

Preparing for Summer, Episode 53



Power of Moms A Gathering Place for Deliberate Mothers

In this podcast Saren Loosli and April Perry, Power of Moms co-founders, share ideas and tips to help moms prepare and plan to make summertime both meaningful and enjoyable for the whole family. Saren shares ideas from her [Do It Yourself Summer Camp Kit](#). Following is highlights of their discussion:

Summer is a chance to really enjoy teaching children things when they don't have to be off at school everyday. It's a great opportunity, but it can also be daunting and difficult to moms. Enrolling kids in lots of camps is one option Saren has tried. The idea seemed great, but in reality it proved not worth her family's time to invest time in driving, meeting deadlines and spending time in classes that turned out to be mediocre. They've also tried having daily pool days.

After trying different summertime schedules, Saren put her Master's Degree in education to work by putting together summer camps and inviting the neighborhood kids. She has found it exhausting to plan curriculum for the camps and still create other engaging family activities. She has found that a middle-of-the-road approach is ideal for children to have time to entertain themselves and be together as siblings and with friends.

Power of Moms offers a do-it-yourself summer camp kit on powerofpoms.com. Thousands of moms have taken the idea and run with it. It's been pinned on Pinterest many times. Ultimately the concept is to offer structure for your kids, and decide with the family what all want to do so you've got buy in and reduced nagging. Mom guides the planning to ensure children will be using time wisely to progress during the summer.

Saren's summer camp program provides daily structure and recommends having kids accomplish "must-do's" for the day such as reading and writing, practicing an instrument, etc. Saren's background has shown that reading and writing skills are important to maintain during the summer. Her children do 5-10 minute jobs each day around the house with a list to pick from so they can maintain order in a busy household while everyone is home more often during the summer. The Loosli family also successfully assigns a theme to each day of the week.

The theme Saren shares for each day of the week are as follows:

“Make it Monday:” Make something whether it is building with Legos, art projects, a new recipe or anything else.

“Take-a-Trip Tuesday:” Make a bucket list of fun field trips to take on Tuesdays. Saren’s family plans their Tuesday field trips and often invite friends to come along. Usually the field trips are low key, but each summer the kids save up for a special trip to an amusement park. Other ideas are going to the park or touring your local bakery. You can come up with a great bucket list by asking around a bit.

“Wet Wednesday:” Run through the sprinklers, have water gun fights, make water balloons, go swimming, etc.

“Thinking Thursday:” Research questions from a family “wondering list” of questions you want to answer such as “I wonder where rhubarb grows?” or “How do light bulbs look?” YouTube videos and Google are great resources.

“Friend Friday:” Everyone can invite a friend over or go to a friend’s house.

Saren and April share additional tips for successful summer planning and execution:

- Kids like a routine even if they don’t act like they do. For the first few days of summer you can have no routine, but after that most kids show signs they’d like more of a routine.
- Take the time to figure out what you and your kids really want for your summer and design a summer that meets your needs. The summer kit is valuable because it helps moms strike a balance between being cruise director and letting the kids run around watching TV and playing all the time.
- It’s really helpful to have structure in place and to have daily “must-do’s.” April’s kids earn points for doing their must-do’s and can get really excited about their charts. When kids have their daily must do’s they are able to do productive activities while Mom gets her work done.
- Helping kids have a plan and summer goals helps create progress and develops them into people who know how to set goals.
- Summer is a wonderful time to ask children “What do YOU want to learn?” It may be a goal related to running, typing, Spanish, writing, etc. Saren’s son set a goal to run a 10-minute mile over the summer. He progressed to a 7-minute mile and joined the track team as a result.
- Be your kids’ coach and let them decide who they want to become.

- Teenagers need to have a chance to provide input. Let them know you respect their opinion and want their input on the plans.
- Let kids know you're the consultant and want them to be everything they want to be. Then you can say, "I know you have a goal to do 'x'...what are you going to do about that goal?"
- Finding the right incentive/reward to help them achieve a goal can be helpful. Emphasize verbally how good it felt for them to progress and reach their goal. Keep a positive perspective versus nagging.
- Serendipity is important. Summer allows for flexibility when new opportunities come up. Summer is a great time to allow for adjustments while maintaining structure.

Readers are encouraged to share ideas of what works for them during the summer. Please leave a comment on this podcast page so other mothers can read your ideas. Our community is all about moms sharing and helping each other.

Transcribed by Laurie Brooks