

What Does School Time Mean to Mothers?

By Suzy Fielders

Now that summer is officially over, and school is well underway, we pose the question—how do moms feel about this? Suddenly houses that were filled with children and plenty of noise become very quiet for moms. Many moms realize they now have significantly more free time on their hands.

Mothers always are so busy that any free time is always a great thing to have. Many moms love how much easier it is to get house work and errands done when the children are in school. Emily King has been a stay-at-home mom in the triad for 10 years and takes full advantage of the school-day time. She knows, like many moms, “it’s easier to get the house cleaned and run errands, such as grocery shopping, getting the oil changed in the car, and helping my husband with his business or yard work” when children are busy at school. Another helpful attribute of back-to-school time for her and other expectant mothers is that it allows them to get some rest. Emily says, “Lately I have been trying to catch up on rest and take a cat nap while I can before this baby comes in the fall.” Any mom knows that once a baby is born, there is very little rest, so catching extra sleep is a perfect idea!

Another great opportunity school time presents moms is the chance to do things for themselves. Every mom needs some time to herself and to do what she loves, and this is the ideal time to do so. For instance, Katie Jones, a local stay-at-home mom, uses her free time to “read a good book or visit with friends.” Katie also says, “I had to look into a hobby for just myself. I took up sewing, which everyone loves. It is wonderful to be able to take on new hobbies and learn new things while the children are at school.”

Volunteering is an excellent way to fill the time and help others in the process. Some mothers, like Katie, volunteer at the schools. Today’s teachers and office staff have so much to do and very little time to do it. Parent volunteers are invaluable to schools, as they can help fill in the gaps when things need to be done. It also gives moms the ability to be more involved in their child’s school, which in turn leads to more involvement in the children’s lives. Another option is to volunteer at local hospitals or organizations within the community.

Something else moms can do is go back to school themselves. Diane Blevins Smith did just that and was able to get her Bachelor’s degree in psychology while her kids were at school. Diane says about going back to school, “I decided it was something I wanted to do for myself, once my children started school.” In addition to going back to school, she also competed in two bodybuilding/fitness/figure contests and in an MS150 bike ride. This was no easy feat. As she mentions, “That took up quite a bit of my time, as it involved lifting weights four times a week and doing cardio six times a week while adhering to a six-meals-a-day nutrition plan.”

“Back to school” can also take on a new meaning when children are going away to college. Parents then find themselves as “empty nesters,” and this transition can bring about a completely different set of emotions. Diane says, “When I did feel out sorts was when both the children completely moved out of the house within two months of one another.” Lynda Hooks Culler describes this transition by saying, “When I became an empty-nester I can only describe it by saying the silence was deafening. I stayed busy to avoid the silence.”

There are so many things to do in Winston-Salem and in life that moms should make sure to take advantage of their new free time, now that the kids are back in school. Whether the time is used for cleaning, running errands, volunteering, earning a degree, exercising, or finding a new hobby, it ultimately is an investment into building yourself as a person.

