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2007

### When the Mind is Idle...

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#### Recommended Citation

DiMatteo, Wendy, "When the Mind is Idle..." (2007). *Deaf Rochester News*, 2014-09-07 (), Accessed from <https://scholarworks.rit.edu/article/429>

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## When the Mind is Idle...

Contributed by Wendy DiMatteo

Teenagers may become bored and consider the temptation to try the alcohol that you keep in the cabinet just to see what it feels like. They notice that you "loosen up" while drinking and so they don't see anything wrong with trying it "just this once" to see how it feels.

With the school year over, there is a welcome relief from classes, but the unstructured day poses a risk for our youth to become involved with drinking and using marijuana or other drugs to ease the feeling of boredom and isolation. Summertime tends to bring neighborhood children together who normally might not chose to become friends, and your child may become exposed to undesirable activities, as they play just out of your sight. Riding their bike around the block or playing in a neighbor's yard, we can't see what they're doing. Of course, as they get older, we need to show them a certain level of trust and allow them some independence. It is important however, to keep an eye open for signs of use so we can guide them if we notice a change in behavior.

If your child is deaf, and there are no other deaf children in your neighborhood, it's important to maintain a connection with at least one of their deaf school friends over the summer, so they can freely be themselves, using the mode of communication that is most comfortable for them. They will be less tempted to try to fit in with any group of kids that happen to be hanging around.

Even though you may have to work over the summer, and are tired when you get home, it's very important to set aside some quality time with your child when you first get home. They may have been home all day, and really need some attention, or just want to feel the family connection. You'd be surprised how 15 minutes can satisfy them for hours. If you also spend some time with them before bed, the transition to sleep might be easier. Maybe a game of cards or something where they get your undivided attention would be enjoyable for both of you. Open communication is so important. Don't hesitate to ask what's up with them, and what they'd like to do over the summer. Knowing their personality, you might suggest some hobbies you think they'd be interested in. My beadwork keeps me busy for hours!

Be sure to plan some weekend outdoor activities, too!



Deaf Rochester News September, 2007