

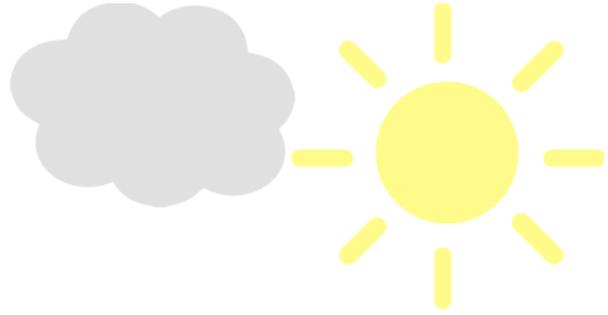


How to: Keep your kid busy this summer

Middle School can be challenging time for planning productive out of school time activities. Many of the vacation programs are geared toward younger kids and the ones that are available may no longer fit with your middle schooler's interests. Young people this age may also be asking for more independence from structured activities and parents may be looking for a break from expensive program costs. However, we know that middle schoolers continue to need well planned out of school time or they run the risk of losing academic ground as well as losing the opportunity to develop new skills, experience positive adult role models and stay healthy and active during the summer break. Below are a few ideas for planning a productive summer for your child.

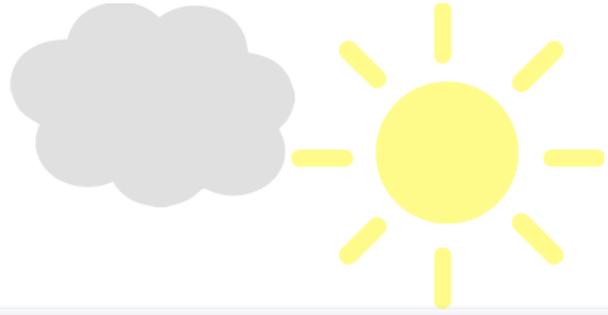
➤ **Camps and Classes** – there are still plenty of options in Newton for camps. See our resource guide that lists the programs available locally including plenty of counselor in training programs which can be great transition for young people ready to build some leadership skills and begin thinking about future employment. Overnight camps can also be a great option at this age, helping young people begin to develop their independence. There are many options of Sleepaway camps but a good place to start learning about them is at www.livenewton.net. Financial aid and scholarships are also available at some day and overnight programs but it's important to plan ahead to take advantage of those opportunities. The Newton Free Library also offers various summer activities for middle schoolers. See <http://newtonfreelibrary.net/tweens/> for more information.

➤ **Volunteering and Internships** – What does your child love to do? Is there an interest, a skill that he or she would like to explore over the summer? Help your child reach out to local businesses or organizations who may be willing to host your child and help them gain critical experience. Does she love dogs? Maybe a local vet would like someone to help with animals that are boarded there. Or a local dog walker would like a helping hand. Does he love plants and gardening? Maybe a local landscaper would like to have someone help during the busy season? Young people this age will need your help in brainstorming ideas and reaching out but be sure to involve them early, especially as professionals will want to see a certain level of maturity and initiative from any youth they are considering working with. Here are a few volunteering ideas:



