

OPINION

Should children be left to own devices this summer?

Now that school is officially finished, summer break is in full swing. For some, this signals the beginning of summer camp, with barely enough time to catch one's breath between school ending and boarding a camp-bound bus — some for the entire summer.

Other students, not going to sleepover camp, are enrolled in day camps. For most children, this means sticking to a schedule — getting up at a specific time, making sure to meet their bus and going to bed early enough to be alert the following morning.

A disciplined summer schedule is exactly what one blogger — 4boysmother — is warning against in her blog in May, where she offered 10 tips on giving kids (hers included) a 1970s summer. This, she said, includes letting the kids watch TV all day, eat whatever they want, getting them to put on a talent show and encouraging play outside without fear of them drinking from the water hose, for example.



Sara Dimerman

I was asked by a national radio station to comment on this blog and to respond to the question:

Does a 1970s summer work in 2014? My response, in part, was "It might ... if you can get your kids off of their electronics, out of their bedrooms and outside".

Left to their own devices (pun intended), my guess is that most children would rarely see the light of day. The other part of my response focused on the working mom in 2014 compared to the mom of the '70s.

Forty years ago, most moms stayed at home. During the summer, many parents kept their kids at home and hung out with other moms and their kids outside.

Nowadays, finding a program to keep one's kids busy and safe is not so much choice, but necessity.

The blogger writes, "It's totally OK their parents will be at work and nobody will be home all day." I don't find this comment very funny.

Until your children are old enough to be left alone at home, parents need to plan summer schedules in advance. Even leaving teens alone all day is not the best option, as many will likely sleep until mid-afternoon and stay up all night as a result.

If your children resist being programmed all summer and you agree it's important to give them some down time to sleep, stay up with friends or watch TV all day, but you still have to work outside the house, here are a couple of tips.

Create a co-operative of sorts. Find out which of your child's friends' moms or dads are at home or take a "staycation" and create a schedule whereby each parent takes on the responsibility of a few kids for a week at a time, for example.

This way, the children entertain one another while a parent supervises and your child doesn't feel his or her entire summer is rigidly scheduled.

If you can, use summer as an opportunity for your children (and you) to take a break, chillax and rejuvenate.

Markham's Sara Dimerman is a psychologist, author and married mother of two daughters — one of whom works and wishes she had more time off during the summer and the other who works part time and is enjoying some down time before beginning Grade 10. For more advice, visit helpmesara.com or on Twitter @helpmesara

WHAT'S HAPPENIN' SATURDAY

We're going to have a little party at the store Saturday, and the occasion is our "new" stores' 3rd Anniversary — which is a big deal to us! We certainly have a lot to be thankful for, and this is our way of saying a big thanks for your support and business. Now, most of my friends wouldn't think of me as a party animal, but I'm going to give it my best. Firstly, we're going to feed everyone that comes. Not only will we have lots of sampling stations at the store, but we'll be cooking outdoors for charity. My Hockey With Heart buddies (and others) will be grilling our Prime Rib Burgers, Ball Park Dogs and Flank Steak Sandwiches — something that we've never done before. We'll have a lemonade stand too! And seating!

This won't happen in silence either because we'll have the radio station there doing a live broadcast and be careful, you too might be on the radio with Gary Gamble on The Jewel 88.5.

There will be a market and cooking demonstration and sampling upstairs in The Upper Level. Anne, the Appetizer Queen, will be there and Eddie, my Marble Slab ice cream guy, will be there helping kids make sundaes. Lets have fun!

TUNA STEAKS

We'll have some fresh tuna steaks in the fish department. These are centre-cut loins, which are great marinated in an olive oil seasoning and then grilled — the flavour is sublime! Limited supply.

WASHINGTON BING CHERRIES

These are Bings now. They are sweet, very large and very enjoyable. Size 9's \$3.99 (They're big!)

SUNDAY BRUNCH

We'll be serving our cream of Leek and Potato Soup, a big fave of mine, with either sliced beef rib eye roast with gravy or roasted chicken breast with a mushroom sauce, with either mashed potatoes or rice, tea or coffee and a token dessert. This will be served from noon till 2pm, cost is \$10.95/person.

WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

Good morning Evan, We are celebrating our third anniversary from Thursday to Sunday with an amazing Village Grocer Club Sandwich combo.

