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Lynn's Top Five

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gardening help work well for this age group.

4) High School: Your goal here is to instill confidence and realism in your teens about money so that when they leave for college, they can live on a budget and avoid some of the pressures they'll face to live beyond their means. Start with helping them craft a summer budget and then break it down on a weekly basis. Next, compare it to income sources such as work and allowances to teach them not to live beyond that amount. And if you haven't already, it's time to visit the bank and set up a checking and/or savings account. For your older high schoolers who are driving, have them obtain a debit card and/or a low limit credit card for gas or emergencies so they can build confidence while still at home with you as the safety net. Review their spending weekly online to be sure all is well.

5) As a family: For the younger kids, there's actually a family board game called "The Allowance Game" and of course, my family favorite, the time-tested "Monopoly." Planning vacations together can be a real-life lesson on spending and budgeting, too, allowing you to keep it within your family means for everyone's sake.

These are just a few ideas; I know you'll have your own fantastic ones. The most important goal is to raise a financially literate citizenry while in a safe, loving environment, all while making it enjoyable. Remember, it starts with us. Incorporating these goals into family fun enhances the learning and the wonderful summer memories. Trust me - you'll be the "cool" parents with the financially savvy kids. Enjoy!

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I remember scrambling every summer for activities to keep the kids entertained and mentally engaged so that they didn't lose the momentum of the school year. I also wanted to slip some life lessons in there in ways that were fun and palatable - sort of like popsicles made with real veggies! Building financial literacy and capability skills can be those veggies. There are many fun, age appropriate ways to work on important life money skills with your kids and grandkids this summer. Here are a few:

1) Pre-K through Second Grade: What can a dollar buy? What about five dollars? Give each child real dollar bills and take them to one of our local dollar stores, or even a drugstore with a toy section. Try to guess what things cost and help them use their real dollars to buy what they can.

2) Third through Fifth Grade: Building on the above, what if children want to buy something that costs more? Time to introduce the concept of saving. Every week give them a few real dollars - you set the amount - and then go buy the more expensive toy after they've accumulated enough money. This is also a great age for providing children with "above and beyond" chores around the house they can do to earn extra spending money. Sweeping out the garage and washing the car were favorites in my family. Don't make it too huge or too long or they'll lose interest. Maybe work side by side with them.

3) Middle School: It's time to introduce the concept of a clothing allowance. Look in closets, drawers and laundry baskets and have your kids figure out what clothes they'll need for the summer and eventually for the fall first semester. Make a list and then go shopping together to check out prices. Create a clothing budget together, give them real dollars, and help them make their choices. Don't bail them out by paying with a credit card if they go above budget. If they want more spending money, it's time to work for it! Babysitting and other

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