<u>Newton Food Pantry</u>	The Newton Food Pantries rely 100% on volunteers. Work available includes helping unload trucks, stocking shelves, and some summer options. Visit http://www.newtonfoodpantry.org/ways-to-help/
<u>Centre St. Food Pantry</u>	Volunteers help with lots of tasks including helping shoppers choose items, bag refrigerated or frozen food for the shoppers, checking expiration dates etc. Visit http://www.centrestfoodpantry.org/volunteer for more information
<u>Hope & Comfort</u>	Help this Newton non-profit count, sort, package products and more. Visit http://hopeandcomfort.org/get-involved/volunteer/ for more information
<u>www.volunteermatch.org</u>	This website is a great resource for local volunteer opportunities.
<u>Green Newton</u>	Staffing farmer's market table, help with mailings, help writing environmental- focused articles and more
<u>New Art Center</u>	Office, marketing, and gallery projects are some volunteer work that is available
<u>Newton Community Farm</u>	The Newton Community Farm is a non-profit that provides locally grown produce to Newton Farmers' Markets, local food pantries and their own farm stand. Opportunities for volunteering include joining the Field Crew, assisting as event organizers and helping with communications. To volunteer, send an email to volunteers@newtoncommunityfarm.org noting your name, interest and information about yourself relevant to the work you're interested in doing.
<u>ASC Newton</u>	ASC Newton connects Newton students with volunteer opportunities at organizations such as the Newton Special Olympics, the Charles River Conservancy and the National Kidney Foundation. Most volunteer events last for 3-6 hrs.
<u>Center for Civic Engagement</u>	The Center for Civic Engagement seeks to provide opportunities for Newton students to participate in community service, civics and leadership.
<u>Help Around Town</u>	Help Around Town is a free community job board designed for youth. Register at helparoundtown.com to find flexible local jobs such as babysitting, running errands and yard work.





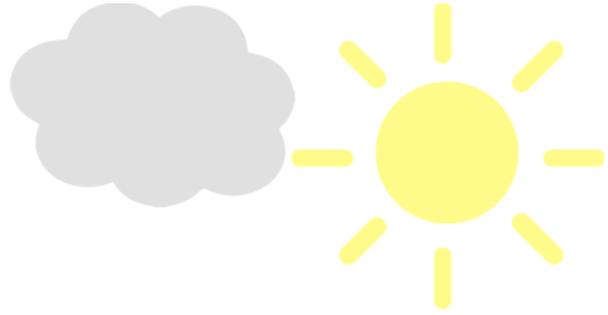
- **Online Courses** – Do you have a kid who might want to explore some academic subjects a little deeper on their own this summer (or perhaps with your support). There are free online classes on a vast array of topics that might keep them busy and learning throughout the summer.

Khanacademy.org	Free online classes on a vast array of topics for all ages and types of learning.
Newton Community Education	Various online courses offered for kids and adults of all ages

- **Swim and Play** – Summer time should be fun. Newton has two wonderful swimming areas, Crystal Lake and Gath Pool and students can get one pass for both that offers unlimited access to them. Go to <http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/parks/aquatics/gath/membership.asp> . Financial assistance is also available for summer passes. Go to the Parks and Recreation page of the city website www.newtonma.gov/park and download the financial assistance form or call 617-796-1500

- **Early Work Experience:** How about helping about the neighbors over the summer? Are there dogs that need to be walked, pets who need feeding, gardens in need of water, or a mom who would love a mother's helper? Help your middle schooler reach out and see if they can learn the valuable skills of responsibility and caring this summer.





General tips to help make the summer a successful and SAFE one for your child:

- Make sure whatever plans you make are realistic based on your child's abilities and level of maturity. Don't set them up to walk the neighbor's dogs every day if they aren't likely to follow through. Think through transportation, schedules and contingency plans in advance.
- Involve your child in the planning! Summer plans will be much more successful if you have your child's buy in and base it on their interests. Start the conversation and the planning early and do it together.
- Consider creating a summer weekly plan with specific activities and commitments for each week to help make sure kids have enough to keep them engaged throughout the weeks
- Any plans that you arrange that involve interacting with other adults such as volunteer opportunities or early work experience that you and your child design should be carefully vetted by you. Children of this age are vulnerable so be sure that any adult your child will be with is without a criminal record and is someone you have met and feel completely confident in. Set clear expectations with both your child and adults about such things as whether they can get in a car with anyone, be alone in a house etc. And make sure your child knows basic stay safe strategies such as how to call 911, how to ask other adults for help, and how to reach you.
- You are not alone – the other parents in our community can be a wealth of information about programs and summer strategies. And joining forces with them may mean that your kid has some guaranteed friend time this summer, which is a high priority at this age. Reach out to other parents for ideas, suggestions, and advice!

