

What Can I Do With My Child Or Children In The Holidays?

When I was young and was not spending enough time with the children, (because I was busy creating the school), their mother advised me to read to them every night before they slept. It was sound advice.

The thoughtful parent may not just choose "happy stories", but also: stories with depth. As the child or children grow older you may think of the theosophists who read stories of Dracula to Krishnamurti! Their intention to help him to be free of his fears.

Sometimes you can read interesting short articles from the newspaper (you may need to summarise or explain difficult words) but do be alert to the fact that the child's world is different. They have different interests to us adults.

Young children, may even ask you to read the same story again and again. They have their reason. They may be checking on their ability to remember or be exploring emotions they felt during your previous reading of the story.

Your Child in your Workplace

In India the traditions are often to separate children from the adults. For example: "Let them play we will do the work." However children also need to communicate and understand all aspects of this world.

Recently I advised a Bank Manager to take his 13 year old son to the Bank with him (if allowed), not often, but enough times so that he can understand his father's workplace and his father better. The son may just be sitting quietly reading a book; he will still be aware of the atmosphere and complexity of the Bank's functions. Likewise I advised his mother who was also working in an office.

At Home

The other option is to involve your child in the kitchen, helping with the cooking, or learning to wash clothes and keep his/her room tidy. Some adults need servants to care for the house. If possible the servants should be understood to be part of the family.

What parents need to avoid is **"spoiling the child"**.

Nowadays many parents buy many gadgets for the child. There are psychological reasons for this, parents need to be aware of themselves, but more to the point, consider the impact on the young mind, for the healthy growth of their bodies, children need to run, jump and play. They need to increase the heart rate, pump more oxygen into their blood and develop their muscles and motor skills. Playing video games and the like do not exercise the child. Interestingly most children are aware of the planetary issues of global warming, pollution and plastics in the

oceans and the environment, but we, adults give them plastic to play with or even to help them be "more educated." Are we aware of the contradiction that a thoughtful child will be conscious of?

Going Away

Having given time to your child: quality time; and avoiding as far as possible preaching to him or her or telling him/her do's and don'ts... listening and seeking to understand is so much better...you may decide to go away for some days as a family on an interesting trip for all. Of course, it is a good idea.

Some families cannot afford to do this. So you may decide to send your child away for two weeks for an Adventure Holiday or a Camp. Or you may decide that anyway it is a good idea to send your child away.

Camps

1. Recently I received an application from a ten year old boy who had attended a Summer Camp at Thanjavur Periyar Mariyammai University.

"The camp was named "Palugu Mugam". I stayed there five days. This was the first time I was separated from my parents. I felt very lonely. But I learnt various life skills. The Coaches taught me to swim..... Nowadays I can swim 30 metres. I have now attended this Camp in Summer for a few years. I have learnt various innovative ideas.... I learnt how to speak with strangers and how to face new situations and unexpected problems."

I know no more about this Summer Camp. Perhaps parents will be interested to look into it.

2. For years now I have been receiving a glossy magazine: "Ecotrail" from www.trailblazersindia.com. They arrange many different camps including treks in the Himalayas and the Western Ghats, Skiing in Switzerland and Scuba Diving in Bali. I have no idea of the costs of the camps, nor about the behaviour of the participants and their staff. However the magazine expresses serious concerns regarding the environment and inclusiveness. You may be interested to investigate.

3. I have also been receiving a brochure from Science Camp. "Dudhwa Tiger Reserve" in the Terai, Uttar Pradesh. They also seem to be serious people. Their website is: www.dhwanationalpark.org

4. At Sholai School itself we will be hosting a Summer Camp from 16th June to 26th June

2019. Email: sholaisummercamps@gmail.com

As and when we receive information on Holiday activities we will add to this page.