

# PARENT PAGES



*Because kids don't  
come with directions!*

A quarterly digital publication from the  
Howard County Office of Children's Services

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## Summertime Travel Tips for Families

Kick up your feet and cheer now that the summer has arrived! For families, summer is an opportunity to get away, enjoy a vacation, relax and spend some quality time together. Below are some helpful hints to ensure that the time is filled with more happy memories, less chaos and fewer meltdowns.

### 1. Pick a Family Friendly Place

Look for a destination that fits your children's interests and has something that everyone can enjoy. Locations that provide plenty of outdoor, running-around opportunities allow children the freedom to get energy out. Older children can learn a lot when involved in the planning process. Give them the opportunity to research places they would find interesting and then include them in mapping out the routes and following a budget.

### 2. Communicate the Details

Mark the calendar with your departure date and create an itinerary for the family. Include a schedule that covers meals, bathroom breaks, and naps. Children do best with structure and routine; so make sure to create it. Explain if you'll be spending the night, where your child will sleep, and how long you'll stay.

### 3. Use a Packing Checklist

Create one main packing checklist that covers all the clothing, toiletries, miscellaneous items, toys/electronics and paperwork that you'll need so you don't leave anything behind. Make sure not to over pack – stick to one suitcase per person. Don't forget to include items for both the hot outdoors and the cooler air conditioned indoors.

### 4. Set Expectations

If you're going to stay with relatives during the holidays, print out pictures of who you'll be visiting. Tell your child stories about them to ease anxiety about new people, and make everyone feel more comfortable once you arrive. If your children have any special needs, make sure to share them with those you visit.

### 5. Set Rules for the Road

Remind children about the rules from home that will be the same and the ones that might be different on vacation. (Such as a little more screen time while on the road) Safety rules for staying together, rules at other families homes and pool safety are some new rules that should be reviewed ahead of time.



### 6. Emotionally Prepare Children for Change

Role-play any potential problem areas so kids are equipped with a plan for how to react. Remind children how to calm down when over excited, such as take 3 deep breaths and tuck like a turtle.

### 7. Use Your Cell Phone as your Personal Assistant

Take pictures of important documents, where you parked your car, your hotel address and other booking information. Remember, confirmation emails only work when you can get a signal. You can also leave yourself a voicemail message if you prefer.

### 8. Prepare for the Airport

Before you leave, show your children the [TSA Kids](#) video, so they know what to expect. Make security easy and wear comfortable clothes. Use one gallon-sized zip bag per person to keep things together when emptying pockets. Use the sandwich technique with one parent going first, then younger children, followed by the other parent so no one wanders off. If there will be long waits, exploring the airport can help with extra energy. Also, put a copy of your itinerary and cell phone number in kids' pockets in case you get separated.

### 9. Surprise Bags

Pack an activity bag and have kids help pick out items such as small toys and hand-held games, then sneak in new toys they have never seen such as a new book and sensory toys to keep busy hands occupied. Remember to add snacks and drinks.

### 10. Maintain Sleep Routines

Overtired kids are cranky kids. You might be staying up later on vacation, but try to stick to normal bedtimes and go-to-sleep routines whenever possible. Make sure to remember the times of day that your child is usually tired, and plan accordingly to avoid meltdowns.

# COMMUNITY

## GET UP, GET OUT AND GET ACTIVE!

Summertime is a popular time to get out to the pools and run in the sprinklers. Don't forget the many parks in the area too. Even on hot days, you can go out first thing in the morning to get outdoor exercise before the heat and sun get too strong. Below is a list of local fun places around Howard County to take the children this summer!

### Centennial Park, South Entrance

10000 Route 108, Ellicott City, MD 21042  
[www.howardcountymd.gov/centennialpark.htm](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/centennialpark.htm)

This 337-acre park features a 54-acre, man-made, stocked lake and is home to a variety of wildlife. Walk, run, or bike the paved pathway around the lake. Amenities include fishing, picnic pavilions, picnic areas, boat rentals, and more.

### High Ridge Park

10100 Superior Avenue, Laurel, MD 20723  
[www.howardcountymd.gov/highridgepark.htm](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/highridgepark.htm)

This 88-acre park borders the Patuxent River. Enjoy a tennis court, basketball court, gazebo, picnic pavilion, and playground. Only six acres are developed so be sure to watch for wandering wildlife!

