

Another 864 Hours Wasted

Since school closed in the middle of June, about 864 hours have passed. How wisely have your children used their 864 hours? Out of the 864 hours (36 days) your children should have slept at least 360 hours. That's about ten hours a day. "You've got to be kidding," I can hear you saying right now. Most children during this first half of the summer vacation would have only slept about 180 hours (five hours a day) and have watched a minimum of 300 hours of television. That's at least eight hours of television each day. If your child was in school during that same period, that child would have spent 300 hours in the classroom. While in the classroom, the child is learning, growing, and developing social and academic skills useful for a lifetime. During the first six weeks of summer vacation, 300 hours of television watching does not provide the same developmental opportunity. In fact, it would have been more destructive intellectually and emotionally. **Sadly, some children would have spent only 1.8 hours reading the Bible during the same time period (864 hours). With 300 hours of television viewing and 1.8 hours of Bible reading, which one is more influential in their lives? There is a possibility that the majority of Children would have not yet opened the Bible to read voluntarily during the summer. But like a trained robot, their hands would have turned on and off the television set at least 100 times.**

During the past 846 hours, your children would have pushed out of the brain at least 40% of what they have put into it during the school year. This is according to a research done at Johns Hopkins University. Many teachers admit that for the first few weeks in school, they spend lots of time reviewing the material they taught before the school year ended. It is often wasted time. Unless the long vacations are better organized to provide mental growth, teachers will continue to waste time teaching and re-teaching.

STRUCTURE

How can you help your children retain during the summer vacation more of what they have learned during the school year? There are about 43 more days before school re-opens. That's another 1032 more hours to provide organized activities that can enhance your children both intellectually and emotionally. I recommend that your children watch no more than 150 hours of television between now and the day school opens for the new school year. They should sleep at least 430 hours (10 hours a day) and not 215 (five hours a day), what many children would normally do. Here are more recommendations for the remaining part of the summer vacation:

1. Make sure your children read at least two hours for every hour they spend watching television.
2. Have your own "Summer Reading Project." Let your children choose a new book to read and provide a short summary of the book at the end of the summer.

3. Between now and September 1, have at least 144 hours of television black-out time. That's at least one entire day out of every week without the television.
5. Organize local cultural tours of Nassau or The Bahamas. Plan to spend about 15 to 30 hours during the remaining weeks visiting historical sites, government ministries, art and cultural museums, for example.
4. Find fun toys, games, activities for children to do on the outdoor every day.
5. Make sure, as parents, you spend at least one to two hours each day playing, reading, or working with your children.
4. If the children are old enough, make sure they have at least five hours a day of work on a job or at home.
5. One hour each week for the rest of the summer, let your children review something they have learned during the school year.
6. Three weeks before school begins, make sure your children spend about 20 to 30 minutes every other day reading, planning, and studying from books for the new school year.
7. Enroll your children in a supplemental education program such as Oxford Learning.

OTHER CREATIVE THINGS TO DO

Here are a few more creative activities to make the summer months fun and educational. Let your children learn the local and scientific names of ten trees and ten birds in your neighborhood. Help your children create a scrapbook of their summer activities (photos, newspaper clippings, etc.). Let your children write a new story, adding a new paragraph each day. Let them read the story to family members during an end-of-summer party. Go on a one-day trail walk and let them report on every new thing they have observed – birds, plants, rocks, insects, trees, etc.

THE MISTAKE

Parents make a big mistake each year by not providing structure during the summer months. They drop all guards and standards, thinking it is best for their children. This is detrimental to children's welfare. Although the structure can be different during the summer months, the principles are to remain. That is, children should obtain sufficient rest, nutrition, social and intellectual stimulation. Too many children learn negative habits during the summer months that would affect their lives forever. If only they had parents who cared enough and were wise enough to provide the same standard and structure they did during the school year! Parents, this information in this article is relevant for students in elementary and secondary schools (ages 5 to 18). No one is exempted. **Barrington Brennen is a marriage and family therapist. Send your questions and comments to P.O. Box N-896 or email at question@soencouragement.org or call 1242 323 8772 or visit the website www.soencouragement.org**