

Learning is a year- round job!

All through this year teachers have worked hard to help them learn and grow at school academically by teaching reading, writing and math as well as arts and practical skills. They have also taught social skills by encouraging cooperation with others, respect for authority and self-expression combined with self-control.

YOU (the parent or any adult) can help make this summer a **fun learning experience** for any youth. You can reinforce what a student has already learned in school, expand their knowledge, skills, horizon, and prepare them for school next year (and years to come).

Summertime is a time to experience and explore. Help sharpen a young person's senses by encouraging them to:

Look

How many different shapes, patterns, colors and unusual things can a child see in the world around us...in clouds, roads, buildings, trees, water, etc.?

Listen

Have children identify sounds of voices, a cell phone, the wind, machines, or insects buzzing. Which sounds are loud or soft, low or high? Close your eyes and try to sort out sounds.

Taste

Summertime offers a great opportunity to taste different types of foods. At any age you can play a taste testing game with your eyes closed.

Feel

with hands: heartbeat after a run, a seashell, stones, plants, dry skin.

with feet: hot sidewalks, wet sand, grass, puddles, mud.

with body: sunlight, wet clothes, rain, and wind.

Smell

The air after it rains, food of all kinds, fresh cut grass, flowers blooming, and tar on a newly paved street.

Go exploring with a child

Take a day to ride bikes, go fishing or just go for a walk in the park with a lunch. Ask questions and have them ask questions; describe your experiences to each other.

Summertime is also a time to imagine and create, talk and read, discover your community, or simply to put things in order. It is also a time to stretch out on the grass and cloud watch or just daydream because **each of us needs to have hopes and dreams.**

So... Help make Summertime a fun learning time...Share the excitement of a child's summer vacation...Relax and enjoy!

School is out, let's shout, summertime is upon us!

As we glide through summer, some of us are off at sleep-away camp, some are traveling to faraway places and many others are still trying to figure it out. Most families are not worried about a **well-documented phenomenon** called **summer learning loss**, with students losing between one and two months' worth of academic knowledge each summer. How do we balance summer activities, team sports, and just plain fun, while keeping our kids stimulated and learning? Here are some tips to beat summer learning loss.

DO TRY THIS AT HOME!

Ask you kids what they are curious about and what they wish they can learn more about, and then see if there is a summer program available to enroll in.

Summer Reading: Make sure you have a copy of your student's grade level summer reading list and use it. To keep kids thinking, you might ask them to rewrite the beginning or ending of a book; write an autobiographical essay using the voice of a less prominent character in a book; or make a smart phone movie with a friend that features characters from one of their assigned books. Don't just ask them to write about a book. Use summer reading as an opportunity to develop critical thinking skills.

Scavenger Hunt: Most museums and zoos have at least one free or low-cost day that families can take advantage of. Plan a "scavenger hunt" to one of these institutions that provides an opportunity for your kids to fully explore art and science and nature in a new and exciting way.

Flash Cards: Yes, I know in this modern age good old flash cards might seem antiquated, but daily review of basic math facts will go a long way in helping students stave off summer learning loss. And throw in a few word problems while you're at it. You might even want to feature characters from students' summer reading list in those word problems just for good measure. If you need help, go to Google and search age appropriate math flash cards.

Current Events/Media: Assign some kind of a research project that requires kids to create a visual and written journal. For example, how to grow and tend a vegetable or flower garden; following a media event over the course of week on the TV or internet; or just using the internet to research how to fix a bike, learn a craft, or pursue a hobby.

Finally, there are a host of websites – some teacher driven, some parent driven—that offer all kinds of ideas to keep your kids on track each summer. So get out there....GOOGLE and keep the learning going all year long.

DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT: The Summertime Activities Calendar and the weekly parenting tips on the Pennsylvania PTA website at www.papta.org