



the  
🐡 manatee  
parent's guide to

**SUMMER BREAK**



# About this guide

## Summer doesn't have to be stressful!

Summer break brings sunshine, freedom—and let's be honest—a whole lot of juggling. Whether you're home full-time, working, or somewhere in between, this guide is here to help you create a season that's fun, balanced, and manageable for the whole family.

Inside, you'll find simple routine-builders to keep days flowing smoothly, and resources to support you (because parents need care too!). With the right tools and a bit of structure, summer can be both restful and enriching—for you and your kids, too.

Be sure to check out our Self-Care Summer workbooks for kids and teens, as well as our Family Summertime Starter Pack!

Let's make this summer one to enjoy, not just survive.

## Have a great summer!

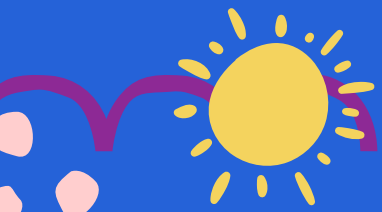
**the manateam**



book a  
session today!



manatee



build-your-own

# summer routine



Kids do best with a little structure, especially during summer break. A daily routine helps their bodies and brains get ready for the day so that they can feel good and confident.

Work with your kids to cut out or draw pictures of their daily tasks and paste them into the blank summer routine chart. It's a simple way to build independence while keeping summer days on track! Older kids can use the blank time table version to plan out their summer routine instead.

**Tip:**

Put the chart up on your fridge or on a whiteboard or cork board so your kids can use magnets or pins to mark activities as done every day!



breakfast



chores



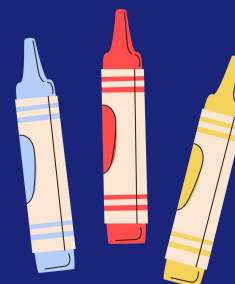
brush hair



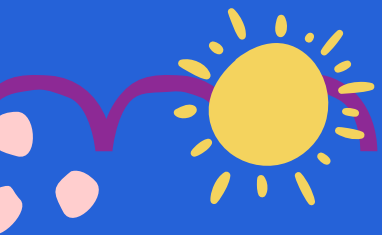
go outside



read

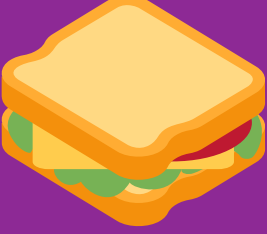


creative time



build-your-own

# summer routine



lunch

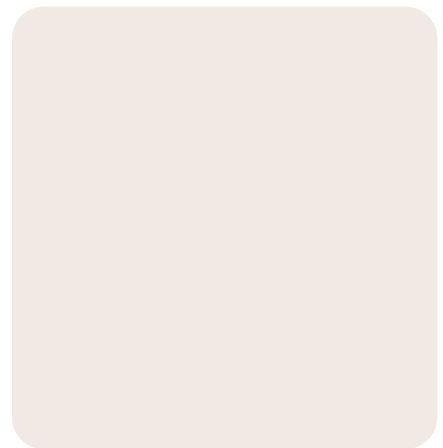
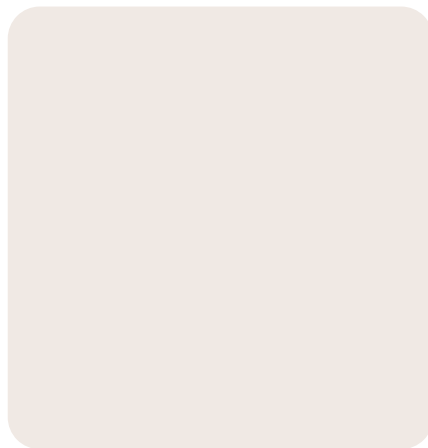
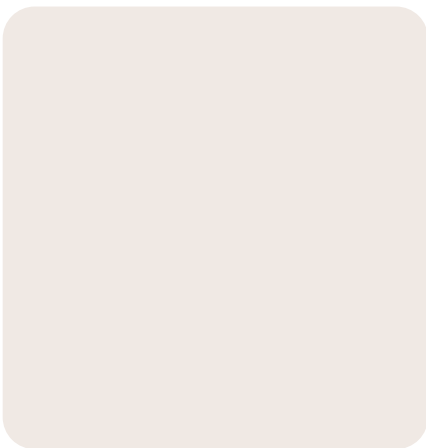
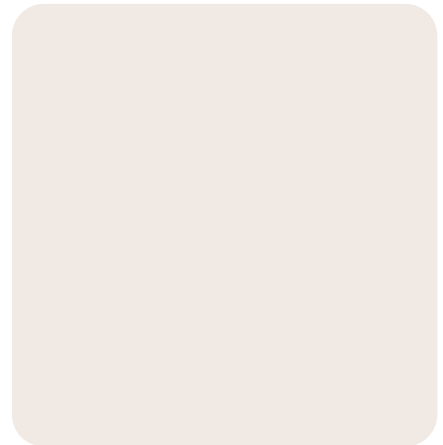
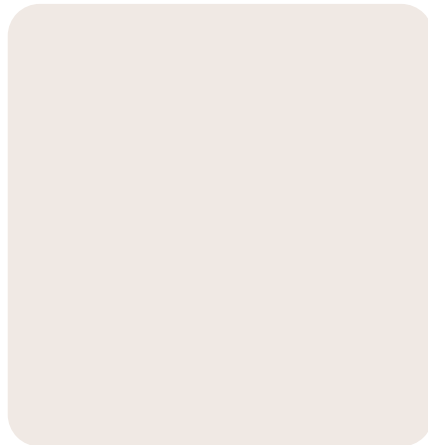
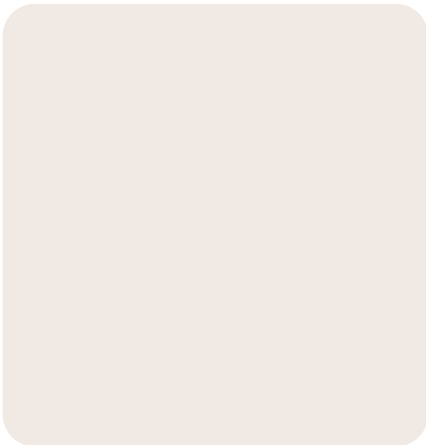


