

Managing the Chaos of School Holidays

It's that time of year again, as we start to prepare for school holidays. Here are some ideas to help you and the family have an enjoyable few weeks.

- **Acknowledge your achievements.** Be proud of yourself for getting through another year. Take some time to notice all you have achieved in the year.
- **Rest and Reset.** Make time to focus on resetting for the next year. This might look like pencilling in some 'home only' days to rest and unwind.
- **Focus on Sleep.** With the morning routine of school no longer being present, it's easy to slip into a different sleep routine such as staying up much later or sleeping in until mid-morning. Making sure that we are still getting enough sleep is important. Set a time each night to stop and unwind to get our brains ready for quality sleep. As the start of the school year approaches, it may be helpful to gradually get back into the school sleep routine by practicing a couple of mornings as if you were going to school.
- **Maintain Routine.** Where possible, try and keep a consistent holiday routine. One way is to get a calendar and pencil in particular activities, so your child is aware of what is coming up. This can be particularly helpful if your child finds it difficult to self-occupy or fill the time in without school. These activities do not have to be costly, the best things in life are free. For example, going for a walk outside, having a picnic, going on a bike ride, visiting the beach, reading a book at the local library, or watching a family movie at home.
- **Have Fun with the Family.** Make time for enjoyable family activities. This can reduce stress levels by making sure all family members have time to do things that make them feel good. Each family member could write down one activity they find enjoyable and then everyone completes those activities.
- **Manage Screen Time.** Consider how you will manage screen time over the holiday break and find ways to be flexible with screen time. Given the reduced routine of school, you may like to consider providing additional screen time as a reward for getting through the year. Consider how much screen time you would like your child to have and openly talk with them about this prior to providing the device.
- **Reach out for Support.** Don't be afraid to ask for help. As children can sometimes finish school before parents finish work, managing and looking after children during this time can be very challenging. Reaching out to family or friends for support to assist in the care for your child in this time is ok.

