Avoid Summer Learning Loss: Four Tips For Fun Summer Learning

Summer is not far off and finding an array of fun summer learning activities will not only engage your child but can help ward off summer learning loss. You are like most families, preparing for the summer vacation break from school. Your child has progressed nicely through the academics of the current school year and is looking forward to a break. School provides a routine for learning and practicing material. What happens to this routine during the summer?

Research shows that students lose a month of academic achievement over the summer months. That means that they retain 8 months of information from a typical 9 month school year. For computational math and spelling, they may lose 2.6 months. Students retain only about 2/3 of the information they learned in these subjects. How do you as a parent limit this summer learning loss? Here are a few tips.

Fun Summer Learning Tip #1- Reading during the summer is important. Students are required to read during the school year and should continue to develop their reading abilities during the summer. Find out at the local library about summer reading programs. The librarians should be able to recommend books for your child that are age appropriate as well as those that are of interest to your child. You should try to be a good role model and read as well. Let your child see you read. Children who frequently read often have parents who also read.

Fun Summer Learning Tip #2- Are you planning a summer vacation away from home? Encourage your child to make a journal about the trip. This is a good way to practice writing skills. Have your child help map out the trip to practice math and science skills. Are you planning to visit historic sites? Have your child write about these as well. He could create a play and become a character from the historical time period. Encourage your child to write about his summer activities in addition to vacation. He may learn to do something new, like ride a bike, and a record of his progress would be interesting.

Fun Summer Learning Tip #3- Having your child help with cooking is a way to practice math and science skills. Following a recipe is a good way to practice following directions. Most recipes have fractions for various amounts of ingredients. This, of course, is math practice.

Fun Summer Learning Tip #4- Consider tutoring for your child during the summer months. Your child can practice skills learned during the school year and get a deeper understanding of the knowledge he acquired. He can also get a head start on the next school year. Online tutoring offers a convenient option. There is no commuting for you or the tutor. Tutoring sessions fit more easily into your schedule. Online tutoring uses technology that students love, computers and the internet.

Writing about summer activities, reading age appropriate books, adult supervised cooking, and tutoring are all fun summer learning activities that can reinforce what your child learned during the school year. By incorporating subjects like reading, writing, math, and science into activities in which you participate during the summer, you can limit the summer learning loss for your child.

By: Lorie Moffat (http://www.loriesonlinetutoring.com/)
Extended School Year for Children in Special Education, Could it Help My Child?

Are you the parent of a child with a disability who thinks that your child needs an educational program during the summer? Do long summer breaks cause your child with emotional disabilities to regress in behavior? Do you think that your child needs before or after school educational services? This article will discuss the definition of Extended School Year (ESY), what services your child may be eligible for, and how it could help your child.

Extended school year is a term used to describe any special education and related services, which are given outside of the regular school year. This includes before and after school, special education services. School districts are required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), to offer extended school year services, if the child needs it to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

There have been quite a few court cases about ESY, as well as policy letters from state boards of education, and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Check your state board of education for any policy letters on ESY. On February 4, 2003 OSEP released a policy letter that states a public agency may not limit extended school year services to particular categories of disability, or unilaterally limit the type, amount, or duration of these services. ESY must be provided to the child, at no cost to the parent.

Children with disabilities can receive a lot of different services during ESY. They can receive educational services (reading, math, written language), self help skills, functional skills to help them become independent, critical life skills, behavioral interventions, related services (occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy). The list can go on and on.

You must keep in mind that, your child must need ESY in order to receive FAPE. School districts are supposed to bring up ESY to parents in a timely manner, so that any disagreements can be resolved at a due process hearing. In my opinion school districts sometimes do not bring it up, unless a parent insists.

Make sure that at your child's annual review ESY is discussed. If your child tends to regress during the summer, has behavior that interferes with their education, behavior regresses during the summer break, your child could benefit from ESY. Also, if your child is just learning to read, they may need ESY to keep the progress going. By understanding what ESY is and how your child can benefit, will help you advocate for needed services for your child.

