

# Surviving the School Holidays

**How to get through the next couple of months!**

Some of us may have fond memories of school holidays and endless days spent playing with our mates or riding our bikes. However, many parents are filled with dread when the school holidays approach, fretting about filling whole weeks with activities and generally having to entertain the kids. With a little bit of planning ahead, the holidays needn't be a stressful time, says this guide by leading psychologists from [First Psychology Scotland](#) compiled by Professor Ewan Gillon, Dr Maria Gascon and Dr Ian Connor.

**1. Make a plan:** what will it take – for you and your children – to have a great holiday? Try to plan ahead and look at options that allow you to spend time together, but also give the young ones a chance to spend time with others of the same age and start making arrangements early on. Include your children in the planning stage by asking about their own plans and integrating them into the family plans. And don't forget to have a range of rainy day options up your sleeve!

**2. Create a routine:** during the school year, our days are highly structured. Whilst the holidays are a good time to loosen these routines and generally slow down, both you and your children will benefit from some kind of structure such as set play times and meal times. Spontaneity is great, but without any structure at all, children can feel a bit lost and bored.

**3. Build up a support network:** check with schools or nurseries for a holiday programme. Community centres may also offer activities and events that allow youngsters to try something new, learn different skills and develop interests outside of their school curriculum.

**4. Family is key:** if you're lucky enough to have family members living close by, include them in your holiday preparations for day trips, sleepover etc. Visiting family members is a fantastic opportunity for children to bond and have fun with their grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Your family will appreciate spending time with the children, too, and it takes the pressure of you as a parent.

**5. Mind your work:** most working parents are unable to take time off work for the full duration of the holidays and even if you have flexible working arrangements, there will be a time when you do need to knuckle down in front of your laptop. Make sure these times are part of your joint holiday planning to avoid becoming more stressed out than you would be during the school year.

**6. 'No parents allowed':** most children love socialising with their peers and the holidays are a great opportunity to arrange 'play dates' with their friends. Speak to fellow parents and your neighbours about taking turns in hosting other children. This will allow you to retain some 'me time' whilst giving your offspring a chance to develop social skills and simply enjoy themselves.