

Six Weeks Sorted

The Busy Parent's Handbook
for a Stress-Free Summer Holiday

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eBook edition

Published by:

The Endless Bookcase Ltd,
Suite 14 STANTA Business Centre, 3 Soothouse
Spring,
St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 6PF, UK.

More information can be found at:
www.theendlessbookcase.com.

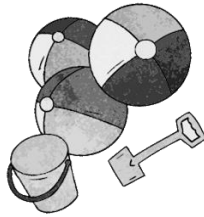
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ISBN: 978-1-917061-78-0

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Introduction

The summer holidays are fast approaching, and many parents look forward to it and dread it, often in equal measure!

Mums look forward to spending time with their children without the demands of homework or getting out of the house in the morning, but many worry about too much screen time and the dreaded cries of, 'I'm bored' once the novelty of being on holiday wears off.

Without guidance children can lose momentum, or suffer learning loss, which is when neural connections fade, as we found during the pandemic

when formal learning was interrupted, or they can get into habits or attitudes that won't help them in life.

Young brains don't stop learning or processing during holidays.

They just switch focus.

Holidays provide a wonderful opportunity for focusing on the Core Skills that we all need in life, but that school doesn't have time to teach.

You already have these skills, and you will be stronger in some than others, but your child needs to learn and develop them to be successful in school and learning too.

The resource sheet that follows allows you and your child to talk about their core skills and decide which one to focus on first.

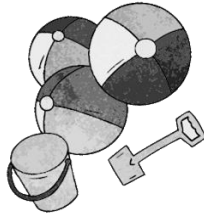
Core Skills

- **Self-control** – includes good listening and being able to wait patiently if needed.
- **Focus and Attention** – this is different from being mesmerised by a screen.
- **Organisation** – knowing how to tidy up and how to be systematic with work and in your thinking.
- **Working Memory** – be able remember and follow multi-step instructions.
- **Planning** – this includes preparation – and tidying up!
- **Time management** – includes learning to tell the time.

Emphasised from puberty:

- **Critical thinking** (includes thinking about what you've done and how well you've done it; working out what could be done better; and being creative for future projects)

- **Task initiation** – getting on with what needs to be done.
- **Perseverance** - not giving up if it gets hard because you want to achieve.
- **Flexibility** – includes being able to adapt if plans change.



Scores for Skills

- Use the chart that follows to talk a little bit about each skill and define it.
- Give examples of where we use each skill.
- Give examples to your child of where they particularly need to use the skills.
- Remember, it may be the first time ever that your child has heard of them, and added information can be tiring.

For children from 7 years on, ask them to give themselves a mark out of ten for how strong they think they are in each skill. Tell them you will also

have a copy and will put a mark out of ten to show how you see them.

If your child thinks they are 10 out of 10 excellent at self-control, but they don't listen to you when you take them out on trips, or their school report asks them not to call out in class, your mark may be 6 out of 10, this will give you a starting point for a chat about how they can improve it further.

Skill	Score now	Score in 3 months
Self-control		
Attention		
Working Memory		
Organisation		
Time Management		
Planning		

Let your child know what has impressed you about them so far and then discuss the skills they want to improve or develop.

Let them know there will be daily tasks and different activities to focus on which will help them develop their knowledge, skills, and independence.

A broad outline plan of activities follows for you to pick and choose.

The activities are designed to help keep the children happy, interested, and busy, while developing their learning skills through the holiday, so they hit the ground running in September!

The weeks can be used in any order and the ideas are to help you increase their knowledge and reference in your child as well as allow them to practise and develop new vocabulary and learning skills as they go.

A work session can be included in the daily plan if your child is going to sit significant exams in the new school year, but I always recommend two things:

1. Where stated, a timer is used – accurately. We are dealing with brains and they like accuracy! This

means, ‘read for 5 minutes’ **means** read for 5 minutes!

2. **Every** child’s brain needs a rest at some point – even if they are preparing for exams – and clients love it when they are told they **MUST** give the children **AT LEAST** a week with no work at all. In that week, you may read to them, but there are no pressures or expectations on your child.

When we learn, our brain can focus on only one thing at a time. So, focus on one skill at a time.

You can choose to focus on a different skill each day or a different skill in each activity.

The important thing is that your child’s brain knows what skill they are developing. Examples are given through this book to guide you. There are no hard and fast rules.

To help maintain continuity in their learning, children need to be:

- Reading together with you (up to age 11 and beyond if you/they like). This reading should be a little challenging for them to read by themselves, but they would enjoy the story.
- Reading alone from books or magazines they choose and enjoy.

Before the start of the holiday:

Get everything ready – including your child.

- Put a Holiday Kit together. Prevent stress on rainy days especially, by keeping the kit separate and only use in holidays. Your child can help gather everything together. There is a handy Holiday Kit list in the resource pages.
- Make time for a conversation with your child about the plan for the holiday.
- Let them know it is your holiday as well and you want to see them enjoy themselves and grow in responsibility and independence.
- Look through the Dates to Observe on page 29. Choose the ones that interest you, put them on your calendar so you can be prepared.