### Meadowbrook Park

5001 Meadowbrook Lane, Ellicott City, MD 21043  
[www.howardcountymd.gov/meadowbrookpark.htm](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/meadowbrookpark.htm)

This 77-acre park features three baseball fields, an open-play area, a large playground, two tennis courts, two basketball courts, two picnic pavilions, and restroom facilities.

### Waterloo Park

6951 Old Waterloo Road, Elkridge, MD 21075  
[www.howardcountymd.gov/waterloopark.htm](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/waterloopark.htm)

This 22-acre park is a great setting for a family get-together! There are two picnic pavilions, a playground, a basketball court, tennis courts, a ball diamond, and a multipurpose field.

### Howard County parks and playgrounds listings:

<http://mapofplay.kaboom.org/>  
[www.howardcountymd.gov/RAP](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/RAP)  
[www.visithowardcounty.com/outdoors/popular-parks](http://www.visithowardcounty.com/outdoors/popular-parks)

### Howard County Conservancy

10520 Old Frederick Road, Woodstock, MD 21163  
Check the website for many activities and events.  
[www.hcconservancy.org](http://www.hcconservancy.org)

### Robinson's Nature Center

Check out the website below for info on summer camps and other special events.  
[www.howardcountymd.gov/RNCprograms.htm](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/RNCprograms.htm)

### Courtyard Concert Series - Columbia Village Centers

Great outdoor concerts and entertainment are held at the Dorsey's Search, Hickory Ridge, River Hill, Harper's Choice, Kings Contrivance and Wilde Lake Village Centers mid-June through mid-August (days and hours vary).  
[www.columbiavillagecenters.com](http://www.columbiavillagecenters.com)

### Sunset Serenades

Grab a blanket or lawn chair, bring the family, have a picnic, and enjoy the sounds of summer!  
Wednesdays at 7 PM Centennial Park South  
[www.howardcountymd.gov/summerconcerts.htm](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/summerconcerts.htm)

### Lakefront Summer Festival

Bring a blanket or a lawn chair and enjoy live performances and movies on the lawn at the Columbia Town Center Lakefront. Mid-June through mid-August  
<http://www.columbiaassociation.org/services/lakefront-summer-festival>

### Travelin' Bands Summer Time Concert Series – Howard County Recreation and Parks

Grab a blanket, bring the family to enjoy the sounds of summer. Locations and dates vary. 410-313-4700  
[www.howardcountymd.gov/rap](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/rap)

### Local Color 2015

The Artists' Gallery of Columbia, August 3-28  
American City Building, 10227 Wincopin Circle  
[www.artistsgallerycolumbia.com](http://www.artistsgallerycolumbia.com)

### Passport to the Past – Discover Howard County!

Pick up your Passport at the HC Historical Society at the Miller Library or The Museum at 8328 Court Ave.  
410-313-3250  
[www.hchsm.org](http://www.hchsm.org)

### Teen Collision Avoidance Training

Collision Avoidance Training is a defensive driving and vehicle control program for teens. Participants learn hands-on techniques for evasive maneuvers, emergency braking, cornering, backing, skid recovery, steering, acceleration and more.

Cost: \$95.00

Ages: 16-20 who possess a valid Maryland "Class C" driver's license (no learner's permit)

Classes are held at the James N. Robey Public Safety Training Center in Marriottsville. June 27, July 25, Aug. 22. For more information email [JBeram@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:JBeram@howardcountymd.gov) or visit <http://www.howardcountymd.gov/departments.aspx?ID=6442451532>

# PARENTS AS TEACHERS

## SUMMERTIME SAFETY

Pools, picnics and shorts, oh my! Fourth of July, barbeques and family outings, oh yes! Sunburns, humidity and heat stroke...oh wait!

Yes, it's that time of year again when we start planning our family beach trips, go to the park and explore the outdoors. With the temperature rising, also remember to keep your loved ones safe!

Here are a few pointers to keep in mind while planning that upcoming trip:



### Heat Dangers

Make sure to wear water resistant sunscreen with a minimum of SPF 30 and reapply throughout the day. Keep cool by taking numerous water breaks. Wear loose, lightweight and light colored clothing, which helps adjust the body's temperature during the summer months when sun exposure is at its highest.

**Never** leave children or pets unattended in a car.

### Water Safety

- Enroll children in swimming lessons.
- Arm floaties and air-filled tubes are not approved for safety and will not protect your children from drowning.
- Keep your eyes on your children at all times, even with a lifeguard nearby!
- Remember that children rarely make a big splash when they slip and fall into a pool.