The sandwich is our own roasted turkey, our own bacon, avocado, tomato, mixed greens and lime basil sauce. To make it an anniversary combo deal we are giving you our own lemonade or a small coffee and a mini scone for \$8.99.

On Saturday, Mark, the owner from Velvet Sunrise, is giving out free coffee and our Bakery Diva, Jaana, has promised to provide mini scones and mini muffins served from 9am to 11am. We are also having a great deal on three of our most popular coffee beans from Velvet Sunrise all day Saturday. Have a great day, Grethe

CARLI OLIVE OIL

This will be part of the party! The Topolino will be here, a Fiat 500 that runs on olive oil, along with two handsome young lads from the Carli family. They will be here making sure that you get a taste, special price coupon, AND a free bar of olive oil soap with your purchase. It is a great olive oil!

WHAT'S COOKIN' AT THE DELI!

We'll start with a soup this week, and it's our Cream of Leek and Potato. We are now using local leeks, just so you know, and we use potatoes, chicken stock, lots more veggies, some garlic, cream and 'spices'. This is sold in the self-serve area, and featured this week at 25% OFF. Reg. \$7.95/900ml

Next, we'll be making copious amounts of our Cranberry Quinoa Salad, using dried cranberries, that magical grain (quinoa), sweet onions and peppers, raisins and dried apricots and almonds. Our feature is 25% OFF this product as well. Reg. \$2.49/100g

Next, we'll have a feature on two iconic products made in house. The first is our Bruschetta, but this week we are using the first field tomatoes of the season, and the second item will be our Jack Daniels B.B.Q. Sauce. Both are reg. \$4.99 each, and will be featured as 25% OFF as well. Also, as an added bonus, we will be serving up Cajun Jumbo Wings in the deli. Really delicious at \$8.99 per container

BANANA BREAD SALE

We have an abundance of bananas this week, so we are making lots of our large size Banana Bread. This is one of the first things we baked in our store, mostly to use up ripe bananas. Now we sell so much of it that we have to buy ripe bananas, instead of waiting for them to ripen. Reg. \$6.99. Limited Quantities

1/2 PRICE THIS WEEK

WHAT'S DOIN' AT THE BANDSTAND

This Thursday we'll be listening to Pretzel Logic, which is a very talented group of Toronto musicians bringing us a rendition of a wonderful mix of blues, jazz and the rock of Steely Dan.

OUR GUINNESS SAUSAGES

We use this famous Irish beer to make these great sausages. They are on the mild side, but full flavoured. Reg. \$5.99/lb

25% OFF THIS WEEK

NORWEGIAN NARLSBERG CHEESE

This is an item from the Favourites List, and it's on my list too. When I was a kid I would take a big hunk of this camping, always, and by the second or third day nothing tasted better. It can be sliced for burgers, nibbled like it is, or cut julienne into salads. Reg. \$4.29/100g

1/3 OFF THIS WEEK

WHAT'S BAKING THIS WEEK

LEMON MERINGUE PIES - My all-time favourite dessert! Whenever Jaana asks me what I would like for them to make on special, more often than not, my answer is Lemon Meringue Pies! There's a big collective sigh and then they go to work. These pies are a lot of work and have to be done in stages. First, the pastry shells have to be pressed, crimped and blind-baked. Second, a huge amount of lemons are zested and juiced and eggs separated, then the filling is cooked, and finally meringue is whipped, spread on the pies and baked! And we hope for nice, non-humid weather so there won't be excessive weeping of the meringue. We use no stabilizers or additives in our lemon pies (or anything else we make) so some weeping is inevitable, but it won't affect the taste! Reg. \$12.95 each

UPSIDEDOWN CAKES - This is an improved version of my mother's Pineapple Upsidedown Cake. We use fresh pineapple and maraschino cherries caramelized in butter and brown sugar atop a scrumptious white cake with a beautiful texture. This week we are also making Peach Upsidedown Cakes. Reg. \$19.95 each

PINACOLADA MUFFINS - Another one of my favourites. I have one of these almost every morning with my coffee. I'm a texture guy, and the texture of these muffins feels pretty perfect to me! Made with cream of coconut, pinacolada mix, toasted coconut and pineapple. \$1.89 each

ALL THESE ITEMS ARE 25% OFF THIS WEEK

SPECIALS IN EFFECT FROM THURSDAY TO CLOSING SUNDAY, JULY 13

Hours: Mon. - Fri. 8:00-8:00

Sat. 8:00-6:00 - Sun. 9:00-6:00

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