



A monthly publication provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education.

Resources for Families

April 2011

Make learning last summer long

When it comes to summer vacation, kids need more stimulation than a TV and a full refrigerator. During the summer the average student forgets much of the math and reading skills learned during the previous school year. Parents can help prevent this loss as well as the frustration their child feels. Here are some ways you can help.

- Ask teachers for a summer reading list and fun learning activities to do with your child.
- Read. Let your children see you spend time reading, and make sure to set aside time each day for reading. Some parents attach an incentive to reading time.
- Visit the library often. Sign up for summer reading programs. Find the stacks of children's magazines, and take some home for fun reading times.

Remember to keep the learning creative and fun. It is summertime, and because there is no competition with regular classroom assignments, it's the perfect time to learn new and exciting things. During the summer there are many activities at museums and parks. Check your local paper for scheduled summer events and activities.

Talk to your children about their use of different forms of media and technology, and ways to be safe while using them. Set aside some time to create or update a media use contract with each of your children. Visit Media Awareness Network for ideas and resources: www.media-awareness.ca.

- Encourage art projects. Save up loose change and head to the craft store to find an inexpensive project to do together. It might involve counting and sorting, or mixing ingredients to make paint or clay.

- Play word games. Groceries and discount stores have inexpensive books with crosswords and word search puzzles. Sit down together and solve a puzzle.
- Plan a vacation together. Visit the library or go online together to find out all you can about the places you plan to visit this summer. Read maps and guidebooks. List the sights you want to see along the way. Plan a budget for the trip as well. A fifth- or sixth-grade child can even help calculate gas mileage every time you fill the tank.
- Make a scrapbook of photos and mementos of your summer trip. Have your children write out captions below each item.
- Write a family newsletter and produce it on the computer.
- Teach your children the culinary basics. Even the smallest youngsters can be a big help in the kitchen, and when everyone pitches in, it's easier for parents to plan and prepare healthy meals. Make cookies, or some other tasty treat, together. Have your children read the directions to you. Let them measure the ingredients. For a challenge, double the recipe and have them figure out the new measurements.
- Assign summer jobs. Doing household chores provides important life skills and teaches responsibility.
- Plant a garden. If you don't have much room, plant a couple of flowers in pots. Give your children some responsibility for these growing plants, like watering and weeding.



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- Learn about nature. Children are outside and become curious about plants, insects, and weather. Summertime is the best time to explore the outdoors. Ask your children's teachers for a list of resources (Web sites, magazines, etc.) that have science experiments you can do together, making those long, hot summer days fun and exciting.
- Get a hamster or goldfish. Have your children write up an agreement about taking care of the animal, cleaning its cage or tank, feeding, etc.
- Find a summer school class nearby where your children can have fun AND focus on skills that need reinforcing.
- Sign your children up for summer camps, church Bible schools, and library reading clubs. These activities will teach valuable skills and lessons.