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JoAnn Collins is the parent of two adults with disabilities and has been an educational advocate for over 15 years. disabilitydeception.com

PEATC Workshops and Events: January 2013

Cumberland County Public Schools, Cumberland, VA 23044

Jan. 15 – "PEATC, Parents and Counselors: Partners or Pests?"
Webinar: time and location TBD

Jan. 16, 2013 – “Understanding Special Education (USE)”
Rocky Mount, VA 24151, 7-8pm

Jan. 17, 2013 – “How to Talk so Schools Will Listen and Listen so Schools Will Talk”
Salem City Schools, Salem, VA
Opinions On Extended School Year

The majority of us have grown up and gone to school on the traditional schedule of starting in the beginning of September to the beginning of June. But as of recent anyone with kids or nieces or nephews have noticed that normal school schedules has been extended to later in the summer, as well as starting earlier. There are some school districts that currently have no summer vacation, but rather multiple vacations of perhaps two weeks or so spread throughout the year. In addition to the schedule changes concerning the days school is attended, some school systems have also made the hours in school longer.

Now personally I am somewhat divided on these current changes that are occurring. Firstly the most important concern is doing what is going to get our children the most educated and ready to enter into adult life. Almost everyone who works knows that, unfortunately, we don’t get two and a half month summer vacations. And those that push for these extended hours and days of schooling cite that as major factor. In addition many other countries are beginning to outperform testing metrics of children in the US. Most of these countries that are ahead in these numbers do have longer school schedules and hours. And I am a firm believer that to have a prosperous and successful community and nation you need a well educated and driven new generation in line to take the reins from previous generations.

Now this being said I’ve heard those that are against it, and their reasons do make sense and I can agree with the points that they make. One of the fundamental ones is the phrase, “let kids be kids”. There are many studies that are published and released that I have heard, that state many of the youth in this country are being overly stressed from the current school system.

A large part of that coming from the fact of the multitude of extra-curricular activities offered now and the importance of maintaining an excellent school record. And in many cases parents do push their children to participate in these programs perhaps too hard. By making schooling and learning in general a stressful and negative experience it results in children no longer having the want to learn and grow and expand themselves. A completely opposite result from what the proponents of longer school schedules are expecting to gain.

As far as what should be done or should not be done I have to reiterate that what’s best for our children’s development, education and preparedness for adulthood is paramount. I would support a longer school schedule at least in high school levels if the extra curricular activities were not as excessively pushed on students. I do think some involvement is important as a social and, depending on the activity, physical fitness reinforcement. But it is imperative to make sure that we have students coming out of our school system that are hungry to learn and achieve great things.

One last thing I’d like to say is regardless of school schedule length or the hours our children attend, the most critically important resources are family and parents. No amount of hours in school can produce the next generation. This country and world needs without supportive and caring parents that are involved with their children’s education.

About the Author
This article was written by Dustin Costa at A State of Logic, the social network site for meaningful conversations (http://www.astateoflogic.com/).

Special Apps for Special Needs
During the summer months, you can encourage your child to play and learn with the following apps that support Virginia’s SOLs (http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/index.shtml). The content for these apps was developed by Virginia Interactive (www.virginiainteractive.org) and the GameLab at RU (http://www.gameslab.radford.edu/).

“Master the Math” is an educational game to help students prepare for Virginia’s Standards of Learning (SOL) exams with a focus on the mathematics curriculum from grades 3-8 (years 2006-2009). Featuring over 800 questions from 19 released SOL tests, Master the Math can help anybody study for the SOLs.

“Pass The Past” is an educational game to help students prepare for Virginia’s Standard’s of Learning (SOL) exams with a focus on World, United States and Virginia history, civics, and geography.

“Number Line” is an educational game app to help students learn about fractions, decimals, and percents by ordering equivalent fractions, decimals, and percents on a number line.

“Freddy Fraction” is designed to enhance the student’s ability to determine equivalence relationships among fractions, decimals, and percents, as well as improve fractional computation.

“Fraction Factory” is designed to enhance the student’s ability to find and order equivalent fractions and decimals on a number line. In addition, Fraction Factory targets fraction computation.

“Governometrics” is designed to enhance the student’s ability to improve the quality of public services by researching the US economy and readjusting the state budget every round (fiscal quarter) for 16 rounds. Virginia Standard of Learning (SOL) areas targeted: Civics and Economics CE.11, CE.12, and CE.13.
What is Extended School Year (ESY) and what does it look like?