### Firework Safety

The sale, possession and use of ground-based sparklers is prohibited in Howard County. Handheld sparklers, party poppers, ignitable "snakes" and "snap 'n' pops" may appear fun, but can be hazardous. Do not allow young children to play with fireworks. Summer is a time for family and fun, so being prepared will help keep your summer months safe and exciting!

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BITES

### Ticks

Bites from some ticks found in Maryland may result in Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever or Lyme Disease. The symptoms of both begin a few days to a few weeks following the tick bite and include headache, chills, fever and a rash.

**Tick First Aid:** Remove ticks by using tweezers. Grasp the tick close to the skin and pull upward with steady, even pressure. Make sure the entire tick has been removed. Wash the area thoroughly. If symptoms develop, contact a doctor.

### Snakes

Two venomous snakes are native to Maryland: the Timber Rattlesnake and the Northern Copperhead. Both are pit vipers with triangular heads, elliptical pupils, fangs, and pits between the nose and the eyes. Rattles may or may not be present on the rattlesnake.

Not all venomous snakebites result in the injection of venom. Symptoms include pain, redness and progressive swelling.

**Snakebite First Aid:** Remain calm. Wash well with soapy water. Always call the Maryland Poison Center before performing any additional first aid.

### Spiders

The Black Widow spider, known for its round, glossy black abdomen with an orange-red hourglass on its undersurface, is commonly found in Maryland. Its bite may be painless or painful with redness and warmth at the site. Common symptoms include muscle pain and cramps developing within two hours of the bite.

Controversy exists over whether the Brown Recluse spider is found in Maryland. Regardless, this venomous spider is about one half inch long with an oval body and a dark violin-shaped marking on its back. Symptoms are usually limited to the bite site and include pain, redness and a "bull's eye" appearance that may progress to an ulcer.

**Spider bite First Aid:** Wash the area thoroughly with soap and water, then call the Maryland Poison Center immediately.

**Additional information from Maryland Poison Control can be found on [www.mdpoison.com](http://www.mdpoison.com)**



# THE ADOLESCENT ARENA

## TEENS IN THE SUMMER MONTHS

With the summer months upon us, teens are moving in many different directions because of social commitments, internships, summer classes, and camps. Although the summer months are naturally less structured, one of our roles as a parent is to help our adolescents have a productive summer. Being sure to plan out your adolescents' time is mutually beneficial; it helps to balance structured time with unstructured time. Taking a break during the summer months is ok, but it is also important to have a schedule



that is followed so they are prepared for the school year. Parenting experts have identified three steps to planning the summer with your teen so they do not get bored and possibly find trouble.

### Map Out a Monthly Schedule

When you plan out your full summer monthly, you are able to clearly identify the gaps and unstructured time. This will enable you to help them fill their unstructured time with productivity. For example, check out the Howard County Public Library's calendar for free teen activities, book clubs, identify community service or volunteer opportunities, and develop a screen time schedule. Social media has intensified with 30 million teens nationwide using various sites. During the summer months these numbers are even higher because children are not in classes and teens have more free time to explore and communicate with friends. Breaking up large blocks of time will help your teen avoid settling into the routine of sleeping in late every day, watching long hours of television, and spending too much time on social media.

### Create a Weekly Schedule

Writing out the weekly schedule will ensure all family members are informed; this schedule is more fluid and can be changed. This will also allow them time to participate in the planning by being part of the process. Write in opportunities to do spontaneous things as well as things that are planned, so they can attend impromptu events as well. A weekly schedule is also the ideal place to list household responsibilities for your teen. Be sure to schedule things that are of interest to your teen so they are excited about the upcoming week.


### Make a Daily Routine with Your Teen

Together, plan out the daily routine so they are aware of what is expected. Often, adolescents need to be reminded of their daily responsibilities like hygiene and chores. When developing the daily routine, be sure to leave some free time, but also have a list of suggested activities for downtime such as: reading, listening to music, swimming, or biking. It is also important to schedule in television and video game times so that these activities do not take up your teen's free time or encompass their whole day. Creating alternate daily routines for camp days, vacation, and other special times can help your adolescent make good choices during the unstructured time.

Summer is a time to rest and enjoy time off, but always be mindful to create a balanced schedule. Following these three steps may help you help your teen have a more productive summer. This creative scheduling and time organization will keep your teens from getting bored and give them plenty of free time with some practice at making choices.

For more information, contact the Adolescent Specialist at 410 313-2273 (voice/relay) or [children@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:children@howardcountymd.gov).

