

Is School Out and Chaos in? Use *Feng Shui* to Stay In Control

By Pat Heydlauff

Did you finally get your children's school year schedule figured out only to realize summer vacation is upon you and chaos is about to set in once again? Transitional times when schedules get turned upside down are always more hectic and difficult for parents, grandparents or caregivers.

When a child's schedule is interrupted or dramatically changed, sheer panic can be the result for the child as well as the parent. Transitions must be dealt with quickly and confidently so as to provide a peaceful transition bridge for everyone involved, or parents will be out-of-control on the first day of their child's summer vacation.

Is there really such a bridge? Can you successfully transition from the solidly set school year schedule to either no schedule or a limited summer vacation schedule? With a little advance planning and the use of some basic Feng Shui principles to shift energy, the answer is a definite yes.

Ideally planning for this transition should have taken place at least one to two months more before school ended. However, it is never too late to begin even if your children have officially ended their school year.

STEP 1 The first energy shift that needs to take place is with the adults. Adults need to create a new summer schedule for their children as soon as possible and adhere to it as closely as they do the school year schedule. This keeps the parent's life uncluttered. Children thrive on schedules and the daily routine of what is ahead. It's the lack of a schedule that allows the peaceful school year energy shift to the chaotic unplanned summer schedule.

It doesn't take long for parents to realize they will have less personal time for self, or for their little ones not in school when summer arrives, unless they plan carefully.

Summer should be filled to the brim with scheduled activities like summer camps, day trips to places like the zoo, reading time at the local library, activities and swimming lessons. Into the same category, time should be scheduled for going to educational events like summer school to help a child learn to read better, catch up on mathematics or whatever educational skills are needed to help them in their new fall school year.

This step is a must for all children having difficulty with a specific subject in school. Giving them the summer off from a subject they have a hard time understanding makes it even more difficult for them when the new school year begins. For these children at least one hour per day must be dedicated to improving their skills in their difficult subject(s).

It's all about having a set schedule for the children in the summer just like during the school year. The difference is, parents and other adults set the summer vacation schedule, not the school systems.



STEP 2 Create a specific schedule for home activities as well. Children should not spend all day every day in unplanned and even un-supervised activities. Waking and going to sleep schedules should be maintained just as during the school year to keep balance and routine in their lives, and yours. Their personal hygiene activities and household chores schedule should also remain the same all year long to preserve continuity.

Set aside two hours per day to give them total free time to play and do things of their choosing. The remainder of their day should be structured just as their school year schedule is. All children should have quiet time set aside daily to read and write. There should also be physical activity time at a playground, park, pool or a gym for children to release all of their pent up energy. If you do not have some of these activities available in your neighborhood, check with places like your local city recreation department or the YMCA for all of the events they have scheduled for the summer.

STEP 3 Invest in coloring books, crayons, drawing pencils, watercolor paints, sheets of paper and books to read. Schedule creativity time at least three times per week. This should not be "color inside the lines" type creative time, but rather time to encourage their energy to creatively flow wherever it takes them with pen and paper, paint and canvas or clay and a potter's wheel. Children get a lot of "color within the lines" instruction throughout the school year. They need to be encouraged to discover their natural built-in creativity during the summer without the threat of a pass or fail judgment. Just encourage them to do more and find the joy in their choice of creative expression.

Peaceful summer energy for you and your children comes from having and enforcing a plan. When the planned time is up for a scheduled event such as reading or art, make the children shift energy and move on into the next scheduled event. Do not let them change your schedule. The adult is in control here and makes the rules.

The more scheduled and structured your children's activities are for the summer months, the happier they will be and the more peaceful the energy will be in your surroundings and your home environment. Children respond very positively to schedules and rules, but the moment an adult gives in to the child's wishes, the adult has allowed the child to take the reins.

What you need to remember is, an energy shift from a school schedule to a summer vacation with no schedule is a sure formula for chaos to move into your home and send you careening out of control. Get your creative juices going and have a calendar nearby so you can create a peace-filled summer vacation schedule that keeps you in-control, provides you some much needed personal time and the children with much needed structured schedule to follow.