

It's that time of year when teachers are starting to count down the weeks and days until summer holidays! It's time to start winding down, but the work still piles up and seems to increase as the end of the school year approaches, leaving little time for anything else. In our work with teachers through the Early Intervention Program, it is more common than not to see teachers burn the candle at both ends during the final weeks of school knowing the end is near and time for some much needed R & R is approaching.

The two months of summer holidays may be a perk of teaching. The high workload and time demands between September and June, however, means that teachers likely do 12 months worth of work in only 10 months. Teachers therefore need that time to recover in preparation for the next school year. How you spend those two precious months is therefore very important. How well you take care of yourself, your family and your health during this time is imperative to success during the remainder of the year. Having said that however, every teacher should strive to maintain a healthy work-life balance throughout the entire year, not just during the summer!

...so how do you get the most out of your summer holidays?

First, ask yourself what is important to you. Do you value family? Friends? Rest? Travel? Gardening? Renovations? Exercise? Determine what your priorities are for the summer. Evaluate each thing on that list and decide if it is a 'have to' or 'want to'. Just like the rest of the year, you will not get the benefits of a positive and healthy summer holiday if you don't have balance in your life.

Consider the following suggestions in preparation for having a well-balanced summer holiday:

- **Stay in shape:** Whether it's long walks on the beach, going to the gym or playing with your kids, make sure you get lots of fresh air and activity during your time off! Summer is a great time to sign up for a class or get outdoors.
- **Slow the pace:** Get into the habit of finding private time to unwind and enjoy the silence! With more free time during July and August, this may be a great way to establish a routine



of relaxation before the hectic school year begins.

- **Learn something new or do something you enjoy:** Time is a precious commodity during the school year. With some extra free time in the summer, take the opportunity to do something you've always wanted to try or have missed during the school year.
- **Spend time with friends and family:** Talking and enjoying the company of others is important. Try not to talk about work!
- **Indulge yourself:** Have a massage or give yourself a manicure because you can, not because you have to! Taking care of yourself often falls by the wayside during the school year, so use this time to indulge!
- **Be flexible:** Don't over schedule yourself or your family! This is a rare time of year when you are not on someone else's time table. You can get up without an alarm, or go for a picnic, or just stay home. You can decide what you do, so take advantage of that time.

- **Be realistic:** So many teachers make big plans to cram everything into two months, but that is not always possible. Be realistic with your plans. Although you may not be able to get everything in that you wanted to, focus on those things you did accomplish and be proud of yourself!

- **Be organized:** Preparation for the upcoming school year is important and often a priority in August. Be organized throughout the summer to ensure you don't waste time while preparing. Good time management skills are as important at home as they are during the school year!

Unfortunately, before you know it, the summer will be over and you'll be back in the full swing of teaching. Do what you have to in the summer to prepare for September; that will certainly ease in the transition back to work. BUT, make sure to pace yourself and maintain a good healthy balance between work and play even during the summer! Developing good habits during your time off will set you up for a successful and healthy school year.