26 Staycation Ideas to Rejuvenate Your Family

By Debra Eckerling

A: Aquarium Explore marine life at a local aquarium.

B: Beach Nothing says summer like a day at the beach.

C: Camping The great thing about camping is you can camp anywhere.

D: Day Trip Just because you’re not going on a traditional vacation doesn’t mean you can’t pretend to be tourists. Go sightseeing.

E: Explore Another staycation option is to explore your own neighborhood. Go to a park or entertainment venue you haven’t been to in a while.

F: Festivals/Fairs During the summer, it’s likely your town will host a festival or fair (or several). Look into art festivals, renaissance fairs and farmers’ markets, as well.

G: Global Cultures/Groceries Think of your staycation as an opportunity to explore traditions and cuisines from other parts of the world.

H: Hotel Here’s a classic staycation idea: Check into a local hotel for the night.
I: Ice Cream Social  Everyone loves an ice cream social. Or try a taffy pull.

J: Journal  At least a few days each week, have your kids write about their summer staycation activities. Younger ones can write just a few words, draw a picture.

K: Kindness  Along with your kids, perform acts of kindness.

L: Library  A library staycation allows you to visit places near and far, real and imaginary, through the pages of books you read together.

M: Museum  A trip to a museum can transport your family to another time and place through art and historical exhibits. What a great staycation idea!

N: Nature  Opportunities to explore nature during the summer are endless. You can plant a garden as a family.

O: Outdoor Movies and Concerts  Many communities have places that host outdoor movies and concerts throughout the summer. Just check your local chamber of commerce for a schedule or ask around.

P: Park  No list of staycation ideas would be complete without recommending that you visit your local parks.

Q: Quiet Day  Picture an idyllic vacation day spent lounging around a pool or on a tropical beach. A quiet staycation day may even include a nap!

R: Reunion  Summer’s the perfect time to host a family reunion or a reunion of friends you haven’t seen in a while.

S: Sports  Team sports may be fun to play, but they’re also fun to watch! Go to a sporting event.

T: Theater  Check the schedule for your local community theater or school drama department.

U: Under the Stars  When school is out, the kids can stay up a little later. Summer’s the perfect time to learn about astronomy and explore the stars with your kids.

V: Volunteer  There are volunteer opportunities are everywhere, from beach and park cleanup to visiting the elderly at a senior center.

W: Water  Need to cool off? Plan at least one pool day on your family staycation. Turn your backyard into a water park, and invite neighborhood kids over to play.

X: “X” Marks the Spot  Plan a treasure hunt as a staycation day treat! Get into the spirit—decorate the house, serve fish and Chips Ahoy cookies and dress as pirates.

Y: Yard  No matter how many day trips you plan to fill with staycation ideas, odds are you’ll be spending lots of time outside in the yard during your staycation.

Z: Zoo  We started with the aquarium, so it’s only fitting we wrap up with a trip to the zoo for our staycation ideas from A to Z.
Autism Society of Michigan

Fall Conference 2015

October 19th

Grand Valley State University

Grand Rapids Campus

Featuring Speaker:
Paula Kluth

Morning Workshop - “You’re Going to Love This Kid!”

Afternoon Workshop: “Just Give Him the Whale”

Dr. Paula Kluth is a consultant, teacher, author, advocate, and independent scholar who works with teachers and families to provide inclusive opportunities for students with disabilities and to create more responsive and engaging schooling experiences for all learners. Paula is a former special educator who has served as a classroom teacher and inclusion facilitator. Her professional interests include differentiating instruction and inclusive schooling.

She is the author or co-author of more than ten books including "From Text Maps to Memory Caps": 100 More Ways to Differentiate Instruction in K-12 Inclusive Classrooms", "Don’t We Already Do Inclusion": 100 Ways to Improve Inclusive Schools, and "You’re Going to Love This Kid": Teaching Students with Autism in Inclusive Classrooms. Paula is also the director of a documentary film titled "We Thought You’d Never Ask": Voices of People with Autism.
Fireworks Social Story

We celebrate the 4th of July with fireworks and sparklers. Fireworks are a fun way to celebrate the 4th of July holiday.

