books.** Listen to audiobooks in the car, at bedtime or anytime. Audio books help to increase attention spans, comprehension and vocabulary. There are lots of free audiobooks at [librivox.com](http://librivox.com). I recommend the Burgess animal books series for younger children, and the classics such as *The Secret Garden* and *Treasure Island* for older children. Most libraries provide audio books and where you'll have access to the newer children's books.

**Another tip: pick up a list from your library of recommended books.** They often have lists of Caldecott Award Winners (best picture books), Newberry Award Winners (best children's fiction) and lists by age or interest.

I love good children's literature, but if you have a reluctant reader he or she may not. Look for reading material that will interest your children. Graphic novels are wonderful for many kids who will read them when they won't read other books.

Some children prefer nonfiction books about things they are interested. One of my children would only read books about alligators and sharks for an entire year.

**Mix it up.** Read in a backyard tent or a blanket at the park. Have grandma or the babysitter read to your children. Have a family read aloud in the evenings. Bring books with you no matter where you go, so your independent readers have a book whenever they feel the urge. Hard copies are probably best because our kids already spend a lot of time on screens, but if your child prefers reading on a tablet that's something you want to consider providing.

**Be a role model.** Let your children catch you reading. Join a book club. Let them see you choosing books for yourself at a store or library. Ask for a book for your birthday. Have a bookcase in your bedroom or the living room.

With a little effort on your part, you may be able to get your children reading more than ever this summer! But if your reluctant reader won't go along with your suggestions or plans, please don't get upset. As with everything else, we prioritize attachment and healing from trauma in our children who have been adopted. We don't want to look for more things to create stress or conflict.

Some people will never choose to read for pleasure, and others may learn to enjoy books as adults. Some will always struggle with reading, despite our best efforts. No matter what type of reader you have, the best thing to do is to make reading interesting, pleasurable and easily accessible. The rest will be up to them.



## Medical Subsidy Updates

From Alyssa Stuperak,  
DHHS Adoption Subsidy Office

Starting 4/1/21 Medical Subsidy Policy, AAM640, will be active with updates to the Medical Subsidy program and available funding. Policy changes were made based on observed needs of the families the Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Office works with every day, their suggestions, as well as suggestions from community partners working with adoptive and guardianship families. Some of the changes include increased funding allotted for medical and dental needs not covered by insurance, increased flexibility with tutoring and camp funds to allow families to access services that will best meet their child's needs, and expansion to mental health funding, including the addition of respite funds, to promote the utilization of community treatment options. Please contact your assigned ongoing worker in the Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Office for additional information on services that can support your family and the prior approval process to receive funding. Contact information for your assigned ongoing worker can be viewed at [Michigan.gov/documents/dhs/DHS-AdoptionSubsidy-Contacts\\_253834\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/DHS-AdoptionSubsidy-Contacts_253834_7.pdf).

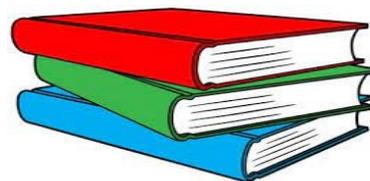
## Summer Camps

Did you know about the Adoption Medical Subsidy Camp Benefit?



The medical subsidy program may cover up to \$500 per calendar year for the cost of summer camp. The camp program must be a specialized treatment camp that provides services related to a condition certified by the Medical Subsidy Office. Overnight and day camps must be licensed in the state where they are located. Adoption medical subsidy will not cover the costs of transportation to or from the camp. Pre-approval must be obtained through the Medical Subsidy Office. PARC can assist you with the application and finding an approved camp.

## Staff Recommendations



***The Gifts of Imperfection*** by Brene Brown is a great read. Below is one of the downloads by Brene Brown that really speaks to me.

<https://brenebrown.com/tgoi-downloads/>

Another good read I would recommend is ***I'm Still Here: Black Dignity In A World Made For Whiteness*** by Austin Channing Brown.

I appreciated how she shared her story and experiences. It was a thoughtful book that I found informative. It will absolutely change how I see things and my actions. ~ Laura

My all time favorite is still ***20 Things Adoptees wish their parents knew*** by Sherrie Aldridge.

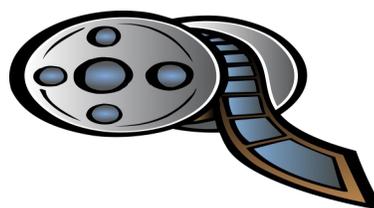
~ Tracy

I often recommend ***The Great Behavior Breakdown*** by Bryan Post. Dr. Post really understands parenting children with trauma and knows what will support them. ~ Jane

I recommend ***Anne with an E***. It is a Netflix show depicting an orphan. I was touched by the theme of needing to feel wanted and loved and the need to seek out her birth family. ~ Luginia

I love ***Finding Nemo*** because it is a rare example of a father stepping up and doing his best instead of being portrayed as an inept loser. ~ Jonathon

I was really moved by the movie ***Instant Family***. I felt this movie displayed real emotions related to the adoption journey. ~ Somer



# PARC EVENTS

Build connections with and get support from others who truly understand!

## Monthly Online Support Groups:

### **Fabulous Foster and Adoptive Parents**

Date: 1st Monday of Each Month

Time: 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

### **Family Connections**

Date: 1st Thursday of Each Month

Time: 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.

### **Adoptive Parent Support Group**

Date: 2nd Monday of Each Month

Time: 7:30 - 9 p.m.

### **Dads Only**

Date: 2nd Wednesday of Each Month

Time: 9 - 10 p.m.

### **Moms Only**

Date: 3rd Thursday of Each Month

Time: 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.

For questions or to register for support groups or events, contact [parc\\_5@judsoncenter.org](mailto:parc_5@judsoncenter.org) or 734-528-2047.

For a complete list of events, visit the calendar page on our website. Additional activities and resources are listed there as well.

[www.parc-judson.org/calendar](http://www.parc-judson.org/calendar)

We asked PARC families about the trainings and support groups they attended. Here are their responses:

**Dad's Only**– “It was a great way for dads to connect and see they are not the only dads out there.”

**Parenting in the Digital Age**–“The presenter was excellent, provided valuable information, very engaging and held participants interest.”

**Family Connections**– “Love the people and the help I receive here! “

**Fabulous Foster and Adoptive Parents**– “These people are my tribe. This group has helped me get through so many things.”



### Mailing Address

3840 Packard Rd. Suite 170

Ann Arbor, MI

Region 5 Phone: 734-794-2988

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