Beat Summer Learning Loss!
By Denine Pope, Registrar, Factory Shoals Elementary School

Did you know?
- Children can lose **two months** of grade-level achievement in math and reading during the summer months.
- Reading at grade level by third grade is the **most important predictor** of high school graduation.
- Learning to read and reading to learn are **lifelong skills** needed to reach graduation and beyond.
- Literacy allows you to be independent and a critical thinker.

Here are some practical ways that you can support your child’s intellectual growth and Beat Summer Learning Loss:

**Read at home.** Reading at home should be fun and easy – something you both look forward to – a time for laughter and talk. Make reading a great chance for you and your child to spend special time together. Ask older children to tell you about what they are reading and/or what they have learned from their reading. Older children can also read recipes, instructions, manuals, maps, signs and emails. This will help them to understand that words can be organized in different ways on a page, depending on what it’s for.

Read and talk a lot about your child while you are doing things together! You are your child’s greatest teacher. When you talk with your child, you teach them about self-expression and expose them to new vocabulary and comprehension skills, which are needed to be successful readers and writers. Most importantly, it helps you bond, connect and communicate.

**Encourage your child to write.** Let them write shopping lists or make birthday cards on paper or on the computer. You can work with older children on word games or make up stories together. Writing for a real purpose (invitations, emails) can help your child want to write. Keep writing fun and use any excuse to encourage your child to write about anything, any time.

**Summer is also the perfect time to practice handwriting.** Make writing easier with the proper pencil grip. When properly holding a pencil or pen, your three fingers touch, which promotes brain activity. Have your child read aloud as they write from left to right. Eyes following hand movement and letters reinforces proper handwriting and reading skills.

**Use easy, everyday activities to reinforce math skills.**

Help your child to:
- Find numbers around your home and neighborhood – clocks, signs, letterboxes, etc.
- Make patterns when counting (forwards/backwards/in a group, etc)
- Do addition and subtraction math problems in his/her head (mental math)
- Tell time – o’clock, half past, past, etc.
- Learn their times tables
- Skip count (2,4,6,8, etc – 100, 200, 300, 400, etc – 500, 1000, 1500, 2000, etc)
- Help at the grocery store - choose items to weigh, look for the best value/comparison shop, figure out how much change you will get back.

These are just a few simple ideas you can use to help your children keep learning during the summer months, and by supporting and encouraging them and being excited by their learning, you will teach them the importance of education.
Schools Out for Summer!
Amanda Kirk, ESOL Teacher, Sweetwater Elementary

Summer means warmer weather and outdoor activities. What about the kids that are out of school? What will they do all summer? For most parents, they just want their kids to do something other than video games or watching endless videos. Here are a few suggestions for summer activities. Here are some of my favorites.

Make Stuff
All too often kids become consumers instead of creators. Here is your chance to change that. There are bunches of things to make. These are just a few ideas to get you started. Make something made out of cardboard. Cardboard is everywhere and easy to work with. You can build anything from cardboard! Let your child show their creativity and inventiveness. You will be amazed at the things they come up with and the best part is that it is free.

Visit Your Local Library
Libraries are a great place to take kids. Most libraries have story programs or reading activities and there’s an endless selection of books to keep a child occupied. If your kids haven’t yet adapted a love of reading, ask your librarian for book suggestions or try a graphic novel. Graphic novels are filled with pictures that can help early readers understand the story and keep their attention.

Parks
We are so fortunate to live close to so many wonderful parks. Take a day and have a picnic at Sweetwater Creek Park or Deer Lick Park. Did you know that at Sweetwater Creek Park you can hike a wooded trail that follows the stream to the ruins of the New Manchester Manufacturing Company, a textile mill burned during the Civil War? Beyond the mill, the trail climbs rocky bluffs to provide views of the beautiful rapids below. More trails wind through fields and forest, showcasing ferns, magnolias, wild azaleas and hardwoods. Park rangers lead informative hikes to these areas throughout the year. There are endless activities you can do here in the parks of our community.

STEM Projects
Keep them busy exploring and learning without screens. Let’s help your young scientists, little inventors, and junior engineers embrace STEM and become expert problem solvers, doers, and inventors. Leftover candy makes for great science and a good way to use some of it up! You can use marshmallows or apple chunks if candy is not your thing. Or a quick trip to the dollar tree to pick up items like toothpicks, popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners or even plastic cups can allow the students to create some amazing things. You would be surprised at all of the objects laying around the house that can be used to make a STEM project.

Get in the Kitchen
Spend some time in the kitchen baking. Let your child help pour, measure, crack eggs, and stir. Spend some time decorating sugar cookies or cupcakes. Baking can be a great way to spend time together and it will help your child develop confidence in themselves, as well as learn basic kitchen skills.

Sports
Douglas County offers many different sporting leagues for kids. Sports are a great way to keep kids occupied while giving them a fun way to exercise and make friends. Another idea: go see a baseball game at your local stadium. The Battery is just around the corner and if you go during the day you can score some really cheap tickets.

Camping
Camping is a great way to get out of the house and explore. Find a spot to pitch your tent, whether it’s in a nearby park, somewhere far away, or even in your backyard. Spend the night looking up at the stars, catching fireflies, and making s’mores. When the sun comes up, your child will be left with a lifelong memory and funny stories to tell in the future.

