



Parents Can Keep Their Cool with Summer Stress Busters!

For many parents, the long summer months can cause their stress level to rise with the temperatures.

Hot and humid weather, bored kids and constant togetherness can lead to extra stress and frustration. Day camps, pool parties and playing in the backyard can break up the monotony, but when the

rain falls or it's just too hot to be outside, children need ideas and activities to fuel their creative juices indoors.

To keep parents from letting the heat get to them, Prevent Child Abuse (PCA) Louisiana offers the following summer stress busters for indoor play:

- **Make an activity box:** Fill the box with items that are safe, simple and don't require supervision, which will give you some time to yourself. Washable markers, safety scissors, glue sticks, white paper plates, yarn, a deck of cards, construction paper, stencils and old magazines are just some of the objects that can be included. For older children, add buttons, marbles, Mardi Gras beads and uncooked macaroni or beans.
- **Dress them up without taking them out:** Kids love to play dress up, so give them some old clothes, hats, shoes, purses, belts, ties and costume jewelry and let them be creative.
- **Go camping indoors:** Let the children build a tent over portions of the furniture with old sheets and blankets, using large books as weights to hold the edges in place.
- **Play keep away:** Rotate your kids' favorite toys by putting some away for several weeks. When you bring them back out later, the children will enjoy rediscovering them.
- **Make a job jar:** Write down some easy things that need to be done around the house, put them in a jar and let your children pick one task per day or week. Doing age-appropriate chores will help build your child's confidence and sense of responsibility.
- **Plan for future fun:** Have your children plan a "Family Fun Calendar" for the month. Challenge them by allowing only ideas that are free and include everyone in the family. A few starter ideas could be visiting the library, having an indoor picnic, playing "I Spy," taking a walk together or making up a poem about the family.



If stress levels ever become too high, get more tips from a trained KIDLINE counselor at 1-800-CHILDREN (244-5373). Parenting is hard; we can help!

