



Summer Behavior Quick Reference Guide

Is It Summer Behavior or Something More?

Less structure + inconsistent routines + extended daylight = parents wondering what's going on.

What helps?

- Flexible summer routines (meals/sleep)
- Downtime after high-energy activities
- Limit overstimulation, add sensory supports
- Clear communication + transition warnings
- Continue therapy/support services

Ask yourself

Can my child ...

Sit still? Enjoy relationships? Participate in activities? Regulate emotions most of the time? Bounce back with support?

If yes: This sounds like summer behavior.

BEHAVIOR COMPARISON

Mood Swings	Meltdowns	Hyperactivity
Typical <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cranky after late nights/skipped meals• Irritable during transitions• Moody after long sun days	Typical <ul style="list-style-type: none">• After overstimulating days• When activities end suddenly• During routine transitions	Typical <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extra energy from being inside• Excitement -> loud play• Jumping between activities
Concerning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persistent sadness/anger 2+ weeks• Disproportionate mood swings• Hopelessness, low self-worth	Concerning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frequent, disruptive across settings• Hitting/biting/running with no pattern• Can't calm down even with support	Concerning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constant movement = safety risk• Can't focus in calm settings• Interferes with social/safety

RED FLAGS Seek help when your child ...

- **Withdraws** from enjoyed activities
- **Shows persistent mood changes** for 2+ weeks
- **Has sleep/appetite changes** that affect energy
- **Worries excessively or is overly rigid** for 2+ weeks
- **Experiences challenges** across multiple settings

How to prepare for help

- ☐ Keep a behavior journal (triggers, timing)
- ☐ Get feedback from other adults
- ☐ Gather medical/developmental history
- ☐ List current medications
- ☐ Have both parents present if possible