Fireworks are loud. Fireworks can boom, squeal, screech, and whistle. When the noise gets too loud, I can cover my ears with my hands, wear ear plugs or headphones.

Fireworks are bright and sparkle. If I do not want to look at the fireworks I can look away, cover my eyes or wear sunglasses. Some fireworks shoot up into the sky and others stay on the ground.

An adult will light all fireworks and sparklers. I will stay away from all fireworks so I do not get hurt. If the fireworks scare me, I can always watch them from inside, on a computer, or smartphone.
How Kids Defend Against Loud Sounds
A PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS howtobeadad.com

**FINGER PLUGS**

DESCRIPTION: jamming fingers into the ears like cotton swabs, the way no one is supposed to but does anyway.

WHAT IT SAYS: “This sound is so bad I’m trying to pop my brain like a zit.”

**HAND HELMET**

DESCRIPTION: covering the ears in a full-coverage, side-of-head double facepalm maneuver.

WHAT IT SAYS: “Hold all my calls. Don’t even bother talking to the hand.”

**HEAD HUG**

DESCRIPTION: clutching the head desperately with hands and forearms, like raising sound deflector shields.

WHAT IT SAYS: “I’m clutching my head to protect you from the blast when it explodes.”

**ARM MUFFS**

DESCRIPTION: raising arms to muffle sound in a straight-up referee pose or draped over the head in various ways.

WHAT IT SAYS: “I’m good. Not plugging my ears. Just celebratin’ good times, c’mon.”

**HOOD OF SILENCE**

DESCRIPTION: covering the head with a shirt, blanket or other ineffective sound dampening material.

WHAT IT SAYS: “I’m not even here to listen to any of this. Nobody’s home. Gone fishing.”

**SCREAMING**

DESCRIPTION: closes the inner ear, dulling hearing. It also does wonders for getting others motivated to stop the sound.

WHAT IT SAYS: “AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH- HHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!”
Summer Fun

Between June and September my kids have 82 days of summer vacation and I’ve promised them something fun every single day. That means I need 82 fun summer activities for one child with a developmental disability and one child who refuses to participate in most activities. It’ll be a piece of cake, right? Borrowing the weekday “Summer Schedule For Kids” at somewhatsimple.com, scouring the internet for more ideas and adding some of my own activities, here are 82 days of summer fun and learning:

Safety Sunday
1. Teach your child his or her full name.
2. Teach your child your full name.
3. Have your child memorize your home address – show where the house number is located outside and show where the street name.
4. Have your child memorize your phone number. Practice reciting key information.
5. Learn how to cross the street safely.
6. Practice an escape route in case of fire.
7. Practice saying “no:” make it a game in which you take turns asking each other to do increasingly absurd things.
8. Play hide-and-go-seek to teach your child how to remain calm while looking for you.
9. Teach your child the buddy system.
10. Teach your child what an emergency is and how to call 911.
11. Practice asking for help with things that are hot, sharp, dangerous or too high to reach.

Make Something Monday
13. Arrange 5 or 6 photos to make a poster or scrapbook page.
15. Plant a seedling outdoors.
16. Dig for worms – it’s a great exercise for fine motor skills and tactile defensiveness. Re-home the worms next to that seedling you planted.
17. Bubble snakes.
18. Make a leaf scrapbook.
19. Color the sidewalk with chalk. Wash it all away with water.
20. Paint using different types of paintbrushes: a fly swatter, a flower, a cotton swab, a sponge, a leaf, etc.
21. Build an obstacle course with hula hoops, lawn furniture and empty boxes.
22. Tie-dye some t-shirts.
23. Make a magic wand using all available materials.
24. Build a “fairy house” outdoors with sticks, pebbles, pine cones, bark, leaves and other natural materials found outdoors.

