

Teacher May Newsletter

Maximize Summer

As teachers, we have all witnessed the “summer slide” firsthand. Students who do not practice reading or math over the summer lose an average of two-to-three months of skills, so how do we help parents and students maximize summer?

First, make sure parents understand that summer learning loss is real. Share what you know about it, and suggest ways to prevent it. Next, make sure your suggestions are doable for both your students and parents. For example, do not send home a two-inch thick packet of worksheets for them to complete over the summer. Instead, provide suggestions for fun activities for both the parent and child. Suggest activities they can do together that will not only let the child practice math and reading skills but will also build the parent-child relationship.

Think about creating a simple one-page newsletter that outlines the reasons each child should practice math and reading over the summer, and also give suggestions for websites and activities parents can use to prevent summer skill loss. A simple online search will yield a plethora of suggestions that you can pass on to parents. [Reading Rockets](#) has gathered a list of ideas and resources for teachers to use as they prepare students and parents for summer.

If there are summer programs offered at your school, be sure to inform parents well before school is out for the summer. Also, research any community-based programs that would be available to your students, keeping in mind the following questions: Are there any costs involved? How long does the program last? Do they offer academic skill practice?

Finally, follow up! Follow up with a postcard to your student. Ask how his summer is going and if he is practicing skills you learned together. Contact parents and ask if they need help finding ways to practice skills with their child. Be ready to offer suggestions and help if needed.

As you think about preventing summer learning loss, consider the following questions.

- What learning activities can I recommend for summer?
- What summer reading programs are available?
- How can my students use math this summer?
- What summer experiences are available to my students?

National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

May is National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month. According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, 6.3 million children younger than 18 have asthma, and more than 50 million Americans have allergies.

As you think about asthma and allergies, consider the following questions.

- Do I have correct parent contact information in case of an emergency?
- What do I do if my student has a severe allergic reaction during the school day?
- Do I know my school district's policy about dispensing medication?
- What questions can I ask my student's parents about allergy or asthma triggers?

To learn more about asthma, be sure to check out the Arkansas Department of Health website at <http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programsServices/communications/features/Pages/CDCAsthmaFacts.aspx> or visit the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America at <http://www.aafa.org/page/asthma-and-allergy-awareness-month.aspx>.



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