

Preparing for hot summer days and children is not always easy



by BETSY SWENSON

I would love to wax poetic about how I'm looking forward to the balmy days of summer with my 2-year-old and 4-year-old. I'd love to tell you how I'm going to relish slow, lazy mornings, free from the hustle and bustle of getting ready for preschool. (Get your shoes! Come let Mommy fix your

hair! Hurry! No, you may not eat your lunch on the car ride! We're late! Your mornings are like this, aren't they? Please say yes.) I'd love to get sentimental about long days spent in the pool, afternoons filled with popsicles and running through sprinklers, and late bedtimes.

But let's get real. There is never a lazy morning in my house. Preschool or no preschool, my kids are up with the chickens, and it's not uncommon for them to come cockle-doodle-doo-ing into my bedroom before the sun even makes its appearance. Thankfully, they're adorable in the mornings—hair sticking out every which way, well-loved blankets trailing behind them—which makes up for their immediate (and very loud) demands for "Chocky milk! I WANT CHOCKY MILK!!!" along with, "I need to watch TV in Mama's bed!" (Yes, I am the mom who pulls the kids into bed with her and buys an extra 30 minutes of sleep courtesy of PBS Kids.)

And those long days spent in the pool and the popsicles and that other stuff? Not to be a summertime Scrooge, but I am largely pregnant—due at the end of June!—and the only thing I really want to be doing is sitting in a chair and NOT MOVING. But my kids? They're not really into not moving. They move a lot. And they make messes and drip popsicles all over the place and strip off their clothing in inappropriate places, and the thought of exerting the effort to clean sticky lime-flavored goo

of: my floor makes me want to weep.

So you see, I'm looking forward to summer, but not so much with anticipation and glee—more with trepidation. It's going to be HOT, yo. And long. And I am a fool woman who has not enrolled her children in any sort of camp or summertime activity because, camps? Who needs camps? We'll just go to the park and fill up the kiddie pool and dig in the sandbox and craft and fingerpaint, and it will be so easy, right? I have no idea what I was thinking, because the sweaty, summery days, they are stretching out before me, and what am I going to do with these kids, pray tell? I'll tell you what I'm going to do, and that is crack up, that is what I'm going to do. Because I'm only getting more and more pregnant, and it's only getting hotter, and there is no preschool, and my kids no longer nap, and HOLY MOTHER. There would be a straight jacket in my future, but I'm pretty sure those don't come in maternity. Hoo boy. Sorry. Public freak-outs are unbecoming. And besides, this situation is temporary. I won't be pregnant forever, and come July, I'll have more energy, right? I'll have had the baby, and I will no longer move like a geriatric woman who has swallowed a basketball. Yes, I'll have a possibly-colicky newborn to care for, but if one can survive a summertime pregnancy while caring for a 2-year-old and 4-year-old, surely a newborn is manageable. It will be manageable, won't it? Please say yes. Thank you.