

Phil's Forum 7-20-08 Busy Summers

My wife and I were wondering... Have we overscheduled our children this summer?

By Labor Day my two boys will have participated in swim lessons, soccer camp, I Can Make It Camp, YMCA Storer Camps, Dahlem Center Day Camp, Ella Sharp Museum Art Classes, vacation bible school, a father/son canoe trip and a family vacation. Oh yeah, and they'll also be completing a Summer Bridge Book and doing lots of reading to earn points in a school summer program.

Is that too much?

Where is the time to just relax, to ride bikes, play ball or do unstructured things?

Of course, as I write this my boys are sitting home building with Lego and watching cartoons on a Sunday afternoon. But Monday starts again with another week-long planned activity.

When do we cross the line as parents and plan too much?

I remember only two planned summer activities when I was a child - family vacation on the Manistee River and YMCA Storer Camps.

I also remember climbing trees in the backyard, playing baseball with friends, trying to build a sailboat out of plywood and scrap lumber with the twins down the street, and running through my cousin's neighborhood playing army with our toy guns.

Of course, playing with toy guns probably isn't a good idea in some neighborhoods. And I'm not sure I'm ready to give my kids saws, hammers and nails. As for tree-climbing, all my trees are straight up pines with no branches within reach.

Thank goodness for Legos!

Maybe we plan so much because we can. I don't think half the activities my boys are doing were even available during my childhood.

Maybe we plan so much because we want to give our kids a variety of experiences. Art, Nature, Science, Sports, Theology. That's pretty diverse.

Maybe we plan so much so that we get breaks from the kids like we did during the school year. Call it "advanced daycare".

Maybe we plan so much because our kids love it.

I asked my boys this morning if they were having a fun summer and the answer was a resounding YES! Words like *"awesome"* and *"really, really, really, fun"* flew around the room.

Maybe I'm thinking about it too much. If the boys are having fun, all that planning is for the good. After all, summer is supposed to be fun!

Now, if only I could plan some more things for me.

Have a fun summer!

Phil Wrzesinski