

Summer 2022 Horizons Newsletter



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Benefits of Summer Camp for Kids with Autism/ADHD

Summer and children bring to mind fun, swimming, playing and hot weather. For those of us as parents of children with autism and ADHD, we know that providing structure and activities for our kids will help them. How can we do that during the summer? Summer camp is a great way to keep our children with autism and ADHD active and learning during the summer months.

Summer camp offers so many great benefits for our children with autism and ADHD. Here are 11 reasons why summer camp is good for them.

1. Develop social skills

Being around other campers and camp counselors, all day gives autistic/ADHD children a lot of opportunity to work on their social skills. I had many caring and nurturing counselors who really worked with him at his camps on social situations. Each summer was a good learning experience for him.

2. Move their bodies

Kids move a lot at summer camp! They play games, participate in sports activities, play on playgrounds and generally run around at camp. At some, they even [swim](#). Camp counselors encourage a lot of physical activity throughout the day, so our kids remain active.

3. Increase mental stimulation

Without a lot of structure, our children's summer days could look quite sedentary and include a lot of screen time. If your child loves to read, thankfully summer reading time is great! At summer camp, kids make crafts, play games, enjoy interesting and engaging field trips, and learn throughout the day. Overall, camps can increase our children's mental stimulation.

4. Improve motor skills

Playing sports, running, participating in games, being part of teamwork exercises, and being active overall can contribute to an improvement in motor skills.

5. Promote positive behaviors

With the camps my son has attended in the past, the camp counselors have focused a lot on positive behaviors. For some, they have a "value" they focus on for the week such as respect and responsibility. The counselors also encourage positive interactions between campers.

6. Increase self-esteem

Participating in camp activities can help our autistic/ADHD kids feel better about themselves. Many of our children suffer from low self-esteem but doing things independently and being involved in group activities can help increase their self-esteem.

7. Boost confidence

Going hand-in-hand with increasing self-esteem is boosting our children's confidence. When they have positive experiences at camp, it can help increase their confidence.

8. Provides a break for both children and parents

This is a big one. Without school being in session, we need a break from one another. Summer camp is a win for both children and parents. Children are able to participate in fun activities and thrive in the structure of summer camp. Parents have a childcare option that allows them to work or get things done around the house (or take a well-deserved rest!).

9. Creates a sense of belonging

In many camps, campers are split into groups or teams. They do activities together, and they compete as teams against other teams in games or competitions. Being part of a group or team can help our kids feel a sense of belonging.

10. Provides an opportunity to make friends

Summer camps provide such a great opportunity for our autistic/ADHD kids to make friends with others. J usually made friends with at least two other kids at camp for the summer and spent a lot of time with them. Of course, he also did things on his own when he felt a bit overwhelmed.

11. Builds independence

Summer camp is a great way for kids to build independence and learn new skills. They have to keep track of their stuff. (As any parent knows, that is a challenge. We've all been searching through the lost and found boxes looking for their sunscreen, swimsuits, lunch boxes and more!) Camp counselors do a good job in general of helping campers learn how to do things on their own.

Reprinted from: www.autismadhdconnection.com

Years After Meeting on The Playground, Moms Start Company to Employ Adults with Autism

When Pat Miller and Pam Kattouf first met on a playground years ago, little did they know they'd soon build a company for their children.

Their friendship deepened after both of their sons, Justin Kattouf and John Miller, were diagnosed as having severe autism.

The moms couldn't find an appropriate school, so they helped found one called the Garden Academy in West Orange, New Jersey.

Then, as their boys got older, Pat Miller and Pam Kattouf realized their sons would have trouble finding meaningful employment. That's when the idea for Beloved Bath was born.

The company sells boutique bath products and provides employment for up to 12 people living with autism. Beloved Bath just moved into a new manufacturing space that can hold more employees.

Pat Miller says they found that making bath products would be an ideal vocation for people with autism because lotions, bath salts, candles and soaps require following a step-by-step process.

“We were able to break down the manufacturing of these products into simple steps that any individuals with autism, no matter where they fell on the spectrum, could learn and feel good about being able to complete,” Pat Miller says.

Beloved Bath is featured in a TV advertisement for Northwestern Mutual. In the ad, the moms explain how the company began with “a little lavender and a little salt and the desire to keep our kids calm.” Pam Kattouf says it's true — she used to add lavender essential oil, known to promote calmness, to her children's baths to soothe them.

The Kattouf family started to make their own lavender bath salts and packaged it up as gifts for loved ones. Over time, people started asking for their homemade bath salts, and from there, Pam Kattouf says the company “organically evolved.”

Without Beloved Bath, Pat Miller says it would have been “extremely difficult” to find Justin Kattouf and John Miller employment. There's an acute lack of opportunities for folks like their sons: Research shows 80% to 90% of individuals with autism over the age of 21 are either unemployed or underemployed, she says.