Time to Read Tuesday
25. Sign up for your local library’s summer reading program.
27. Read all but the last page of a storybook and ask your children to suggest an ending.
28. Have your child dictate and illustrate a story, and read it together. It’s OK if the story is 1 or 2 sentences long.
29. Make a home video of your child reading a story aloud, or of you reading aloud to your child.
30. After you finish reading a book such as The Lorax, go see the movie.
31. Read some books on a specific topic, such as insects, then do a related activity such as a bug hunt or catching
fireflies.
32. Have your child create a summer schedule for the family and read off the schedule every morning.
33. Check out a book of simple science experiments and try some of them at home.
34. Check out a book about a historical figure and play dress-up at home.
35. Have your child write out a checklist for a scavenger hunt, and find everything on the list together.
36. Swap favorite books with your friends.

**What’s Cooking? Wednesday**
37. Fruit smoothies in the blender.
38. No-bake oatmeal cookies on the stove.
40. Spinach-artichoke dip in the blender.
41. Banana muffins.
42. Roll-up sandwiches.
43. Fruit kebabs.
44. Chicken soup in the crock-pot (plug it in on the porch so that it doesn’t heat up the house).
45. Roasted marshmallows.
46. Scrambled eggs and pancakes for dinner.
47. Lemonade from scratch.

**Thoughtful Thursday**
49. Wash the car together. No driveway and no car? Then wash the toy cars.
50. Call someone just to say hello.
51. Pick some flowers (dandelions and clovers are OK) and give the bouquet to someone who isn’t expecting them.
52. Write a top ten list of a person’s best attributes and give the list as a gift to that person.
53. Write a thank-you letter to someone and mail it.
54. Donate clothing, books and toys to charity.
55. Teach your child to do one chore.
56. Give someone a homemade art project.
57. Volunteer at a food bank.
58. Collect bottles and cans, and donate the money to charity.
59. Pray for someone who needs a prayer.
60. Hug someone who needs a hug.

**Somewhere Fun Friday**
61. Petting farm or petting zoo.
62. A playground in a different neighborhood.
63. An art museum – check first to see when general admission is free!
64. The beach.
65. Pick fresh fruit at a local farm or visit the farmer’s market.
66. Ride a train.
67. Find a carnival or a street fair.
68. Ice cream shop.
69. Waterpark or playground.
70. Visit a friend.
71. Nature trail or botanical garden.
72. A skyscraper or another high place with a grand view of the world.
Social Skills Saturday

73. Tell a story from your own childhood. Have your child tell a related story from his or her life experience – yes, even if your child is nonverbal.
74. Lie in the grass and take turns looking for shapes or pictures in the clouds.
75. Go around and ask every family member at home the same silly question, and share the answers.
76. Look at some old family photos and name all the people in them.
77. Practice making emotional facial expressions on cue with your child: neutral, happy, sad, fearful, angry, disgusted, and surprised. Take turns and make it fun.
78. Practice listening skills by responding only with nonverbal communication for 1 to 5 minutes – then switch roles.
79. Be someone’s mirror: imitate a person’s actions as if you are that person’s reflection in a mirror for 1 minute. Then switch roles.
80. Play Follow the Leader. Match the leader’s pace for as long as possible, then let a new leader take over.
81. Play the statue game: one person freezes like a statue and the other person has to make the statue laugh. Take turns.
82. Develop family traditions: sing a song together, recite a poem, and say a prayer that has special meaning to your family.

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**Independent Clothing Line**

Clothing without the fuss and optional GPS tracking insert.

http://www.independencedayclothing.com/
**Homemade Lemonade Recipe**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 cup sugar
- 5 cups water, divided
- 6 to 8 lemons (about 1 cup of lemon juice)
- Ice

**Taco in a Bag**

1 pound lean ground beef  
4 (2.5 ounce) packages corn chips  
1 chopped fresh tomato  
1/3 cup salsa  
1/2 cup salsa  
Optional items: Chopped onions, black olives, guacamole’, jalapenos

