



# How to manage the financial stress of the school summer holidays

**If you're a parent or carer, you may be starting to worry about how you'll navigate work and childcare during the summer holidays.**

It's a juggle many of us face every year and one that is often exacerbated for families whose work situations may not allow for flexibility, and who are unable to afford additional childcare costs.

The squeeze on time and money poses an almost impossible challenge for lots of parents and carers. It's little surprise that stress and burnout rises for many at this time of the year





### Did you know...

The average weekly cost for a holiday club is **£157 per child**, which is **2.3 times higher** than what parents pay for an after-school club during term time\*.

This means that families face costs of **£934 for six weeks of holiday childcare** for each school age child - **£538** more than they would pay for six weeks of after-school childcare during term time\*.

Parents in inner London can pay up to **25% more** for places than those in the East of England\*.

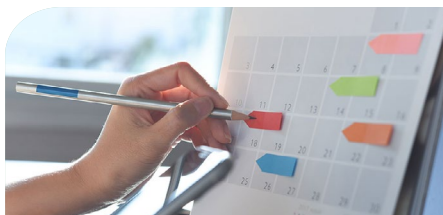
Not only can childcare be extra pricey, but its availability can also be limited. For parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), it can be particularly hard to find care - **9 in 10 families** are unable to source a suitable holiday club or activity for their disabled child\*\*.

## Here are seven ways parents and carers can better manage money worries in the summer holidays:



### Manage your expectations

As parents and carers, we want to make the summer holidays a magical, jam-packed time for our children but this is a huge expectation to put on ourselves. The reality is that children generally enjoy the simple things in life. Take a step back and think about the free or low-cost activities you can plan. If you're keen to put some bigger activities or days out in the diary but are worried about cost, choose two or three, and spread them out over the weeks.



### Plan ahead and find special offers

Lots of companies give out free tickets or two-for-one offers for activities or events over the holidays. You'll often find these on cereal packets, and you may be able to use points on supermarket loyalty cards. If you're planning on buying train tickets, book as far ahead as you can. They usually go up in price the closer you get to the date.



### Enlist the help of others

As parents, we often feel guilty asking for help from others. Know that this is not a sign of weakness and it's OK to get support from family and friends.

You could gather a group of friends who live locally and also have children, and agree on a day in the week when each will look after the children. It can really help to share the load of childcare, and it ensures you are each carving out a child-free day in the week. It's important to weave adult-only time into your day-to-day life.

\*Coram Family and Childcare's 18th annual Holiday Childcare Survey, 2023

\*\*Contact and the Disabled Children's Partnership





### Set yourself a budget

Before the holidays begin, sit down and work out how much you have to spend on activities for the kids over the summer holidays. Plan activities around what you can spend, not what you want to spend. Budgeting can help to avoid overspending, which may cause more stress overall.



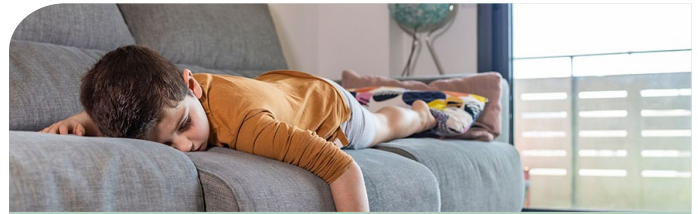
### Search for FREE activities

Although you might have to hunt for them, there are lots of free or subsidised activities for children and young people to get involved in over the holidays. Ask your local library and community centre what they have on, or look on websites like In Your Area.



### Look for pre-loved or second hand toys and games

It can be really tempting to splash out on new toys and games to keep the kids entertained. If your budget is tight, shop on pre-loved or second hand sites like Facebook Marketplace or eBay.



### Let your kids be bored

You don't have to fill every minute of the day with something fun and exciting. It's okay for children to 'be bored' now and then. Independent play time or uninterrupted time alone helps a child to build problem-solving skills and teaches independence. You may find this is when your child becomes most creative and inventive.



### Our tip of the month

The one thing we ask you to do today if you do nothing else...

#### Check how much water you've drank today.

The NHS's Eatwell Guide recommends that people should aim to drink 6 to 8 cups or glasses of fluid a day. Water, lower-fat milk and sugar-free drinks, including tea and coffee, all count. Staying hydrated is particularly important during the warmer months. Not getting enough fluids can lead to dehydration.