It’s that time of year when the excitement of summer time, warmer weather, more daylight hours, the beach, the park, and picnics are on our minds. It’s also a time of transition. Summer often brings more time at home for children, later bedtimes, and more time outdoors. All changes can be hard, especially when you are adjusting schedules and expectations. Take a moment to think about how your child’s life and yours might be different this summer.

What are some of the fun things you are looking forward to and some of the changes you will need to make? Don’t forget to make you and your child a priority as you think about some ways to relax and play.

Fun in the Sun and Outdoors: Summer Safety Tips

Make plenty of time to go outside and have fun, but protect yourself and your children from the sun!

- Avoid direct sun between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm, when ultraviolet (UV) rays are strongest.
- Wear sunglasses with 99% UV protection.
- Wear a hat or cap with a brim to shield the face.
- Use sunscreen that is:
  1. broad or full spectrum (protects skin from all UV light)
  2. SPF (sun protection factor) at least 15 (or higher)
- Apply sunscreen 15-30 minutes before going outdoors. Reapply every 2 hours.
- Be a role model – apply sunscreen to yourself.
- Dress your baby in a light weight long sleeved shirt, pants, and a hat. Keep your baby under the shade of a tree, or use an umbrella or stroller canopy! If direct sun can’t be avoided, use a very small amount of PABA-free sunscreen on the back of hands and on the face, avoiding the eyes.
Enjoy the outdoors during the day and evening, but don’t forget about those pesky bugs!

- Use insect repellent containing DEET to prevent insect related diseases like Lyme Disease or West Nile Disease.
- For children over 2 months old, use 10-30% DEET.
- 10% DEET lasts for about 2 hours and 30% DEET lasts for about 5 hours.
- Choose the lowest concentration of DEET required.
- Do not use DEET on babies under 2 months old!

Did you know?

- Sunscreen with zinc oxide comes in fun colors for your nose, cheeks, tips of ears, and shoulders.
- Sunscreen washes off after swimming. Be sure to reapply even the “water proof” kind!
- You can get a sun burn even on a cloudy day.
- Children (and grown-ups) with dark complexions burn too. Sometimes you can’t see skin damage!
- Babies 6 months old or younger should always be protected from the sun and in the shade at all times.
- One way to protect children from bug bites is to have them wear long-sleeved tops and pants when outside, particularly at dusk and in the evening.
- If you would like a more natural insect repellent, there are some lotions and sprays that use ingredients from nature that bugs don’t like such as rosemary, or citronella.
- You can even make your own bug spray or lotion! There are lots of good ideas for homemade insect repellent on the web. These tend to only last for 15-20 minutes though, so be sure to reapply if outside for longer periods of time!

Minding the Baby

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