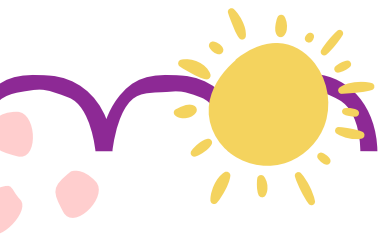
journal



clean up

Use the blank squares below to create your own activities to incorporate into the summer routine!

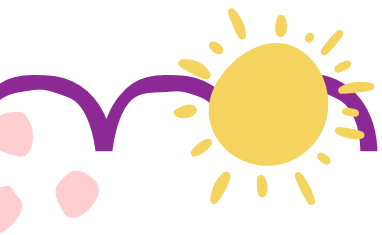




# summer routine



.....  
your name



# summer routine



.....  
your name

morning routine

S

M

T

W

Th

F

S

evening routine

S

M

T

W

Th

F

S



## The science: Gratitude = Joy

Parenting joy doesn't always just happen. Research shows that the best way to increase happiness is by practicing gratitude. Finding things to be grateful for every day, rewires our brains to focus on the good, instead of the bad. With practice, you'll find more moments of joy in your life.



## Tip: Create fun traditions

Each family has its own culture and part of that are its traditions - so let's think of some fun ones! This can be a moment to let go of the seriousness of adulting.

Some ideas:

- Friday night pizza and dance party
- Monday AM bagels and hot drinks
- Game nights



## Tip: Laugh at yourself

You will have #parentingfails, and you will do things you aren't proud of.

**We all do!** Even those picture perfect families. So what can you do?

- Acknowledge them and apologize (if it affected someone else).
- Take a second to reflect and learn.
- Move on without taking yourself too seriously...
- Bonus points if you can crack a joke!



**Note:**

By doing this, you're also modeling for your kids how to get over their failures and not be too self-critical.



## Activity: Gratitude exercise

Write down 3 things you're grateful for before going to bed:

(or whenever you have 5 minutes)

1. Your favorite moment of the day
2. Your favorite thing about you
3. Your favorite thing about your family





# parenting effectiveness



## The science: connection before correction

When your kid is slamming a door, not listening, or throwing a tantrum, it can be hard to focus on what is going on below the surface. But, focusing on what is DRIVING the behavior - instead of focusing on the behavior itself - is the best way to reduce the behavior.

### Many big behaviors are often:

1. An attempt to feel connected with parents
2. A need to feel like who they are and what they want matters
3. A need to feel some sense of control over their life



## Tip: Ask 3 questions

To figure out what's below the surface and what to focus on, ask yourself these 3 questions:

1. Are they feeling connected to you right now? Are you?
2. Are they feeling seen and heard at that moment?
3. Are they feeling like they are in control of their life?