**Directions**

1. Place ground beef in a large skillet. Cook and stir over medium heat until browned. Drain excess oil. Mix in the taco seasoning and prepare according to the directions on the package.
2. With the bags unopened, gently crush the corn chips. Snip the corners off the bags using scissors and slit open the bags along the side edge. Spoon equal amounts of the beef mixture, lettuce, tomato, Cheddar cheese, salsa and sour cream into the bags on top of the crushed chips. Serve in the bag and eat using a fork.
Road Trip Bingo

Police Car  Bird  Yield Sign  Ambulance  YELLOW Car
Traffic Light  Fire Engine  Gas Station  RED Car  Tree
Stop Sign  Worker  FREE SPACE  BLACK Car  Road Cone
18 Wheeler  Tall Buildings  GREEN Car  Bridge  Power Lines
Billboard  Motorcycle  Runner  BLUE Car  Bicycle

George Williams is a writer living in Virginia, who focuses on topics relating to autism in adulthood. He has published articles for educational institutions and the business community, tutored students with autism and home schooled his teenage son with ASD. Who Will Care for Them: What the Future Holds for Millions of Autistic Adults is a short book, but is long on message. It is an urgent plea for society to wake up and smell the proverbial coffee with regard to the growing population of young men and women on the autism spectrum who are aging out of the school system with nowhere to go due to lack of transition services and inadequate preparation for living in the outside world.

After a brief introduction, he launches into his manifesto with “Broken Promises,” that describes this crisis in heartbreaking detail. In essence he is saying that for many people with autism, the world is not their “oyster,” as it is promised to other, less affected people and that this is indeed, a “broken promise.”

In his second chapter, “Silent Voices,” he describes the pressing need for advocacy as so many people with ASD are either nonverbal or have a great deal of difficulty with communication. An important point that the author makes is that the disturbing trend of declaring a child “cured” of autism after undergoing intensive behavioral therapy, making characteristics seem to disappear or become less obvious blinds society to any underlying problems that the child may still have as a teen or adult. This results in reluctance to provide supports in the face of recent economic downturns and budget constraints.

Subsequent chapters discuss the need for appropriate housing, setting up a trust fund for an adult with ASD, and the pressing need for preparing an adult with autism for appropriate employment and for supports as he gets older. His assessments are grim and he pulls no punches here—the problems loom large and must be addressed now to avoid a catastrophe later on. He also provides a ray of sunshine peeking out from behind the clouds as he proposes ways that these problems can be addressed and that the changing business climate with its emphasis on diversity and acceptance of different kinds of people and the ascent of newer technologies that can make life easier in some ways for people with disabilities.

Despite the alarm he is sounding, Williams made me feel hopeful that society can address these problems head-on and he offers numerous ideas for how things can change such as having people design clothing that is sensory-friendly and easy to fasten and unfasten. He discusses trends that could result in a better future for adults with ASD including companies with disability-friendly policies such as Walgreens that hires people with disabilities, providing employees with supports and accommodations that should be an example for us all. I was impressed with the realistic attitude of the author mixed in with optimism for the future as people become better informed about autism spectrum disorders and as they see more people with ASD and see the sheer variation and diversity that this population presents. A major point that he emphasizes is that many people with ASD have talents and untapped potential that can be a huge benefit in the changing work climate as business becomes more global and complex requiring new ideas and “Out of the Box” thinking as never before. He feels that people with ASD can lead the way and can be a shining example for the rest of us.
Anne’s Website Review

WEBSITE REVIEW: Understood.org
(http://www.understood.org)

Anne Carpenter

One of the many labels that people with ASD often have assigned to them before they get the correct diagnosis (including me!) is ADHD. The characteristics such as difficulties with sensory processing, staying focused on one task or being overly focused and difficulty regulating one’s emotions and behavior look so similar to autism spectrum disorders that the child or adult is thought to have ADHD instead of ASD. Now, it is found that there is a great deal of overlap between the two different conditions and the website Understand.org purports to help the reader have a clearer idea about the differences and similarities as well as ways to help children and teens manage their ADHD.