Garden
Plant a garden with your kids! They will love seeing their efforts turn into plants or flowers. Gardening will also teach them the responsibility necessary to care for plants and patience as they wait for the flowers to bloom or vegetables to produce. You can also use it as an opportunity to teach your kids about nutrition and life cycles.

Get Up and Move
One of the best activities to keep kids entertained is movement. Dancing, jumping, running, and even doing kid-friendly yoga are great ideas. Put on some music and dance around the living room! Pretend to be rock stars and perform a concert for millions of invisible fans. Moving in any way is a great form of exercise and is good for the soul.

Keeping kids entertained doesn’t have to be difficult. While it takes a little creativity and planning, with a little effort, you can easily make the summer a fun-filled adventure. Enjoy your summer and we cannot wait to hear about all of your wonderful memories you made with your child.

Amanda Kirk, ESOL Teacher, Sweetwater Elementary

Douglas County School System - Parent Post
Your Input is Needed!

The Douglas County School System Title I Department is in the process of reviewing and revising the district’s Parent and Family Engagement Policy. This policy will establish the district’s expectations for parent and family engagement and how the district will carry out the federal and state parent and family engagement requirements. Parent input into the revision of this policy is requested and required. To review the draft version of the policy and to provide input, please scan the QR code or follow the link.


SUMMER MEALS for KIDS & TEENS
Being Served in Your Community

For more information call: 770-651-2300

You do not have to be enrolled in Summer School to receive meals!

Open to all children 18 and younger
NO Enrollment, NO Cost!

Summer Feeding Locations 2019

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<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<th>Breakfast Times</th>
<th>Lunch Times</th>
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Summer Is Here, But Don’t Let Your Child’s Brain Go To Mush!
Elizabeth Story, ESOL Teacher, Beulah Elementary

Parents, are you and your children ready for summer? Students are eager for a break from working hard on their academics, however it is very important to keep your kids from avoiding the summer slide! There are a number of ways to keep kids’ brains engaged, even as they are looking forward to their break from the classroom. Learn how summer break impacts students’ academic performance in the fall and what can be done to prevent the academic summer slide.

Be a Reading Rockstar!!
According to studies, children can lose up to 25 percent of their reading skills while they are out of school for the summer. This can have major impact on them as they return to school in the fall. So how can you help your child maintain his/her reading level?
* Read books over the summer. Make a list of the types of books your child is interested in. Ask your child’s teacher and find some titles online that your child may love. Scholastic’s website and your child’s librarian will have some great recommendations based on your child’s age and interests. Kids who like what they are reading are sure to read more.
* Schedule regular trips to the library. Our libraries in Douglas County and in the surrounding areas have many fun programs for children during the summer months. Read books at the library and check out a few to take home and enjoy as a family.

Incorporate reading into the regular summer routine:
* Find something to read every day. Encourage kids to read anywhere and everywhere. Menus at restaurants, directions to games, recipes, etc.
* Schedule reading time every day at the same time. Set aside a certain time of day and read. Try different types of texts and locations to make reading fun! Why not try reading outside under a tree? How about in a bathtub with pillows? Want to try reading a book at a park on a blanket?
* Read out loud. Read with your child from his/her current book to you at night, or read to him before bed. Children of all ages – including teens – can benefit from hearing books read aloud to them, especially children who are currently struggling with their own reading skills.

Do your children love using the computer?
Here are some great websites for your child can use that will be helpful:
ReadWriteThink: ReadWriteThink offers a wide variety of study materials and interactives to help students with key literacy areas including writing, reading, and arithmetic.
Khan Academy: this wonderful site offers tutorials, instructional videos, explainers, guides, lesson plans, etc.
Discovery Education: Discovery Education offers free interactive games, videos, contests, virtual labs and activities designed to help you dive deeper into a topic —and have fun too
Smithsonian Education: The ‘Students’ section of Smithsonian Education features interesting education resources. Four major categories are covered: Art, Science and Nature, History and Culture, Peoples and Places.
National Geographic Kids: ‘Nat Geo Kids inspires young adventurers to explore the world through award-winning magazines, books, apps, games, toys, videos, events, and a website.
I Learn.com: practice and maintain math skills over the summer.
Myon.com: Your child can read many great books on their reading level about topics that interest them.
Xtramath.com: practice those basic math facts to automaticity!
Lexia Core 5: (EL students only) - great, fun online reading program that helps students learn the essentials of reading on their own level

Don’t subtract from your math knowledge this summer!
* Look for summer camps that utilize skills learned in math, such as robotics, STEM or space camps.
* Practice basic math facts! Know your addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts with automaticity. You can practice using the website: xtramath.com. Practice with flashcards or orally, while waiting in line at a store, in the car while traveling to and from home, waiting for your food at a restaurant or on television commercial breaks.
* Find ways to add math to daily activities, such as calculating the volume of water in the city pool.
* Double or triple a recipe. For example, how much flour will I need if I double a recipe that calls for 3/4 cup flour?
* Let teens get in on the trip-planning action, by setting a budget, calculating fuel needs or figuring the distance between destinations.

Source: https://www.publicschoolreview.com/blog/10-tips-for-avoiding-the-academic-summer-slide#