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Office of  
**CHILDREN'S SERVICES**  
Howard County Department of Citizen Services

# The Family Institute

A PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM  
Howard County Office of Children's Services

## PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS & CAREGIVERS!

The Family Institute provides **informational sessions** and **training workshops** on the latest child and parent topics:

- Child Development
- Positive Discipline
- Health and Safety
- School Readiness
- Finding Resources
- Adolescent Issues

Also available, "**Parent Pages**," a FREE, quarterly, digital publication, geared to children of all ages and interests, specifically to Howard County.

To view a list of current workshops, or sign up to receive your digital issues of Parent Pages:  
[www.howardcountymd.gov/familyinstitute/](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/familyinstitute/)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
410-313-1440 (VOICE/RELAY)  
[children@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:children@howardcountymd.gov)

# CARE CENTER CORNER

## BRAIN GROWTH AND PLAY

*“Play is the work of a child.”- Piaget*

What can you do as a parent to help your child avoid the summer slump? If you want to see children succeed in life, let them play. How can that be? Don't we want our children to excel academically? Yes, we do. So let them play!

Children love to play and they especially love to pretend when they play. Pretend play is crucial in helping the brain develop executive functioning skills. These are skills that are necessary for academic success and success in the adult years. Executive functioning skills include working memory, cognitive flexibility, inhibitory control and self-regulation or self-control.

Research has shown that the developing brain needs play, especially pretend play, to form neurological connections which in turn make meaning of the world. In her book, “Mind In The Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs” (2010), author Ellen Galinsky notes that children do need to learn a lot of information. They need to learn facts, figures, concepts and insights. But Galinsky observes that children also need life skills. Those life skills

include the executive functions which are so powerfully developed through pretend play.

Sumertime offers a great opportunity for children to be provided with play-based activities for extended periods throughout the day. Children need to explore, touch, question and interact. They need to be curious and learn by doing. Allowing children to have sustained unstructured play is essential for their development and academic success.

So go ahead...have fun and play!

## LAUNCH INTO LEARNING

Wondering what you can do to support that play and learning combination? Need resources and activities for birth through age five? Do you need information about developmental milestones or are you just looking for things to do with your young child? If so, visit Howard County's new Launch Into Learning website. The new website includes ways to promote early learning for parents, early care professionals and businesses. New items will be added periodically so please visit the site monthly.

Launch Into Learning is an initiative supported by the Howard County Early Childhood Advisory Council. To learn more about this exciting new program or the Council, contact Debbie Yare by phone at 410 313-1943 (voice/relay) or email at [dyare@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:dyare@howardcountymd.gov).



**Launch Into Learning**  
TALK • PLAY • SING • READ • EXPLORE

An early learning initiative supported by the Howard County Early Childhood Advisory Council

[www.howardcountymd.gov/launchintolearning/](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/launchintolearning/)

# ACCESSING QUALITY CHILD CARE

## NEED CHILD CARE?

### Two ways to search for child care

The **Maryland Child Care Mapping Tool** is an online GIS application developed primarily to help parents in need of child care services locate services near their home or public school or job. The user can set a search radius, select the type and schedule of care desired, and filter the results according to providers' quality rating levels. Search results display as "pins" on a map and can be printed out as text with or without the display map. Visit <http://geodata.md.gov/mdcc/>.

**Locate Child Care** Parents can also find childcare by calling 877-261-0060 or by visiting [www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/programs-services/locate/](http://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/programs-services/locate/) to access the child care data base. Another resource that is available is The Choosing Child Care information sheet at [www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/choosing-child-care/](http://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/choosing-child-care/)

## QUALITY MATTERS

### Maryland EXCELS in Howard County

#### How can I decide on a good child care program for my children?

Look for a **licensed child care** program and look for quality. Children need an environment that supports and nurtures their social and personal development, language and literacy skills and their cognitive and physical growth. A program that participates in Maryland EXCELS indicates its aim to provide quality child care.

#### What is Maryland EXCELS?

Maryland EXCELS is a quality ratings system for early childhood and school-age care. Programs demonstrate quality by meeting certain requirements in the following five content areas:

- Licensing
- Staff Qualifications and Professional Development
- Accreditation
- Developmentally Appropriate Learning
- Administrative Policies and Practices

Upon review and verification, programs publish a rating from 1-5 checks (with 5 being the highest quality level). Programs can pursue additional achievements in the areas of Asthma Friendly Child Care, Program Administration Scale and Business Administration Scale, Health and Wellness, and Cultural and Linguistic Competency.

