**IDEAS FOR HANDLING SCHOOL BREAKS**

It is not easy for any of us to get thrown off our schedule. Children, especially, have a difficult time with routine changes. Here are some ideas for students on a long break.

1. Maintain a schedule: Create a daily schedule with your child for academics and hobbies. Maintain bedtimes and mealtimes just as if they are in school. It may be helpful to make the schedule visual, or have your child help create the schedule and make it visual.
2. Work with your children’s strengths and interests. Are they creative and artistic, or active and athletic?
3. Make a list of things to do. Work together to create a list of activities that children can do at home, such as board or card games, hobbies, puzzles, crafts, music, exercise, etc.
4. Nature time: It is important for children to get outside if at all possible. Are there games they can play in the yard, or even eat outside if weather and space permits?
5. Have children be active. Reduce screen time as much as possible. Plan for active games or games outside or family walks. This will also help moods and irritability.
6. Set clear and reasonable expectations. So much time together can be stressful at times. Even when we maintain a schedule and keep our children busy, there still may be behavioral issues that need addressing. Children feel safer and more confident when they know the expectations and when rewards and consequences are followed.
7. Prepare for tough moments. Take care of yourself. Be calm, firm, and consistent. Yelling or losing your cool may escalate stressful situations.

