

News Column
June 19, 2019
By: Tasha Killian

Grease is my favorite movie. I love the 1950's feeling, the music, and the way the songs just make you want to get up and dance. My favorite song from the movie is "Summer Lovin'." There is one line in the song that says "summer lovin' had me a blast." Every time I've heard that song in the past few weeks, I've thought to myself, "you mean, summer spending, had me a blast."

Summertime is the best. It is warm, sunny, and a wonderful time for traveling and having fun. I want to go on all the road trips, have fun, and enjoy it. The only downside, summertime can get expensive. So, what do you do? How do you keep yourself in check, when there's just so much fun to be had? You want your family and your children, especially to stay entertained and happy and to make memories, but you also don't want to break the bank. Here's some quick things I've learned to do, along with a few tips from the experts to keep your spending on track, even when the sun is shining.

1. Set a number and stick to it – Stubbornness is often seen as a bad quality, but it doesn't always have to be. It can be a good thing, if used in the right way. When you set your summer spending number, based on what your available funding is, make sure you stick to it. This is the time to be stubborn!
2. It is okay to say no! Saying no seems to be a taboo topic in the world today. We often want to take on everything we can and do it all. But, when it comes to keeping to your summertime budget, remember that saying no can be very powerful. One trick to learning to say no is pause, check-in with yourself, ask if you really want this, if it will be a worthwhile memory or trip for you and your family, and then take time before answering. (New York Times, 2017)
3. Make a Plan – Although most summer vacations, especially those with families, are planned out, there are still times and things that we don't always plan for. Make sure to make a plan for those things. Add them into the budgets, add them into your plans, even though you don't know what they are.
4. Find less expensive alternatives – Summertime fun doesn't always have to be a cross-country six-day trip to a beach, or fancy amusement park. It can be a half-day trip to somewhere remote or new. It can be a two-day trip to a new city. Even if you decide to go on a cross-country trip, there are so many different ways to cut costs. My favorite cost-cutting tip is to use GasBuddy, which is an app that tells you where the cheapest fuel closest to you is, so you're not paying extra.
5. Focus on experiences and find ways to build memories in other ways – With the use of social media, we have the added benefit of being able to take ideas from other people. We can jump on Instagram or Pinterest or even Google and search a term and come up with countless ideas on how to keep children and families entertained and making memories that don't cost a dime.

Summertime is a great time for having fun. It is a time to build memories, enjoy the break from school schedules, snowstorms, and the regular "to-do's" of workdays. Unfortunately, summertime can also get expensive if there isn't a plan. Planning summertime activities have two purposes, give experiences and provide opportunities to build memories for our families. Regardless of how much you spend, it's about having good fun times with families to enjoy time together and build memories.