Respond to these needs before you correct their behavior. For example: hug them, or say: "I know this must be frustrating" or just get down on their level. Once you've reconnected, kids are much more likely to listen.



### Avoid

#### Minimizing feelings

"Why are you upset? This family trip will be way more fun than that party!"

#### Mixed messages

"Put your phone away! I said no phones at the table!" (While you check a quick email on yours.)

#### Unclear instructions

"You have to clean the house before you can go to soccer practice."



## Words that work



### Try

#### Validating feelings

"I know you really wanted to go to this party. It's okay to be upset, but the answer is no."

#### Consistent messages

"As a family, we don't use phones at the table. No phones please."

#### Clear instructions

"Before you go to soccer practice, please empty the dishwasher and put all your games away in the living room."



# parent-child connection



## The science: Short but sweet

Research shows that even 15 minutes a day of 1:1 time with kids has long lasting positive impacts on their development. Create little moments together where you focus on them. Can it be spending a few minutes giving tickles before they go to bed? Or making breakfast together on Saturday mornings?



## Tip: Let your kids lead

Let your kids lead an activity and try to experience it as a kid, not as a parent.

For example, if they want to paint, paint with them, don't 'manage' them painting. If they want to play a video game, play with them. You'd be surprised at how much fun you'll have and how much you'll learn about them!



## Activity: Give 8+ hugs a day

We need hugs.

Physical touch is key to building connection. Hugging, kissing, raspberries, cuddling, massages, they all help strengthen bonds.

**Did you know we need 4 hugs/day for 'survival', 8 hugs for maintenance and 12 hugs for growth?**

Just make sure you respect your kid's wishes on how they'd like to be touched and hugged.

## Activity: Mealtime questions

Mealtimes are a great time to create deeper connections with your kids.

A few tips:

- Make it device-free.
- Sit at a dinner table or dining area.
- Include the whole family.

Asking specific, but open questions:

"What did you have for lunch?  
Who did you sit with?"

"How would you rate your day from 1-10?  
How come?"

"What was your favorite thing about today?  
What about your least favorite thing about today?"





## The science: Asking for help is key

It's important to share with your co-parent and parenting village your own needs as well. Sadly, parents sometimes feel that asking for help or support makes them weak or not good parents. It's actually the opposite! Asking for help is a very valuable skill and a great opportunity to teach your kids about community and collaboration.



## Tip: How to communicate your needs

We know it can be hard to ask for help or communicate your needs, but we got you! Here is your step by step framework:

### 1. Describe what you notice

Factually describe the situation from your point of view. You're just stating what you see. For example:

"I've been making dinner every night and rushing to clean up before bedtime."

### 2. Explain how you feel

Share how this situation makes you feel in an "I" statement. This is key to avoid placing blame and creating tension.

"When I'm rushing and see you on your phone on the sofa, it makes me feel unappreciated."

### 3. State what you need

This step is very important. You clearly state what the other person can do to address your need:

"When I cook dinner at night, I need you to help out, so that I feel appreciated."

### 4. Make a specific request

Be straightforward and make an honest suggestion that would fulfill your need:

"When I cook, can you do the dishes? And when you cook, I will do the dishes!"

## Find a new tribe

As a parent, it's very important to have a few different tribes to lean on. After all... It truly does take a village! Can you connect with other school parents? Neighbors?

"We don't have to do it alone. We were never meant to."  
- Brene Brown



## Do 1 thing for your relationships

It's key to nurture your own relationships. Try to connect with someone outside of your immediate family every day. Commit to something that is doable for you. This might be 1 text a day, a 5 min phone call, a coffee run or a walk through the neighborhood.

need more support?

# virtual care for kids

why it works



## it's as effective as in-person

Many research studies (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), or [here](#)) have confirmed that virtual mental health care is as effective as traditional in-person care. On top of that, kids feel safe in their own environment, therapists get a peek into their world and it's so much easier to loop in parents!

## you get access to the best providers

Virtual care gives families access to experienced providers, specialized in whatever you may need support with. Remember, >50% of counties in the US do not have a local, qualified child and family therapist.



## families stay engaged longer

The convenience of going virtual actually increases child engagement! On average virtual care sees less cancellations and families are more likely to complete their care plan vs. dropping out early.



## it's more convenient



On average, families save 54 minutes weekly by skipping the commute, wrestling kids in the care and finding parking. Home therapy allows for high-quality care in a comfortable environment, with snacks and cozy blankets.



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