

#212 - A Guide to Summer House Rules

Hi there! You're listening to the Lazy Genius Podcast! I'm Kendra Adachi, and I'm here to help you be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. Today is episode 212 - a guide to summer house rules. We're going to just jump in with an excellent starting point - what is a house rule? Setting House Rules is one of the 13 Lazy Genius principles in my book *The Lazy Genius Way*, and it's basically a safeguard against everything falling apart. If you think about common situations or regular times of day where everything feels like it's going up in flames literally all of the sudden, and you're like "okay, I'm out time to open my lobster roll stand in Maine!" House Rules could come in handy. In the book, I use the metaphor of dominoes lined up. Some days feel like all the dominoes just fell. You can't stop it, you can't fix it, it's just over. A House Rule is something that could keep that first domino from teetering and knocking over everything else.

There are no universal house rules because you're the only one who knows your house. I don't, no one else does, and you should be the one to create your own house rules, not copy mine or someone else's. That's why Set House Rules is a Lazy Genius principle; it's a tool that supports what matters to you, not a specific rule to follow.

Now, why do house rules particularly help in the summer? Summer is so different for all of us, and it's different from the beginning of the summer to the end. The three months of summer contain a lot of different energies and priorities, you might not have as many routines or you might need more because you're still needing to work while your kids are home from school, maybe you don't have kids but a lot of your friends do and so your rhythm of connecting with those friends is going to shift because they're in a different kind of summer mode than you are, maybe you just graduated college and are trying to get a job or you're starting one for the first time and don't know how to be in your summer this way... all of us have different kinds of summers, *and* all of us likely experience different modes and priorities, again, within the same summer. House Rules can really help give a little steadiness to that if you want it.

I'm going to share a few crowdsourced summer house rules with you right here, right now, to give you some ideas of how this might work. You can use some of these directly, you can let them inspire your own versions, or you can notice that what matters to you is actually really different from what matters to the person who made this house rule. Specifics always help, even if you don't literally use them. Also all of these came from an Instagram feed post I put up a couple of weeks ago. These are all your ideas, so thank you to everyone who shared, and if you want to read through all 450+ comments, do your thing. But also these are so good. Y'all are so smart. I'm obsessed with every single one of these rules.

And I'm going to share them in no particular order. We'll just rapid fire these babies. First up is @taitoa_t. I'm not sure if I'm saying your name right, Tai, but I actually follow Tai. She's the cutest thing ever and makes really fun reels on Instagram. Anyway, this is her House Rule: "A rule I'm trying to set is that we don't leave a room in upheaval. Our almost 2-year-old is like a walking tornado but

it's up to us as parents to make sure he (with lots of help from us) straightens up before we move on to the next thing." Thank you, Tai. We actually have a similar House Rule that I might mention in the book - I can't remember - but you have to clean up one mess before you make another. If you're coloring and markers are all over the table, do it. Be artistic. Change the world. I'm here for it. But if you are going to go and get out the bucket of Hot Wheels and start building a track in my kitchen, you have to clean up your markers first. Otherwise, we end up in a fallen domino world where my house is a disaster, my children are my enemies because they have interrupted my visual peace, and then we're all kind of cranky. No thank you! House Rule to the rescue! It keeps the house from getting as crazy as quickly. Great rule, Tai.

Next, this is from @chefdoozer, and this one was shared in multiple versions in multiple comments, so this one feels like it helps a lot of people. She says, "Use one cup all day long. Each kid gets a color and it stays on the counter all day to reuse." I love that because cups around the house can be a situation. Some spinoffs of this depending on what matters to you could be no drinks in your room or maybe specifically no open cups in your room, you know maybe water bottles are fine. Ours is not one cup a day, but we have a drink spinner on the kitchen counter, and that's where everyone's cup lives throughout the day. It's just a wooden Lazy Susan that I got a home store ages ago, and it's where we put the water bottles and cups and whatever, and that almost keeps the kids from getting more cups because I can say "check the drink spinner" when they're getting something to drink and they see their cup. We also have accidentally fallen into the everyone has their own cup color vibe just naturally because our kids prefer different colors, and that does help in knowing whose cup is whose. Great one.

