

KICK BACK AND ENJOY SUMMER



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What a wild year! Parents, students, and staff—take a moment to give yourself some credit for making the best of a historically challenging year. We all had to put in extra work to get us here...the end of the year! Although the school year is done, we're not completely off the hook. As a difficult school year ends, many of our students will benefit from planning ahead for summer well-being. We can support our students throughout the summer by finding balance—balance between kicking back and keeping up.

Below are some ways we can kick back and some things we should aim to keep up with:

- Kicking back
- Keeping Up
- Focus on Connection



Kicking Back:

Play! Our students definitely deserve some extra play time this year! Play is a great way to work on and improve social skills while having fun! Seek out play opportunities with family and friends; find a new playground or splash pad; find a new yard game to try!

Incorporate reading time as a relax option. Find a favorite book and a shady spot. Bonus points if parents are reading as well and modeling that reading can be a life-long enjoyment.

Spend time in nature! Getting out in the woods or to the beach gives us time to explore the world around us. Being in nature has all sorts of great restorative benefits including restoring your attention, improving your performance on tasks, and improving your resistance to and recovery from stressful life events.

Keeping Up:

Summer is supposed to be a break! But our students have been thriving on structure and responsibility in the school environment. They will benefit from having a level of structure and responsibility at home too. It will also make transitioning back to school in the fall much easier.

FOCUS ON CONNECTION!

Our students have been surrounded by peers and adults while at school. We want them to take all those great social skills and share them with the community.

Seek out volunteer opportunities in your community. Or pick a day to do something extra special for someone (for example, wash someone's car, help a neighbor with a chore—get creative and pay it forward!). Help our students see the positive impact of giving back!

After trying all of that....if you're still looking for ways to support summer learning for your students, [MDE provides a list of resources](#) that could be helpful.

We wish you all a restorative and safe summer break, and we can't wait to see you in the Fall!

Stay on schedule-ish: Try to keep a general schedule when possible. Things like wake-up time and eating time, and predictable schedules are really helpful. But sleep is the big one! Our students are growing and developing rapidly and as a result, they need a lot of sleep. Students who don't get enough sleep can be more likely to have attention and behavior problems. Getting a full night of sleep will be super important this summer.

Keep up on those screen time limits! Indoor screen time will definitely be a needed reprieve from the heat some days, but it will be important to have clear expectations around screen time this summer. There is no hard and fast rule, but in general 2 hours/day could be a great goal to shoot for. In addition, the CDC recommends kids get at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. The time kids spend watching TV, playing video games, surfing the web, is time they could be physically active!

Learn a new skill or sport! –the methods we use to learn in school translate well to learning anything. Our students are learning to learn and they should be applying this skill to a variety of tasks—to promote that growth mindset! This summer, challenge your kids to focus on the "YET"—I can't do that YET! And highlight the progress that you see after practicing something.

Continue modeling gratitude. It's especially important to focus on the good, after the year that we have all had. Spend time talking to your kids about the things you are thankful for. Ask them what they are thankful. This can be a practice that's incorporated into family routines like dinner or evening walks.