Northwestern Mutual also played a role in helping Beloved Bath become a for-profit company, not a charity. Since many of the opportunities available for people with disabilities are volunteer only, the moms thought it was crucial to pay their employees and provide workers with a sense of achievement and accomplishment.

“We wanted to show that it could be done — and done well — and still be a company that makes a profit and pays all of the employees,” Pam Kattouf says.

Beloved Bath’s workplace is specifically geared for people with autism. There’s a waitlist for employees who want to work for the company, Pat Miller says. Their new, bigger space will allow them to push past their previous employment limits.

Still, the company aspires to grow even more to offer more opportunities to those in need of a job, Pat Miller says. Preferably, Beloved Bath would also support other businesses and open satellite locations across the U.S.

Both moms hope that one day, those dreams will become reality.

Reprinted from: www.wbur.org





NUMBER ONE MISTAKE PARENTS MAKE DURING THE SUMMER

Jennifer Lingle

Time and time again, with the absolute best of intentions, I observe parents making this mistake. **They don't keep a routine for their child.** Yikes! Of course, you want your child to have a fun summer. You envision him entertaining himself, playing outside all day in the sunshine, having fun, and enjoying all the downtime. I totally get it.

However, structure, routine, and consistency is SO important for your child...especially during the summer. You may think that because your child is not in school, he will benefit from chilling out, relaxing, not having a visual schedule, and flying by the seat of his pants. Nope, for most children with autism that's not the case.

The summertime is when you should be even more structured. Because your child doesn't have the routine of school (or virtual learning), challenging behaviors are probably increasing. By simply creating a visual schedule for your child, EVERY SINGLE DAY (including weekends), you are doing him such a huge favor. When he knows what to expect, you are creating a calming environment.

When your child understands what his options are, that's when he can truly relax. Relaxation looks different for him than you might expect. Even when you go on vacation, a routine and schedule will help him to feel more comfortable. When he doesn't know what is happening, and isn't sure what is next in his day, you may quickly observe a meltdown...and that's not relaxing for anyone.

So, here's what you can do, starting today. **Write out his schedule**, or better yet, use photographs to explain what is happening in his day. If you are unsure about the plan, you can put a "surprise" picture in the schedule. At least then he will know that something different and unexpected is about to happen. All of this time at home isn't easy for anyone (Covid blues anyone?), but with a few tweaks, you can create an environment that is predictable and more fun for everyone.

Cookie Salad

Ingredients:

- Vanilla instant pudding
- Frozen whipped topping
- Buttermilk
- Canned mandarin oranges, drained
- Canned pineapple chunks/tidbits, drained
- Keebler stripped fudge cookies

Instructions:

- Mix the vanilla pudding dry mix and the buttermilk in a medium-sized bowl until combined following package directions
- Add the cool whip/whipped topping and gently fold in until just combined. We don't want to deflate the mixture by over mixing.
- Add in the canned fruit that has been completely drained.
- Put the cookies in a plastic bag and crush them until they are in chunks.
- Add the cookie chunks to the cream and fruit mixture. Serve immediately.



Book Review

Title: Rain Reign

By: Ann M. Martin

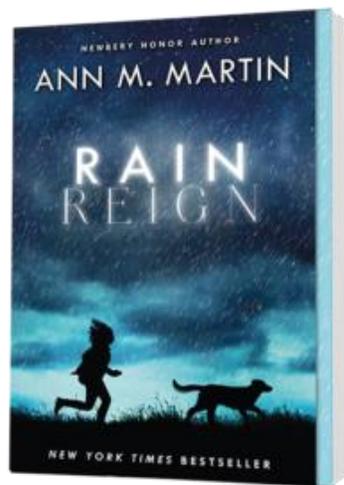
Ages: Teen/Young Adult

Book Synopsis: It's hard to imagine anything worse than a hurricane. But a close second is a missing dog. To most, a dog isn't just a pet, it's a member of the family. Rain Reign is an adventure story about a high-functioning fifth-grade girl named Rose. Rose is almost as obsessed with right and wrong as she is homonyms. Her best friend and beloved companion pup is named Rain (Rein /Reign) and she has three homonyms.

A hurricane makes it a bit too far inland and leaves in its path a great deal of destruction and heartache for the small town. When Rain goes missing, Rose has to develop a plan to find her. In doing so, she learns a lot about the meaning of the word "family". You can't always pick your family, but your family may end up picking you.

Review: Rain Reign is a book about family, friendship, acceptance, and conviction. It is a quick read with enough twists and turns to keep interest. Most importantly, it comes with a message. As for the content, I would place this in the tween category. There is a bit of mature content namely in home life, but a bit of guidance from parents should clear that right up.

Book Review by Matthew Cooper, Librarian at The Rubinstein Library at Cincinnati Children's Hospital,
www.autismcincy.org



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