

Summer Learning Fun!

TIPS FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

School may be out for the summer, but your child's learning needs don't take a vacation! Children learn best when they have opportunities to build skills and knowledge across settings. These include summer child care programs as well as time spent at home. Read on for tips on how to engage your child in fun, meaningful learning activities throughout the summer.



BEFORE SUMMER:

Talk with your child to:

- **Find out what they would like to learn** about or experience during the summer.
- **Share details about summer plans.** What kinds of activities will your child get to do? Are any of their friends attending the same program? Consider visiting the program with your child ahead of time so they are familiar with the setting and staff.
- **Learn what kinds of books** your child would enjoy reading over the summer and help them create a reading list.



Meet with your child's teacher to:

- **Get a list of recommended books** for summer reading. Your child's teacher can identify books that match your child's reading level and interests.
- **Ask about specific skills** your child could pursue over the summer, and explore ways to align those skills with your child's interests. Focusing on what your child already enjoys and feels confident about can make them more excited to learn.
- **Discuss what your child can write about** during the summer—alone or with your help—such as a journal or letters to relatives.

Meet with your child's summer child care provider to:

- **Talk about your goals** for your child's summer child care. Share the information you got from your child's teacher, including your child's skills and interests.
- **Find out what themes and activities** the provider has planned. You can use this information to come up with fun ways to build on program activities when you are home with your child.
- **Let them know the best way** to share information with you about your child's activities.
- **Share information about your family** and culture, and discuss aspects of your child's background that the provider should be aware of to enrich the program. Many providers love having families share stories, traditions, cultural celebrations, or other activities with the children in their program!
- **Find out where your child can access** healthy meals and snacks during the summer months. Ask your child care provider if they are connected to a summer meals program. Summer food programs can help to provide your child with healthy meals when school is not in session.



DURING SUMMER:

Make reading a regular routine:

- **Have your child read every day**—either independently or with you or another caregiver, such as an older sibling. Also, continue reading aloud to your child, even after they begin reading independently. Reading to your child helps them build listening comprehension skills and can expose your child to new and richer vocabulary.
- **Ask your child questions** about the plot or storyline of the book they're reading, to summarize what's happened to that point and to predict what they think will happen next. These steps promote reading comprehension and make the reading experience more meaningful. Prompt your child to tell you if they come across a word or phrase they don't understand.

Promote math learning:

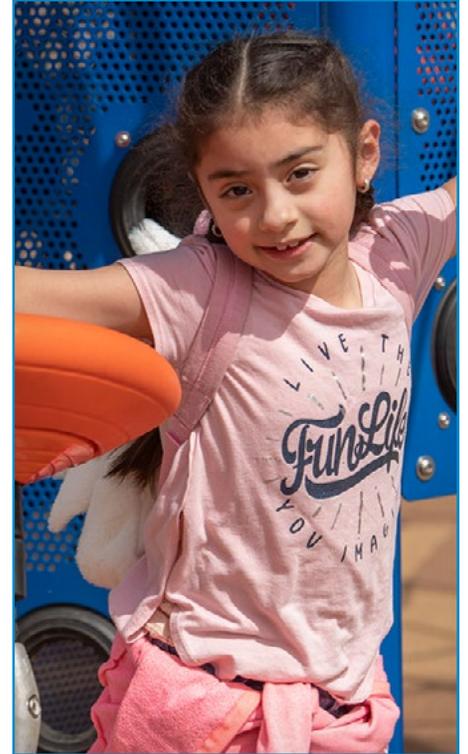
- **Play games together.** Board games and card games are fun ways to help children strengthen and retain math skills. Games also help your child develop cooperative play skills and problem-solving skills. Many games are suitable for players of all ages, so you can include the whole family.
- **Cook together.** Involving your child in meal preparation is a great way to promote math learning as you measure out ingredients, set baking temperatures, and calculate cooking times.

Turn your child care drop-off and pickup into learning opportunities:

- **Play "I Spy"** with shapes, numbers, letters, words, and other objects on the drive or walk to your child care provider. Find patterns in the designs of buildings and fences you pass by.
- **Talk about your child's favorite** part of the book they read the night before. It's just one way to turn everyday activities into fun brain-building exercises.

Stay active and have fun:

- **Take advantage of the longer days** to play an extra game of tag or to go for a long walk together. Children get less exercise when school is not in session, which may lead to unhealthy weight gain. There are many fun ways to help your child stay physically active all summer long!
- **Seek out educational and interactive** games and apps. Letting your child have some screen time can be beneficial, but try to balance your child's passive viewing screen time (e.g., watching TV, movies, or online videos) with more interactive games and apps that are fun as well as educational.



END OF SUMMER:

Throughout the summer, find ways to celebrate your child's successes (e.g., finishing a book, learning to ride a bicycle, or swimming in the deep end of the pool) and share their accomplishments with your child care provider. As a parent or caregiver, you can help make these months a summer to remember and ensure your child will start the new school year ready for success!