

Four Day Weekend, Already?

But didn't school JUST start? And wasn't the kids' first weekend a THREE day weekend? Yes and yes. But to be **fair** (pun intended), this 4-day weekend was not planned in advance, well not entirely, anyway. It began with Monday being Fair Day for the kids – our county fair opens tomorrow, and the kids are off school on Monday to go to the fair and also because many of them have 4-H projects that will be judged at the fair on Monday – that was a planned day off. So then today, my husband was driving our daughter to school, when he realized he was the only one on the road and at the school. At least, that's what he thought -it was so foggy they couldn't see much of anything... so they returned home only to find that there was a two-hour delay because of the fog – our phones had been turned off so we didn't get the early morning call... So anyway, the 2 hour delay turned into an entire fog day because the dense fog would not clear early enough for the school district to send the buses into the country to pick up the kids. Fog Day on Friday + Fair Day on Monday = the first 4-Day weekend of the new school year, taking place on only the third weekend of the new school year! Luckily our student calender is set up to include 5 calamity days, and in NW Ohio, early morning fog is considered a calamity, I guess! What will we do when the 5 yearly calamity days are taken out of the calendar since the governor's plan calls for calamity days to be phased out? Wait and see, I guess...

And now I have to totally rearrange my day – so much for advance planning! I'll have to juggle the not-4-kid-friendly errands I have with my husband's planned business call – keeping 4 kids quiet and out of the way for that? Good luck to me! These are the times when I wish he had his own office... The benefits of working at home outweigh the negatives of him working at an office of course, but on days like these, ugh! It's funny because I'm not native to NW Ohio

and so both fog days and fair days are new to me – man, would I have loved these as a kid. As an adult... not so fun. Maybe we can have another calamity day later this year when we have nothing planned and we can just sit inside and watch movies and play games all day... Then, let it snow!

Utter Chaos – The Good Kind

The school year is winding down... my third-grader's last day of third grade is today! When I was a kid, we always went to school into the month of June – never ended in May. Well, except senior year when we graduated on May 31 – but the seniors always finished early. I don't understand Ohio and their strange school schedules (what with fog days and stuff, which are unheard of in Chicagoland where I went to school), but I do like them. My third-grader is a HUGE help around the house, and I'm excited to have another pair of hands and someone to talk to during the day.

So anyway, yesterday was my 4 5-year-old's end of the year picnic for her school, rain or shine. And rain it did. Even though we arrived right on time, all of the sheltered picnic tables were taken. So, we had to slosh the double-stroller through the puddles and the mud to sit in the rain with 3 little kids and eat our lunch. Luckily it was only drizzling, but the picnic table and bench were all wet – note to self to start keeping a towel in the car. After lunch, they started to set up the large bouncy castles and my husband wisely took our 5 and 2-year-olds (Sammie and Disney) over to get in line. Judging by the huge turnout for this event, we didn't want to wait in line all day, especially if the drizzle turned into a downpour. My kids were first in line, but Disney chickened out, so Sammie bounced without her sister on the

regular bouncy castle. Then it was time to check out the MEGA-bouncy! It began with a crawl-thru maze, followed by a ladder up a vertical wall and finished with a steep slide, and it was total chaos! There were kids everywhere! The adults were scrambling to regulate how many kids went inside, but somehow kids were getting stuck... next thing you know, there were kids crying and yelling and adults couldn't get to them because they were in the crazy maze of this gigantic bouncy! My daughter Sammie emerged from the maze, and she climbed the steep ladder like a pro. Matter of fact, Sammie was thru the entire boucy obstacle course 3 times before most kids got through once – she is a very good climber and couldn't care less about the pile of kids at the beginning which is where most of them freaked out for their parents. Disney kept saying she wanted to try it, and noramlly we like our kids to try new things, but the huge bouncy was littered with kids of all types and sizes: crying kids, climbing kids, big kids, screaming kids – I was sure my sweet little 2-year-old would get eaten alive in there. So she watched for awhile and decided she still wanted to go in it, and we found a side entrance that bypassed the crazy maze of kid-doom. To our surprise, Disney climbed the ladder (with help from big sis Sammie) and went down the slide – and she had fun! And Sammie loved seeing all her friends and her teachers and having fun with them. Chaotic as it was, it was all worth it because it was for Sammie – and she loved it! This is Sammie helping Disney up that huge ladder:



Ohio VS. Illinois – weather

From time to time, I will be talking about what it's like to live in various places throughout the midwest because I have a lot of experience in that area. We've lived in central Illinois, northern Illinois, and various suburbs of Chicago. We also lived in Lincoln, Nebraska and rural Ohio. Of all these, I love rural Ohio the best! But it is really interesting how different things like dialect and attitudes can vary from place to place, even places that are only hundreds of miles apart and in virtually the same climate. One thing I'm still getting used to in rural Ohio is their attitude about weather. I spent my childhood in Illinois, specifically the suburbs of Chicago, so I am used to the attitude of snow days being a rarity. I wonder what the average is there, but I would guess it's one per season or even less – they will not cancel school unless the schools are buried. There was one time when my mom's car was snowed in, she couldn't get it out of the driveway, and so she wanted to take the school bus with me to school – she worked at the same school I attended. So I did what any mature 12-year-old would do – I cried. Foolish, maybe yes, but I figured I had suffered enough with her working at my school – why should I have to face the humiliation and ridicule of her riding my bus? It had nothing to do with how cool I thought I was; it was more about how MEAN kids can be... I was so afraid of what the kids would say or do once they found out my mom was riding the bus! So anyway, lucky for me, she got her car out, and I was saved. But my point is, her car was stuck in the snow, yet they hadn't cancelled school. Here in Ohio things are MUCH different. We are on our 6th snow day already this season! And I've lost count of how many 2 hour delays we've had – which luckily (for them, not me) the kids don't have to

make up. Coming from Chicagoland, I had never even heard of a 2 hour delay before we moved here – they don't exist there. But in Ohio – they are quite common, most of the time because of fog – FOG! We actually have fog days! School has been CANCELLED because of fog... it was really hard for me to get used to at first... you'd think we live in a swamp or something! Oh, wait, – that's just it... this area used to be the Great Black Swamp before it was turned into farmland a few hundred years ago. So I guess that explains it... but I would be willing to bet that if Illinois had a fog problem, they still wouldn't cancel school. I don't know anything about Nebraska's attitudes about weather and school since we didn't have a school-aged child while we lived there. I don't really have an opinion about who is right or who is wrong – it's not that Ohio devalues education or anything like that... they are just over-sensitive about childrens' safety when it comes to weather (is there such a thing?), and the school days and curriculum are made up in the end so they're not behind. I'm just enjoying my role as an amused spectator observing the differences in weather attitude between different regions.