#### What is the difference between child care licensing and Maryland EXCELS?

Child care facilities in Maryland are required to meet minimum health, safety and programming standards to be licensed. Maryland EXCELS is a voluntary program that focuses on excellence in areas such as staffing, programming and administration.



#### What does it mean if a program only has 2 checks?

Participating at any level in Maryland EXCELS indicates a program's aim to provide high quality child care.

#### How many programs participate in Maryland EXCELS?

Across the state of Maryland 4,500 child care centers, family child care homes and school age centers participate in Maryland EXCELS. In Howard County, the total number of eligible programs participating is 251; 121 family child care programs, 81 centers and 49 school-age programs.

#### How do I know if a program participates?

Parents can ask prospective providers if they participate, and can find information about published programs on the Find a Program Portal at [www.marylandexcels.org](http://www.marylandexcels.org) and the Maryland EXCELS Quality Finder App, can be downloaded for free.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON CHILD CARE

### Call The Care Center Line for Help

Parents still needing information or are looking for parent workshops for Choosing Quality Child Care, should contact the CARE Center, the free information and referral line for Howard County at 410-313-CARE (2273) (voice/relay) or email [children@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:children@howardcountymd.gov)

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Please feel free to copy and distribute this publication. Available in alternative formats upon request.

[children@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:children@howardcountymd.gov) 410-313-1440 (voice/relay)

# SANDWICH GENERATION



The State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), part of the Howard County Office on Aging, is the local resource for Medicare for all

Howard County residents and their families or caregivers. SHIP provides a variety of services – all of which are free, confidential and unbiased – to help you understand and utilize Medicare, including:

- Monthly public education presentations (Medicare 101 and Medicare 102)
- Periodic training on how to use the Medicare Plan Finder to compare Medicare Prescription Drug Plans (Using Medicare’s Plan Finder)
- One-on-one counseling sessions (by appointment) with trained SHIP Counselors at a variety of locations around the county
- Assistance program review and application assistance
- Medicare Prescription Drug Plan and Medicare Advantage Plan reviews during the fall Open Enrollment season (October 15 through December 7)
- Senior Medicare Patrol – helping Medicare Beneficiaries protect themselves and Medicare from fraud, errors and abuse
- Public outreach to make Medicare beneficiaries and their families aware of our help

To get a current list of presentations and locations of SHIP services, please visit [www.howardcountygaging.org/SHIP](http://www.howardcountygaging.org/SHIP) and click on **Upcoming Medicare Information & Education Events Schedule**

For answers to basic questions or to inquire about claims, Medicare Beneficiaries can also call the 1-800-MEDICARE Helpline (open 24 hours a day/7 days a week except major federal holidays) for assistance. Should it be appropriate, beneficiaries can easily authorize another person to speak with Medicare on their behalf.

For more information visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) or call the Howard County SHIP office at 410 313-7392 (voice/relay).

# TRAVEL RIGHT

## FIVE TIPS FOR AVOIDING VACATION PITFALLS

**Get it in Writing and Read it Carefully** – Before you pay any money, find out about all terms and conditions related to airfare, hotels or tours, making sure you fully understand all conditions, fees, restrictions and the cancellation policy.

**Pay by Credit Card** Unlike paying with check or cash, you usually have the right to have credit card charges reversed if you do not receive what you paid for. Check with your credit card company for details about its charge-back policy.

### Confirm Travel Plans Directly

If you use a travel agent or tour company, it is good practice to confirm all your travel arrangements directly with the companies providing the transportation, hotel or car rental. Confirming hotel reservations also gives you the opportunity to verify the details of your accommodations, which may differ from how they are advertised.



**Know Before you Go** – Check with the Howard County Office of Consumer Affairs to see if there are complaints against the companies you will be using before booking. Search on-line for reviews and recommendations. Keep in mind that unhappy customers are more likely to post reviews than happy ones, so use more than one source when making your decisions.

**Beware of Solicitations Offering “Free” Trips or Gifts** Solicitations that require you to attend a sales presentation in order to receive a gift or prize are illegal in Maryland. The sales agents often use high pressure tactics and may misrepresent the quality or features of the travel product. In addition, “free” trips are seldom ever free. You will usually have to pay their higher costs for some services and/or pay “reservation” or “handling” fees. Most solicitors also use a cumbersome reservation process that makes it next to impossible to book the trip.

For more information on travel or other consumer topics, visit the **Howard County Office of Consumer Affairs** at [www.howardcountymd.gov/consumer](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/consumer) or call