Solutions for Managing Summer Child Care

Finding ways to keep your children occupied and out of trouble over the summer can be challenging. This can be especially tough when you work full time or have a limited budget. Options also vary depending greatly on the age of your child(ren). In addition to the summer camp and child care resources included on our website, here are some additional options to help you manage this time.

Nanny Share

Nanny sharing is when two families employ the services of one nanny to care for their children. The families literally share the nanny. There are advantages and disadvantages of a nannyshare but it can be a reasonable solution for some families looking for a temporary caregiver for the summer. This type of arrangement works best when the children are close in age and live near one another, parents believe in the abilities of the caregiver and share the similar parenting styles. Nannyshares offer a good deal of flexibility, but they also require strong back up planning for when there is a breakdown in coverage.

Consider looking for a sitter or nanny in the UA Babysitter Network. Contact Vaishali Patel at vpatel@fa.ua.edu or 348-4354 to get access to the online database.

Co-op

A child care co-op is an informal group of parents in a community that take turns watching each other’s children to allow other parents a little time to themselves. No money is exchanged and each member is given equal benefits. A member list is kept of all interested parties and each takes a turn, keeping the group to a safe adult/child ratio. Members are often stay at home parents, though many working parents have set up exchanges for week day/weekend shifts. Co-ops work well in small communities or within neighborhoods.

Volunteer Programs

Volunteerism is a fantastic way for a teenager to learn more about him or herself as well as learn about others. Volunteering can provide a teen all kinds of opportunities. Quality experiences are all around and can be found locally as well as internationally. When researching volunteer opportunities, it is wise to consider what type of volunteer program fits your teen’s personality and capabilities.

Counselor in Training Programs

Teen campers who have completed their traditional camp years, but are still too young to be employed as official counselors, may enjoy the leadership role of being a counselor in training. A quality CIT program recognizes the distinct differences between being a camper and a counselor and offers specific programming to help young people become successful counselors.
Life skills in communication, conflict management, decision making, and group management skills are often a part of training. Other programming may include certification in CPR/First Aid, child abuse, neglect, discipline, and supervision, and camp policies and procedures. If your teenager is interested in a CIT program, it is often a good idea to explore programs they once attended or have an interest or talent.

**Foreign Exchange Programs**

Studying abroad or being a part of an exchange program are life-changing experiences for teens. Some of the programs can be costly but many offer scholarships as well. Traveling to learn about a new culture or practice using another language are experiences that kids don’t ever forget. The opportunity to be a part of an exchange program encourages many teenagers to become more independent and compassionate for others. If your child is interested in studying abroad or taking part in an exchange program, be sure to do your research on the company or program. There are some fantastic programs around, but there are also some to be wary.