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Laurier expert alert: Summer holidays

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University has several experts available to speak about topics related to summer holidays, including the impacts of the pandemic on Canadian parks, how the natural landscapes of Ontario beaches are changing and the importance of keeping children active during the summer.

[Mary-Louise Byrne](#), professor and chair in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, is an expert on beach and dune systems and management, particularly in protected areas surrounding the Great Lakes. Her main research sites are at Point Pelee National Park, Pinery Provincial Park, Sandbanks Provincial Park and Sauble Beach. Byrne is available to provide insight into **how Ontario beaches are changing**. Contact: mlbyrne@wlu.ca

[Carolyn FitzGerald](#), assistant professor in Laurier's Faculty of Education, is an expert in mental health in education. She is available to speak about how the pandemic is impacting the **mental health of children and youth** and what parents can do to help their children. FitzGerald's research focuses on the mental health of teachers and school administrators, as well as ways in which educators can offer effective programs to respond to the mental health needs of children and youth. [Read FitzGerald's suggestions for how to build resiliency in children during the pandemic](#). Contact: cafitzgerald@wlu.ca

[Christopher Lemieux](#), associate professor in Laurier's Department of Geography and Environmental Studies and John McMurry Research Chair in Environmental Geography, is an expert on biodiversity conservation, protected areas, climate change, and the human health and well-being benefits associated with nature. Lemieux is available to speak about **how the pandemic has changed how Canadians use parks** and how an increase in visitors has impacted protected areas. Contact: clemieux@wlu.ca

[Julie Mueller](#), professor and associate dean in the Faculty of Education, is available to speak about the importance of **keeping children active during the summer**; the many sites and apps available to broaden children's learning online (e.g., virtual field trips to museums, zoos and historical sites); the need for critical evaluation of information children hear and see; and the social connections they are able to make through digital platforms and social media. An expert on digital technology and learning, as well as physical activity and learning, Mueller is also a former elementary school teacher. Contact: jmueller@wlu.ca

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