



WE MADE IT!

Another school year has almost come to an end, and what a year it has been. Here at TDSB Psychological Services, it has been a pleasure working with students, families, and our school teams to celebrate strengths and successes, challenge adversity, and provide support for learning and life. We want to especially thank YOU – the caregivers & families at TDSB – for your advocacy & tireless effort in enriching the well-being of our students.

Thank you to our editing team and our wonderful colleagues from TDSB Psychological Services who contributed to the newsletters this year. From our hearts & minds to yours, we wish students, families, and all members of the TDSB community a happy, safe, and fun-filled summer!



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Our articles, tips, and suggestions do not constitute treatment advice.

If you or a family member is in crisis, please contact [Kids Help Phone](tel:1-800-668-6868): 1-800-668-6868 or The Distress Centre: 416-408-4357

Did You Know?

by Afroze Anjum, Psy.D., C.Psych.



After a long winter, many people look forward to the summer months to spend more time with family and friends, and enjoy outdoor activities. While summer can be a great mood booster and a refreshing break for many, it can also bring unique challenges for some.

1 The behaviour of some students with diagnosed mental health conditions may worsen without the structure and routine of school. There are a number of ideas in this issue to check out (see page 4), including information about managing our kids' big emotions this summer, as well as strategies for keeping summertime structured & routine-based, for those who may need it most.

2 One challenge experienced by some students during summer break is academic learning loss. Research has shown that the summer break can lead to a loss of about one month of classroom learning. The loss is more evident in math skills compared to reading skills. This learning loss is also experienced more by students from lower-income or under-resourced neighbourhoods, while those from a higher socio-economic status tend to improve in reading. Fun reading activities such as joining a [book club](#), making regular visits to the [library](#), or reading with your child every day can help them keep up with their literacy skills. For ideas on how to practice math skills this summer, see page 3!

3 Summer can also bring social comparisons among students in terms of their summer vacations and plans. This can pose a social or emotional challenge for some. Decide what summer activities work best for your family. Emphasize the excitement and fun your family is having as opposed to comparing yourselves to other family or friends, as that can bring

unhelpful negative feelings for youth. Practice [gratitude](#) with your child by finishing or beginning every day with a list of experiences that brought you joy and activities you are looking forward to in the days ahead.



Managing Big Emotions This Summer

by Laura Cousineau, M.A.S.P., C. Psych. Assoc.

When our kids and teenagers are feeling inconsolable – angry, sad, overwhelmed – we tend to offer reassurance right away. We might say, "I know you're sad but don't worry, everything will be okay." However, is this approach always helpful?

This summer, try the "3 L's" approach when helping your children manage their big emotions ([adapted from Dr. A. LaFrance](#)). This approach uses "because instead of saying but", and it can help your child learn to self-regulate when they are upset. This approach teaches kids that it is okay to feel upset and ask for help if they need it, and it also promotes positive communication skills between yourself and your child.

And it only takes 3 steps...



LISTEN

Take a calming breath or two. Remember, others borrow our calm.



"Hi Sam. What's wrong?"

Engage in active & open listening (even if you don't agree with them!)



LABEL

Label their feelings for them (this can be especially hard for kids to do in a high emotional state).

Validate by using BECAUSE, not BUT!

"You're feeling angry because Ava took your toy without asking. Is that right?"



Support their emotional and/or practical needs as best you can.



LEND A HAND

Remember, support comes in many ways. You can comfort, give space, problem-solve, re-direct, or offer teamwork to manage the issue at hand.



"How can we make this situation better? Let's work together on this."

Fun with Creative Writing this Summer!



By Jennifer Kapler, M.A., C.Psych.

Summer can be a time to rest and relax, but that doesn't mean you can't practice some writing skills in a fun way! The physical act of writing helps solidify important skills that support the development of reading and spelling. In all children, creative writing can help with language expression and comprehension. Here are fun activities to encourage writing this summer!

Make a 'Writing Prompt' Jar

Fill a jar with slips of paper containing prompts for writing (e.g. "I wish I was....", "Sometimes, it's hard to..."). Have your child choose a random slip of paper from the jar (no peeking!), set a timer for 5-10 minutes, and start writing! Encourage use of sentences, point form, or whichever writing style is most appropriate for them. Have your child share their writing with a family member, or use this as a rainy day family activity!

Journaling

For older youth and teens, starting a journal is a good way to get them to practice writing. Some 'fillable' journals (e.g., Wreck This Journal) can kick start the process in a fun way.

Mad Libs

These are silly fill-in-the-blank stories, that are a fun way to introduce kids to grammar (e.g., nouns, verbs) and express their creativity. Mad Libs are also a great time filler during summer road trips, bus rides, or while waiting in line during all your summer activities!

Write the Room Game

A spin on 'Eye Spy' - Choose a letter of the alphabet, find things in the room or outdoor area that start with that letter, and write them all down. Whoever can find the most items on the list, wins! A fun game for elementary-aged children to play together and take turns writing.

Write Letters to Summer 'Pen Pals'

Set up a summer 'pen pal' for your child to write letters or emails to. The 'pen pal' can be a grandparent, school friend, or through a group like [Friendly Connections](#), which offers support to youth with differing abilities (through [Connectability & Community Living Toronto](#)).

Post Card Adventures

When you visit places this summer, pick up some postcards and have your child write about their trip. Mail the postcards to friends or family, or you can drop them off in a loved ones mailbox! You don't even have to leave Toronto... You can pick up postcards from tourist destinations around the city, or make your own postcards about an imaginary trip to a magical destination!