Next, this is from @beckyspressley. Becky says, "Two snacks. You pick them in the morning and put them in your ziploc. You eat them whenever you want and when they are gone, they're gone. I ain't nobody's snack you know what and "can I have snack" 1000 times a day drives me nuts." I love this one. Love it. We sometimes have a snack bag where kids can choose two snacks from the bag, but I like this because it also includes time. It's like okay if you're going to eat it all in the morning, that's on you. I wonder how old Becky's kids are because I know a couple of mine have not fully learned the value of delayed gratification, but I guess this is a good way to teach it. This is a great rule.

Our next summer house rule is from @acreativemission. It says, "Car rules: keep a change of clothes, an easy snack in the trunk, and a towel of the car at all times. Makes it easier to say yes to park days and splash pads which are sanity givers during the summer!" I love this. It's like a kit! It's a summer kit. One of the ways you could use this is to think about what makes life in the car or life on the go in the summer or being spontaneous, what keeps that from happening? Is it not having what you need in the car? Is it that some kids are better at prepping their own car kits than others? Is it that always having your car stuff isn't built into a routine? I love this rule because it opens up a lot of good questions about what matters to you and what situations make everything feel like it's all falling apart. Again, a house rule is a way to safeguard everything falling apart.

Okay, next summer house rule is from @ginnylafser. Ginny writes, "Want a popsicle? Take it to the backyard. Popsicles are for outdoors only. No drips inside!" Another popsicle related rule because summer is full of popsicles is from @christabelle81. She says, "Always have popsicles in the freezer. With that popsicle scissors so they don't use mine and a cup for all the cut ends that end up everywhere." I love that, that's such a real popsicle challenge, the sticky scissors and the little plastic bits around your kitchen or garage or yard or wherever. I do think having a popsicle-related house rule if you have kids is a good idea. Summer is meant for popsicles, kids love them, it's such a fun thing to enjoy, so think about what matters to you about that the most, and create a house rule to keep any chaos from happening around you and popsicles.

Next this is from @corporatemonkeyco about working from home. She says, "I don't have kids but my hubs & I are trying to set "summer hours" on our work calendars. We both work from home in corporate monkey jobs (per my insta handle) so it's easy to find ourselves sitting at our desks for just a little too long every night, or starting just 30 min early to catch up on something that will be there 30 min later. So I blocked my calendar so no one can pop meetings in early or late and also blocked a full hour for lunch every day. Sounds silly but I feel like it's revolutionary for some wfh corporate cultures." I think that's so great because you're stopping the overworked chaos from happening by setting a house rule of when you start and when you end your work. When the lines between work and home blur like they have this past year especially, this is really smart.

I love this next one from @emily.g.lang. Emily Lang has been a follower for awhile; Emily, you're always so encouraging! But Emily's rule is "Keep nature in nature. No mulch, rocks, branches, leaves in the house." I love that. I love the simplicity of that. Nope, that stays outside. And this feels like a good rule to remind everyone that this rules aren't for every house. House rules are for you and what matters to you. Some parents might love all the creative nature stuff. Some are like I want you to be creative and love nature but outside. We all get to choose our rules, so don't hear any of these and think you have to do them. You don't at all. These are just examples of how a house rule can keep what matters to you in the forefront.

Next one is from @luannecastner who says, "I have two teens. If a decision needs to be made, they rotate days. Example, my son has even days of the week and my daughter has odd days. We've been doing this for years and it helps with everything. If it's your 'dibs day' you can choose to shower first or second. They can choose to unload or load the dishwasher for the day. It has solved many problems." This is so great. I might do this with my boys, give them dibs days. I like the simplicity and fairness of this, especially if you don't want to be a referee all summer. The house rule does the work for you.

Next is @dgbowe206: "Headcount for dinner before noon." Love it. Love the simplicity of that. It's not that you care how many people are coming to dinner, how many friends are invited, whatever it is, but you just need to know before noon so you can make it happen and not be stressed out. I love that. That feels warm and seeking connection, but also that's likely a family with older kids who are often inviting their friends over and potentially some tension with the grownups on wanting to connect, wanting your kids to connect with their friends, but that connection is sullied by protecting your own

energy when you're not able to be prepared and fully allow that sense of connection to exist in the way your family and house is set up. This is a great house rule to support that.

We have a few more still; aren't these so good? Next is from @thesarahellen. Sarah says, "We will have quiet time every day. That's the rule. We will all need a break from each other and time to rest and/or being creative on our own." Yes yes yes. We do this too. I don't know how or when we're going to do it this summer because our summer schedule is different than usual, but prioritizing quiet time is a good one.

