



# SUMMER LEARNING GUIDE

There is no other time of year when inequalities are greater in the United States than during the summer months. Low-income students tend to LOSE TWO or more months of reading and math skills, leading to significant implications for the achievement gap, graduation rates, and long-term career success.

While summer is potentially full of fun outdoor activities, young people can be inactive, staying inside with video games, television or friends. We want our children to enjoy their summers while staying on track in their physical, social and emotional, cognitive and verbal development.

Kids who keep up over the summer are more successful learners from their earliest years, and they are more likely to be reading at grade level by the end of third grade, and participation in high-quality summer programs can lead to **GAINS of TWO** or more months of reading and math skills.

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## Summer Learning: Extra Clip!

In this scene, Idris and his father both reflect on the summer learning gap. Joe says that it is important to him because when he was growing up, he saw the difference a few hours could make. Needless to say, Idris is not ecstatic about the idea of working through the summer.

- How do you plan to involve your kids in academic and healthy activities this summer?
- What benefits and challenges do you face to engaging your kids in summer learning activities?

## Here are some ideas\* from our partners at the Campaign for Grade Level Reading for incorporating fun activities and nutrition into your child's summer:

**MAKE READING A PRIORITY.** Ask your child's teacher or school librarian for a summer reading list. Join a reading program or group at your local library. Set aside a specific time to read together.

**TURN OFF THE TV AND THE COMPUTER.** According to a recent study by the YMCA of the USA, 50 percent of parents surveyed said technological distractions, such as cell phones and television, are a big barrier to getting their kids to engage in healthy behaviors. Encourage kids to turn off the gadgets and be active with friends and family.

**KEEP HEALTHY SNACKS AROUND THE HOUSE.** Freeze some grapes or place a popsicle stick in the middle of a yogurt cup and make a frozen treat. String cheese and fresh fruit smoothies are also great snack options. Popcorn with cinnamon instead of butter and salt makes a healthy snack.

**LOOK FOR SUMMER PROGRAMS IN YOUR COMMUNITY THAT PROMOTE LEARNING, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTHY EATING.** Ask specific questions about the learning and physical activities your child will be involved in and the food they will be eating. Many summer learning programs provide summer meals through the federal USDA Summer Food Service Program. Ask your child's teacher or at their school for summer program references.

**BE ACTIVE WITH YOUR CHILD.** Take a walk together, create a scavenger hunt or go to a local basketball court and shoot some hoops. Whatever activity you choose, it's great to exercise and spend time together.

**TAKE ADVANTAGE OF LOCAL POOLS AND RECREATION CENTERS.** Many communities have free or low-cost facilities for youth activities or programs. Ask your children's teacher or call or check out your local city or town website to obtain more information on what's available for your child during the summer.

**GIVE KIDS TOYS THAT ENCOURAGE ACTIVITY.** Toys like basketballs or soccer balls, jump ropes or kites, encourage your child to be active. Outdoor games that the family can play together, such as volleyball or badminton, are a great way to get everyone moving and having fun.

**ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO GET OUTSIDE AND PLAY.** Ride a bike, join a pick-up basketball or soccer game or walk to your local library. Make sure that your child drinks plenty of water while out in the heat to stay hydrated.

\*All data taken from the [National Summer Learning Association Summer Learning Day Resources](#)

### Participating in this event is just the first step! Take the next step:

- Share your commitment to Summer Learning with us on [Facebook](#)
- Visit our [website](#) and sign-up to join our campaign to receive details on our free mobile app and other upcoming American Promise events and programs.

# THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

The achievement gap between children from high- and low-income families is roughly **30 TO 40 PERCENT LARGER** among children born in 2001 than among those born twenty-five years earlier.<sup>1</sup>



"... EDUCATION IS A WAY OUT OF POVERTY — BUT POVERTY IS ALSO A HINDRANCE TO EDUCATION."<sup>2</sup>



Parents with the means invest more time and money than ever before in their children while lower-income families, which are now more likely to be headed by a single parent, are increasingly stretched for time and resources.<sup>3</sup>

LOW-INCOME YOUTH LACK OPTIONS IN THE SUMMER, and sometimes come to the library because it's air conditioned.<sup>4</sup>



FOR EVERY ONE LINE OF PRINT READ BY LOW-INCOME CHILDREN, MIDDLE-INCOME CHILDREN READ THREE.<sup>5</sup>

## What Happens to Children DURING THE SUMMER?



During the summer months, disadvantaged children tread water at best or even fall behind. It's what we call

### "SUMMER SLIDE"

while better off children build their skills steadily over the summer months.



### SUMMER LEARNING LOSS

accounts for about two-thirds of the ninth grade achievement gap in reading.<sup>7</sup>

## How Summer Learning Can Help CLOSE the Achievement Gap.

### SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS TARGETED TO LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

can help close the achievement gap that has been attributed, at least in part, to cumulative learning loss during the summers and that has been shown to be steeper for low-income students than for others.



Longitudinal studies indicate that **the effects of summer learning programs endure for at least two years after participation.**<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> New York Times, Feb 9, 2012. Education Gap Grows Between Rich and Poor, Studies Say. Sean F. Reardon, Stanford University, Whither Opportunity? Rising Inequality and the Uncertain Life Chances of Low-income Children. <sup>3</sup> Peter Edelman, Professor of Law, Georgetown Law Center, Huffington Post, Reinventing the American Dream: A Broader Bold Approach to Tackling the Achievement Gap. <sup>4</sup> Gains and Gaps: Changing Inequality in U.S. College Entry and Completion, Martha J. Bailey, Susan M. Dynarski. <sup>5</sup> Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning, RAND Corporation 2011. <sup>6</sup> Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap, Karl L. Alexander, Doris R. Entwisle, and Linda Steffel Olson, American Sociological Review 2007. Additional Sources: The Achievement Gap, Education Week, Aug 3, 2004, Annie E. Casey Foundation 2011.

National Summer Learning Association | [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)

