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# Ginnie Graham: Kids are ready to swarm the city looking for summer fun

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Posted: Wednesday, May 28, 2014 12:00 am

By GINNIE GRAHAM News Columnist | 1 comment

By the end of the week, thousands of Tulsa-area students will be free of school, and they have big plans.

The first? Sleeping late.

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There will be no alarms going off at 6 a.m. No showers to rush into. No searching for missing shoes.

Just a well-deserved, long snooze into mid-morning.

Video games will be on my son's agenda. Disappointment is inevitable when finding out the daily time limitations on electronics.

There are always Lego creations to build, neighborhood friends to visit and a scooter to ride.

My 6-year-old daughter has her own to-do list.

All in one day, she wants to swim, bike a Tulsa trail, swing, play with her My Little Pony set, visit her Nana out of town, get a pedicure and throw a party complete with punch and a cake.

She also entertained the idea of driving to the American Doll store in Dallas but then thought it might be a bit much.

From a kid's view, there is nothing more freeing than the first day of summer break.

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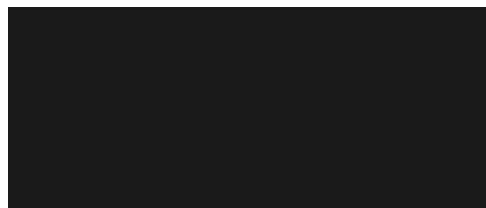
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For working parents, it's the start of a months-long game of chess played with summer camps, vacation getaways and baby sitters.

Parents fortunate enough to have summers off with their kids still play a game to avoid the "I'm bored" syndrome.

The Tulsa area has a lot to offer in beating back the summertime tedium, from 79-cent QuikTrip drinks to the Blue Hole Park swimming and camping ground near Pryor.

Here are some suggestions.

**Library reading program:** Starting this week, kids can go to any Tulsa City-County library branch to start recording the books read and visits made. The coupon-book reward is worth it with free food and entertainment.

An adult reading program has been added. It's too bad the same coupon book isn't part of the prizes. Grownups like free doughnuts and cookies, too.

**Second Saturdays at Philbrook:** The museum is free on the second Saturday of each month and has art activities available for families and children.

**Movies:** Go the Admiral Twin Drive-In, especially before the evenings become scorching and mosquito infested. It's rare for today's kids to make memories at a drive-in, so take advantage of it.

The Guthrie Green is offering free Thursday evening movies through Oct. 31, including "The Wizard of Oz" and "The Outsiders." Lying on a blanket in this park is a cool new tradition.

**Bowling:** I've never broken a score of 120, but who cares. It's hard not to like throwing a huge ball down a lane.

Andy B's offers a Kids Bowl Free discount, and other lanes offer discount days.

**The great outdoors:** Traverse the River Parks trails, go to the Red Bud Valley Nature Preserve, walk around the Oxley Nature Center, view a buffalo at the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, hike Turkey Mountain and climb the rocks at Robbers Cave near Wilburton.

Canoe, fish, ski and swim the state's rivers and lakes. My list in this category easily topped 50 different destinations.

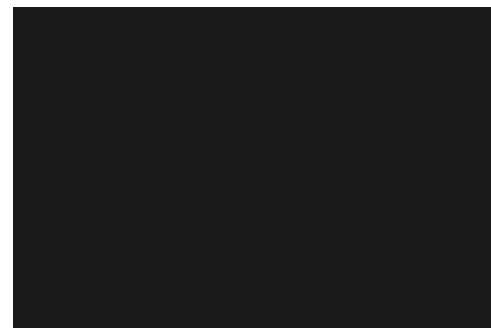
**Local parks:** Our taxes are paying for city and county parks, so use them. See what classes for kids are being offered, and hang out at a splash pad, where parents are not required to wear a swimsuit and can hang out in their regular clothes — definitely a bonus.

**Festivals:** Every city celebrates something, whether it's peaches in Porter or pelicans in Grove. Go to one and enjoy small-town life for a day.

**Building memories:** There is nothing wrong with doing nothing. Improvising each summer day has its own rewards.

Some of the best summer memories are made by accident — impromptu water fights, making cookies in the afternoon, building tents of blankets on rainy days or just playing in the backyard.

A big vacation is not going to be part of our summer. It doesn't need to be with all the other possibilities.



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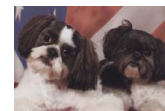
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My daughter may not get to see an American Doll store in the next few months. My son won't get to play as many video games as he'd like.

But, when August rolls around, the kids will have a string of tales to tell about their break. That's the nature of summer — bringing out the child and adventure in all of us.

Ginnie Graham 918-581-8376

[ginnie.graham@tulsaworld.com](mailto:ginnie.graham@tulsaworld.com)

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Ann McWhortor posted at 3:58 pm on Wed, May 28, 2014.



We have season passes to the aquarium and zoo. Another family member has bought passes to a few other activities within a days drive going and coming.

We do the reading program at the library. They asked 2 weeks ago when it would be starting.

We use several of the city parks.

They go out of state for 2 weeks and spend time on a farm with a relative. They love it.

Kids have ridden the devil out of the scooters they received for Christmas. They now have new bikes they just received for their birthdays. (Bummer

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they kept looking outside yesterday to see if it had quit raining.)

They already know they can't just sit inside and just play games.

Then there is my favorite. (For selfish reasons) We have a quiet time on a lot of days. (They have graduated from nap time.) Everyone grabs a book and reads for a while. Then we all take turns telling about the book we are reading. Sometimes the younger ones will choose a book at the library that they want me to bring home and read to them.

No matter what we do or plan they always seem to be glad to get back in school.

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