



# JUNE Newsletter



## NOT YOUR USUAL SUMMER WITH KIDS

Ahh, summer! The time to relax, unwind and spend quality time with the kids...those small people who have been mostly in our houses for the last year and a half.

As families and the community emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the activities of traditional summers are up in the air. Summer camps, the county fair, sports and classes, water fun — they may be happening in a limited, adapted way, or they may not be happening at all. This is a summer to get creative!

**Child care** — While the pandemic has intensified the region's child care crisis, there is hope. Hop onto [ChildCare Aware of Washington's website](#) and you'll find help in your search for quality care.

**Brainstorm with the kids** — Sit down with your children and create a summer bucket list. What do they want to do to have fun this summer? And by having fun, of course, we mean growing new skills, learning about the world, exploring interests, and all the other benefits of play. Put the bucket list up in a visible place and check items off as you do them. Or write each experience on a slip of paper and draw one every day. You can even color-code them, so you can grab a slip appropriate to the day's weather or the amount of gas in the tank!

**Summer fairs** — The Clark County Fair has been canceled, but smaller events such as Tuff Truck and Monster Truck shows July 30-Aug. 1, a 10-day carnival starting Aug. 6, and bull riding in mid-August will offer a taste of the fun. Check [Clark County Fair](#) for information. Fairs will go on in other Southwest Washington counties. Check their websites for details on the [Cowlitz County Fair](#) July 21-24, [Klickitat County Fair](#) Aug. 19-22, or [Skamania County Fair](#) Aug. 18-21.

**Explore nature** — We are lucky to live in one of the most beautiful parts of the country, with many options for getting outdoors. Check out a park you've never been to. Take a hike; [alltrails.com](#) is a great resource for finding trails near where you live. Pack a picnic and eat with the ants. Have the kids keep nature journals, remembering not to pick living plants. [Columbia Springs](#) in Vancouver, 100 acres of wetlands, greenery and science education, offers a geocaching adventure this summer.

**Explore parks** — Parks departments have had to rethink summer recreation this year, as children under 12 have not yet been able to be vaccinated for COVID. Vancouver Parks and Recreation is taking free, smaller-scale events to eight different parks from 4-8 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays in July and August, plus Friday night movies in the parks each week. Go to [Vancouver Parks and Recreation](#) to sign up for email notifications. In other areas, check with your local parks department to see what's planned this summer.

**Explore history** — Fort Vancouver National Historic Site is a national resource that will take you back a couple of centuries (in a socially distanced way). But museums abound in Southwest Washington. A good resource is found on [Pinterest](#).

**Explore helping** — One family keeps kids from begging for treats at the grocery store by letting each child choose an item for the food bank each trip. Even at a young age, those children are learning to help others. The [Water Resources Education Center](#) in Vancouver will be sponsoring physically distanced summer cleanup opportunities. Make cards or pick flowers for neighbors. Open a lemonade stand to raise money for a cause. The possibilities — and the teaching — are endless.

**Explore the world** — Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries are open and have activities planned, taking precautions to keep everyone safe. See what's happening at your closest library, from LaCenter to Goldendale, at [fvrl.org](#).

Stay healthy and safe

Debbie Ham | Executive Director

## OUTSTANDING JOB AMANDA!

We want to take a moment and recognize our amazing ECEAP Lead Teacher, Amanda! Amanda works at the Minnehaha Early Learning Center and has worked through this last year supporting children and families during such uncertain times. Last March Minnehaha opened their doors to families of essential workers and Amanda did phenomenal at making new children feel welcomed and supported all while also teaching her ECEAP kiddos online. She safely delivered packets to students' doorsteps and made sure families had all they needed. Amanda was recently recognized for her outstanding work during the Circle Time Honors at the Early Achievers Institute. We are so proud and thankful for all she does!

## FUN IN THE SUMMER SUN

In our first article, we shared some fun summer activities. Now it's your turn. We would love to hear from you. Do you have a favorite place to hike, popsicle recipe, or summer-inspired art project that you would like to share? We are highlighting these tips and tricks on our social media channels. That way, we can all stay inspired over the summer months to provide safe, fun, and stimulating activities for our little ones to enjoy. Please send your tips and tricks (and pictures of you and your little one enjoying the summer sun) to Debbie at [debbie.ham@selfwa.org](mailto:debbie.ham@selfwa.org).

DONATE