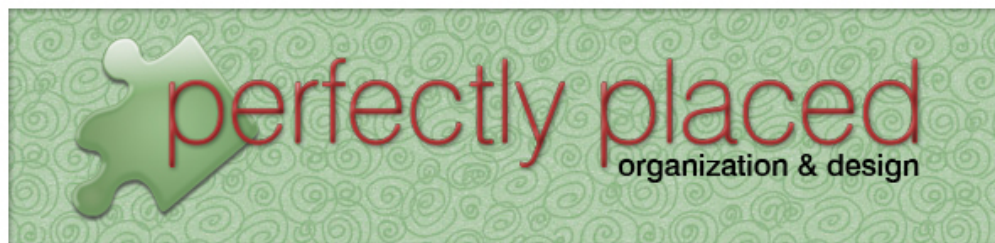


How to keep your kids from driving you nuts this summer.

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3 Strategies For Coping With Summer Chaos

School is out and your living room has turned into a drop zone of massive proportions. Each time you walk through it, you see trails of what your child has been doing all day. If you can relate to this scenario, you are not alone. Here are 3 strategies to cope with the craziness of summer.

1. Have a schedule. With no schedule in place, summer quickly turns into a watching TV and "I'm bored" whining festival. Set a day or days of the week where the kids are allowed to have play dates from outside of the neighborhood. Set one day a week or twice a month for fun days. Have the kids brainstorm on what they would like to do on those days and make a list. Assign a date to each child and on their date, they choose the activity. Determine times when the tv is and isn't allowed to be on. Have a strategy in place for how often your kids are allowed to have or attend sleep overs in a week. Schedules keep you from having to make spur of the minute decisions.



2. Simplify belongings. Summer is a great time to clean out kids rooms because they are home and it is best for them to be a part of the process. Kids not only outgrow their clothes quickly, but also their toys and interests. Take some time to purge your child's clothing and toys with them. You'll be amazed (and so will they) at how much easier it is to maintain their space when there isn't so much in there. Create homes for the things they do use and love so they know how to clean up their space.

3. Set routines & responsibilities. Just because school is out, doesn't mean responsibilities have gone out the window. Meals, laundry and clean up are more present than ever in the summer months. To keep common areas of the home from becoming overwhelmed with clutter, use a step basket or other decorative basket for each child. Once a day have everyone do a clean sweep through the living room or other common areas and place each person's items in their perspective basket. The baskets should be emptied daily. Summer is also a great time to teach older kids how to cook. Give each child a day of the week that they are responsible for helping you cook dinner. Their future spouse will thank you some day.

Sincerely,





Susan Stewart
Owner, Perfectly Placed Organization and Design
susan@perfectlyplaced.org
www.perfectlyplaced.org
636-686-0048 (St. Louis) | 623-202-9199 (Phoenix)

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