



### **Cool Tips For Summer Fun That Don't Break The Bank** **Double the family fun without doubling the cost**

When school let's out every summer, the thoughts of children and families across the nation turn to fun-filled summer days. But rather than letting summer break the bank, Family Foundations suggests the following that fun, inexpensive activities to pass the sunny days with children.

- **Visit the local library.** Most local libraries provide regular storytelling programs that provide an air-conditioned break that keeps even the youngest and oldest reader's learning skills sharp. It's also an inexpensive way to check out books or books on tape with your child. Bedtime stories can take on fresh meaning as children explore "new" books with their parents. Each visit can have a different theme of interest to your child. For example, consider checking out books about the beach before a family vacation.
- **Family movie nights.** In addition to renting a movie and making your favorite (and less expensive) traditional movie snacks, many movie theaters will offer free or reduced summer kids movie programs. Or if the family wants to catch the latest release, consider going to a weekend matinee, which can provide a significant cost-savings for adults and a cool daytime break from the summer heat.
- **Free or reduced summer trips to local museums, art galleries.** With soaring gas prices, now is the time to check out those local museum and gallery treasures right in your backyard. Contact local museums to see if they offer free or reduced summertime programs for children. Or some museums will offer discounted prices on their slowest days. Consider packing a lunch, snack and/or drinks (if allowed by the museum) and have a picnic.
- **Visit local playgrounds and parks.** A visit to a playground in the next town will be an adventure for kids to explore "new" slides, monkey bars and swings. Maybe the kids have been begging to visit a nearby skate park, or biking/hiking trail (remember the appropriate safety gear!). Or take a short trip to a nearby state or national park that can provide hours of free- or low-cost family excitement – from hikes, picnics, fishing or even catching fireflies.
- **Visit nearby friends and family with a series of day or overnight trips.** Do you have family and friends that live too far away to meet for dinner, but close enough to not cost a fortune in gas? Consider making a series of day (or overnight trips) to grandma's house, a favorite aunt's house or even an old friend that also has children. A change of scenery is good for kids and the company typically is enjoyable for the parents, too!
- **Establish childcare "sharing" programs** – Pooling your resources and manpower with neighbors, friends and families can be a powerful (and enjoyable) way for traditional summer activities of just visiting with friends. Consider striking a deal with your neighbor to watch one another's children once a week for a couple of hours. This allows each mom to enjoy some alone time to relax or run errands, and visiting someone else's house is a sure cure for the "I'm bored" blues.

The key to finding inexpensive family activities is a little research, forethought and creativity. By incorporating a series of free or low-cost activities you are teaching your children to treasure the time spent together rather than the money spent on the activity.

**Family Foundations** stands ready to help. To reach us, call (904) 396-4846 or go online to [www.familyfoundations.org](http://www.familyfoundations.org).

**About Family Foundations**

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