'Adding' Math to your Summer Fun!

By Lauren Dade, Ph.D., C.Psych.

Without regular practice in the summer, children tend to lose some of the math skills they have learned during the school year. But you don't have to sit your kids down to do math sheets – there are better and more fun ways! Math happens everywhere around us, so mixing math into the summer day-to-day is easy and can help to maintain and maybe even improve your child's math skills. And since math is universal, practicing it in different languages helps with learning! Here are some ideas:

When setting the table: How many forks do we need? Let's fold napkins into triangles!

When shopping: How much money do we need to pay for this? Can you find four quarters? Can you pick out 3 oranges?

When cooking and baking: That's all about understanding fractions and multiplication! Talking about math and using hands-on items and visuals to assist with counting, grouping, and addition and subtraction can help to build understanding, skills, and confidence.

For older children: Practicing basic math facts can help them to feel more confident in their math ability. This may require a bit more focused practice, but it can still be fun! They can make their own flash cards and do a speed game, or play games with dice or cards that incorporate adding or subtracting (Yahtzee, Crazy 8's, Uno, dominoes, cribbage), or maybe find a favourite math app to help to engage and learn.

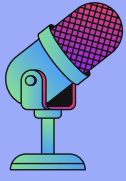


Just remember to use variety, start from where they can feel successful, review a few times, and keep it fun!

Here are some free, online math programs for all ages & stages!



WHAT WE'RE READING & LISTENING TO THIS SUMMER

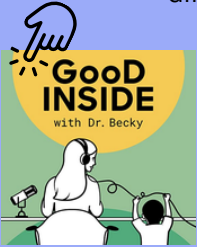


PODCASTS

Listen to the joys & frustrations of supporting kids who learn and think differently.



A clinical child psychologist tackles tough parenting questions, all in under 30 minute episodes.



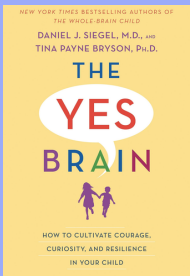
Authors and experts discuss "raising differently-wired kids with confidence, connection and joy".



Created by LD@School & LDAO, learn about the science of reading & more from Ontario educators & experts.

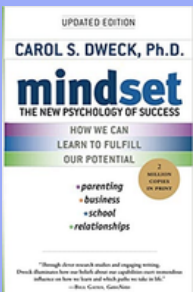


BOOKS



The Yes Brain: How to Cultivate Courage, Curiosity & Resilience in your Child By Dan Siegal

How to Break up with your Phone: The 30 Day Plan to Take Back your Life By Catherine Price



Mindset: The New Psychology of Success in Parenting, Business, School & Relationships By Carol Dweck

COPING WITH SUMMER "TIME"

by Paul Szego, Ph.D., C.Psych.

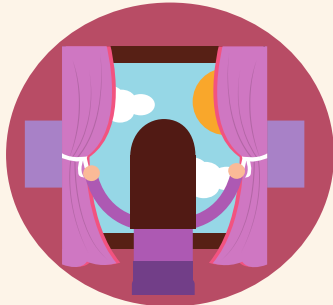
So many kids and teens look forward to the summer break - less rules, less work, and less school!

But sometimes, those are the very things that keep our days structured and running smoothly. That means that for some of our students, the summer days and weeks can be difficult to get through without those routines to help keep them on track. After all, if you don't have to get out of bed at a certain time, why not just sleep all day and stay up all night?!

Here are some things to keep in mind if your child is having a hard time with their unstructured summer days:



Try to get to bed at a reasonable hour, and limit the screen time in the late evening. Similarly, try to wake up at a reasonable time most days. Staying in bed or waking up late makes it harder to feel tired at night, and makes us want to stay up later that night!



When you wake up, opening the blinds and drinking a full glass of water when you first wake up is an easy way to tell your body "Good morning" and start to actually feel awake!

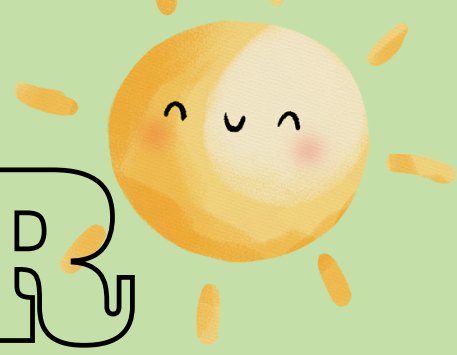


Getting some fresh air, spending time with others, and exercising, are all great ways to keep people feeling active, engaged, and connected even if there's no camp or activities lined up this summer.



Helping with cooking and cleaning, doing chores, or taking care of others is a great way to feel a sense of responsibility, importance, and to know that they matter to the people around them!

COMMUNITY CORNER



What's happening at the TDSB in June and over the summer!

EXPLORE
TDSB SUMMER PROGRAMS
For elementary, secondary, and adult learners

Summer Well-Being Resources

Happy
Pride Month!

NATIONAL
INDIGENOUS
HISTORY MONTH

Italian
Heritage Month

ACAPO LUNAL Presents
Portugal Week 2022

Centre of
Excellence for
Black Student
Achievement

Mental Health & Well-Being Resources for Students & Families:

Mental
Health Toolkits
& Choice Boards

what's up
walk in



Help
Ahead

Culturally
Responsive
Virtual Lounges
& Resources