

SUMMER ACTIVITIES THAT ENCOURAGE LEARNING.

From the experts at



BY MEGAN RIEDE

FOR MANY CHILDREN, June signals the end of the busy school year and the beginning of days filled with sunshine and a lot more free time. Not surprisingly, summer break is also a time when concepts and skills children learned during the school year may be forgotten.

It has been well documented that most children lose some knowledge and skills over the summer break. According to the National Summer Learning Association, it is common for teachers to spend upwards of four to six weeks at the start of a new school year re-teaching material that students forgot over the summer. Math and reading comprehension skills show the highest areas of decline after the summer months.

It's as easy as

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Here are a few extra ideas to engage your child academically at home during the summer:

- 1. Ask your child's teacher!** Some teachers or school districts create summer learning packets filled with activities for children at each grade level.
- 2. Sharpen math skills at the grocery store!** For example, your child can compare prices to determine the best deals or estimate total cost as you shop.
- 3. Navigate with a road map!** Your child can determine the distance remaining and estimate the time it will take to get to the destination, based on your speed and how far you still have to travel.

Tips for Maintaining Reading Skills

Helping your child maintain his or her reading skills over the summer months is important to continued learning and

development. Through our commitment to childhood literacy, here are some tips to help keep your child engaged and reading during the summer months:

- Help your child develop a plan for summer reading. Ask about his or her interests and make a list together of books he or she may be interested in. Set a goal for the number of books your child will read during the summer. Many public libraries offer free summer reading programs for children of all ages.

- Set up a book club with your child. The book club could involve your whole family, or families living in your neighborhood. For exciting titles to include in your book club, check out Scholastic's Book Clubs. (http://teacher.scholastic.com/clubs/parent_landing.htm).

- Involve your child in a summer reading incentive program. Many libraries, bookstores and children's publishing companies offer free programs. You can also set up your own reading incentive program at home and fun family activities that provide opportunities for learning. (e.g., picnics in the park, family hikes, and visiting a museum or zoo).

Enroll in Summer Camp

Structured summer learning programs are another great solution to combat summer learning loss. Summer camps have been shown to improve academic outcomes and positively affect children's motivation, self-esteem, and confidence. Ideally, look for summer camp programs that incorporate activities across all learning areas: social, emotional, physical, and intellectual. Children in these types of programs benefit from the variety and will actually enjoy the program more because of the diversity.

One exciting example of a structured summer learning program is at your local KinderCare® Learning Center. KinderCare offers a summer camp program for children ages



three and older that deliver high-quality learning opportunities through hands-on involvement and unique experiences. Through 12 unique weeks of fun, KinderCare keeps children continuously engaged in a variety of experiences; balancing learning and fun, while helping them keep their skills sharp throughout the summer months. For more information about the KinderCare® Summer Camp 2010 program, visit www.KinderCare.com/SummerCamp.

The Learning Doesn't Have to Stop

Summer presents wonderful learning opportunities for children. Look within your community and even inside your own home to plan and encourage activities that will help your child learn skills while still having fun this summer. If you are interested in more information regarding summer learning loss, a great resource is The National Summer Learning Association: www.summerlearning.org.

Megan Riede, Director, Education Programs at KinderCare® Learning Centers is responsible for the conceptualization, development, and implementation of early childhood and school-age programs servicing more than 170,000 children and their families.