Speaking of good ones, I am obsessed with this next house rule from @eoandjo. "Summer means stay up as late as you want as long as you're reading. Everyone reads more because it feels like a treat, plus they sleep in." This is magical. I will do this almost definitely this summer with my boys. Maybe even with Annie a little. You can stay up later as long as you're reading. So simple, so connective, so focused on reading mattering if that matters to you in your house. It's just... this one got me. Love it love it love it.

This next one from @elizdemar is pretty genius and got a good bit from follow-up comments if I remember correctly. She says, "The main floor of the house is for quiet play only. If you want to run or play floor is lava, go outside or in the basement." It's setting House Rules for play zones to keep things a little more manageable, especially if you are like me and are highly sensitive a lot of loud stimulus and it makes you feel like you're going to explode on the inside, knowing that there are zones for loud play and quiet play could really help. Obviously not all living situations are set up for this, but maybe that's where instead of zones of space for quiet play, you go back to that earlier house rule from @thesarahellen about quiet hours. That's your zone, timing is your zone. So good.

I love this one, too. Y'all, y'all are so smart. I love these so much. This one is from @elizaropan. "Sunscreen on at breakfast May - Sept. No exceptions. If it's raining in the morning, we still put on the sunscreen. Not going outside right away - still sunscreen. It's too important to miss and I don't want it to be a fight on the days we are outside (most days)." Jamie Golden would be so proud of this one. I love it so much. So smart.

@baylorgirl90 has a short and sweet house rule of "One real meal must be eaten before 1 pm." That makes a lot of sense. That keeps crazy snacking requests and eating all the food in the afternoon and spoiling dinner and changing dinnertime because everyone is hungry or not hungry anymore... if having a steady dinnertime matters to you in the summer, this would be a great house rule, especially if you have teenagers.

And last one comes from @cjbak03 who says, "I started teaching mine to do their laundry when they were in 3rd grade. Now they are all teenagers and a preteen. They wait until the last minute to do their laundry. It was madness. That summer we started assigned laundry days. They each have a day. Their laundry must be washed and out of the laundry room before their day is over. It's been a lifesaver to avoid a million loads in one day." That is so good. And again, notice the last line. It's been a lifesaver to avoid a million loads in one day. That's where things fall apart, isn't it? That's where @cjbak03 say all the dominoes fall. When everyone needed the washer at the same time, it got

exponentially crazy. Go back to the beginning of the crazy. What is a house rule that can keep that from happening as quickly or as often? They're so great. I love House Rules so much, and I love these that y'all came up with. Again, you can check the post on Instagram that says "Set House Rules" and read through those comments. There are so many good ones, but these are ones that are great to highlight.

As you think about your own, remember that you get to choose. What makes you crazy? What is keeping you from what matters? What mess or attitude or time of day or inconvenience or lack of something or excess of something is making you want to crawl into a hole or yell at people or give up or whatever? When and how is that happening? Then try and go back to the beginning. Trace it back to where things tend to fall apart, and create a House Rule to plug the leak so to speak. They're so fantastic I love them so much I love them.

Before we go, it's time to celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Brittany Chatburn who shared some words about how she Lazy Geniused her reading. She writes in an Instagram caption, "I did in fact resolve near the end of 2020 to make reading a priority again. I don't like books on screens, so those newborn years just did not allow time to read for pleasure. It was sad.

It's still hard for me to make time! So I do it slowly. A few pages at a time. Like, two pages. (Until I'm 3/4th in then it's like BYE KIDS.) I read one book in the morning that's either some sort of spiritual formation or anti-racist education. Then I have a novel a few nights a week. I've read six books this year!! Maybe not a lot to you, but a sign to me that I actually have named what matters and kept a little promise to myself. (So many [@thelazygenius](#) principles happening right now!!! IYKYK.)"

Thanks for sharing these words, Brittany, and I'm so glad you've experienced joy and progress in an area that matters to you by starting small, by naming what matters, and by building the right reading routine for you. Also your kids are adorable. I'm grateful to all of you who share all about this podcast and The Lazy Genius Way book and me and all of it on Instagram and just in conversation and in podcast and book reviews... all the things. You all are so beautifully generous, it means a lot to me personally, but I'm thrilled that more and more people are finding their own freedom and wholeness in living lives that work for them. It's the best part of my job. Thank you to all of you, and congratulations Brittany on being this week's Lazy Genius of the Week!

Okay, friends, that's it for today. Thanks so much for listening, and good luck on those summer House Rules. Until next time, be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. I'm Kendra, and I'll see you next week!