Understood.org is here to help. This site is so comprehensive and so vast that it’s hard to know where to start. The home page includes several featured articles at the bottom that the user can click on that include six sections, Learning & Attention Issues, School & Learning, Friends & Feelings, You & and Your Family, Community & Events, and Your Parent Toolkit. Each section includes several articles that one can read and videos to help one better understand the concepts at hand. At the bottom right of each article is a section called Keep Reading with a book icon that lists other articles that the reader might find helpful. There is such a wealth of material here that the reader needs to take her time when using the website to get the most out of it.

The best place to start would be to read the introductory article about ADHD that does an excellent job of describing the characteristics and similarities to ASD and how it is different from ASD so that the parent or teacher has a foundation to go by when using the site. There are places for parents to fill out a profile identifying their child’s needs in the parent toolkit section so that the parent can identify their child’s needs and find the right approaches for him or her. There is a ton of information about schooling, including high school, how to navigate living with one’s family, learning how to make friends, establishing guidelines for dating and cellphone use, managing emotions such as anger, and much more. The organization into sections makes this easy and the clean, colorful layout with shades of blue and purple make for an attractive, easy to navigate website with just the right amount of information. I was impressed with how one can find additional articles about a subject of interest and the number of videos on each subject. This makes for a richer learning experience so that a mother or father can have the compass and roadmap they so badly need when Johnny has ADHD and has to take his Ritalin before his eighth grade classes or when Janey starts to daydream during 10th grade biology class.
Anne’s Vision Board

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE: Making a Vision Board!

Anne Carpenter

For years I had read about creating a vision board as a way to use the Law of Attraction to increase the likelihood of manifesting one’s desires by having a concrete representation of one’s wishes whether it be it travel, romance, a new house or adopting that adorable little girl you saw on an agency website. This can be done with photos, artwork and craft materials such as beads, glitter and stickers.

I had wanted to make a vision board of my own, but was never sure how to go about it until the folks here at the office suggested that I do one, so we exchanged ideas on subjects to focus on and what materials to use. I wanted to do one on places that I wanted to see and have been to and loved. So I decided on Italy, because I really want to go there—my mother traveled to Italy several times and fell in love with it, so we searched for pictures of Italy on the Internet and printed out a picture of the Rialto in Venice, a picture of a canal and a gorgeous picture of the Isle of Capri with cliffs dotted with houses overlooking blue water! Then, I focused on Sarasota, Florida which I had visited several times and fell in love with so we found some pictures of that area—one of a beach with a palm tree, a beach scene and the shopping area in downtown Sarasota. I hope to live and work there someday as I have relatives there and it is such a lovely city!

I also included a picture with a quote that reflected my desire for that “Special Someone” to share my life with. I attached the pictures with tape, stuck on some sparkly stickers and buttons and we sprayed it with glitter and put on sea shells on the bottom, and we put sandpaper on the bottom for sand and I painted aqua waves. The frame was painted aqua, also. We put a big mirror in the center for me to gaze into knowing that this could all come true and it is now on the wall in my office.

This would be a great tool for an adult with autism as a visual and concrete way for him or her to focus on his hopes and plans for the future, so that he or she can find ways to make all of those dreams work out. After a vision board is created, the person can then find ways to meet those goals. For example, my sisters and I are planning on a trip to Italy on an Elderhostel (now Road Scholar) and I can always visit my relatives in Sarasota again.

I am more than open to finding that Special Someone! If nothing else, a vision board is a way for one to focus on their desires, so that they may be more likely to manifest in one way or another. One can have fun in the process. How cool is that??
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Pamela Dorris
Kachina Proffit
Sarah Vella

Charity Motors
Cyriacus Ibekwe
A SPECIAL THANK YOU!

ASM’s 5k Run/Walk was a huge success

Special Thanks to:
Our Sponsors, Runners & Walkers, Volunteers, and Michigan Running Foundation

We are looking forward to our 2016 Event!

Our Mission
The mission of the Autism Society of Michigan (ASM) is to assure full participation and self-determination in every aspect of life for each individual. We will realize this vision by opening avenues of self-advocacy and advocating on behalf of others in a way that values equity, respect, dignity and diversity in all communities.

Your “Summer Horizons” Has Arrived!

At a Glance in This Issue….

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