Extended School Year (ESY) is the service or services provided to a student with an individualized education program (IEP) beyond the normal school year of a school division for the purpose of providing a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Determining the need for ESY services must be presented in the context of the IEP process and completed at an IEP meeting. The IEP team should consider the need for these services initially and at least annually, but the consideration for ESY services should be an integral part of any IEP meeting. In addition, the parent, student, the student’s teacher(s), related services providers, or administrators may request an IEP meeting for this purpose.

Federal regulations, OSEP guidance, and case law in Virginia support the fact that procedures used by local school must prohibit the postponement of the decision by the IEP team regarding ESY services until after the summer in order to gather data or determine what would happen if the services were not provided. In addition, the ESY decision should be made early enough to ensure that parents can exercise their due process rights if they wish to challenge the decision.

According to the VDOE Technical Assistance Resource Document, “Extended School Year Services: Implementing the Requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004 and Federal Regulations, 2006 (Revised December 2007), there are six factors that are to be considered by the IEP team when determining the need for ESY services for a student:

1. Regression/recoupment Is there a likelihood of substantial regression of critical life skills caused by a school break and a failure to recover those lost skills in a reasonable time following the school break?

2. Degrees of progress Without ESY services, will the student’s degree of progress toward the IEP goals be significantly jeopardized?

3. Emerging skills/breakthrough opportunities Are IEP goals that target critical life skills at a breakthrough point?

4. Interfering behaviors Without ESY services will any interfering behavior(s), such as ritualistic, aggressive or self-injurious behavior targeted by IEP goals, prevent the student from receiving benefit from his/her educational program during the school year?

5. The nature and severity of the disability Without ESY services, will the nature and severity of the student’s disability be likely to significantly jeopardize the student’s receipt of benefit from his/her educational program during the regular school year?

6. Special circumstances or other factors Without ESY services, are there any special circumstances that will significantly jeopardize the student’s receipt of benefit from his/her education program during the regular school year? (i.e.: ability of the child’s parents to provide the educational structure at home, ability of the child to interact with children without disabilities; and areas of the child’s curriculum, which need continuous attention).

For further information on the examination of the above factors, read through the VDOE Extended School Year Services document which can be found at:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/speced/regulations/federal/extended_school_year_services.pdf

LATINO CORNER

¿Qué es “Extended School Year” y cómo se aplica a la educación especial de mi hijo(a)?

El término “Extended School Year” o “ESY” traducido es servicios de año escolar prolongado.

Lo que significa:
* Educación especial y servicios relacionados más allá del año escolar normal
* Para aquellos estudiantes que no se beneficiarían de un receso en educación especial durante las vacaciones
* Para que aquellos estudiantes puedan recibir una educación pública adecuada gratuita (“Free Appropriate Public Education” o “FAPE”)
* ESY es sin costo alguno y es parte de la planificación del “IEP” (debe ser considerado como una opción)
* Si se necesita ESY, el Programa Educativo Individualizado (“IEP”) debe incluir la duración e inicio del ESY
* Factores a considerar para determinar si el estudiante necesita ESY:
  - Regresión (perdida de habilidades durante las vacaciones)/Recuperación de las habilidades que fueron perdidas durante las vacaciones
  - El grado de progreso anticipado sin ESY
  - Nuevas habilidades/opportunidades de avance que serían interrumpidas sin ESY
  - Conducta que interfiera con los estudios durante el año escolar normal
  - Indole y/o intensidad de la discapacidad
  - Si hay algunas circunstancias especiales u otros factores que contribuyan a esta consideración
* Diferente que las clases de verano (“Summer School”).

Enlaces con mayor información:
* Un manual de servicios de año escolar prolongado del estado de Virginia (en inglés):
  http://www.doe.virginia.gov/speced/regulations/federal/extended_school_year_services.pdf
* La guía de educación especial para padres, página 27:
* Un ejemplo del condado de Fairfax en español (ojoo, cada condado es diferente):
  http://www.tcps.edu/otherlanguages/translations/PDF_FILES/specialeducation/forms/iep1033/espanish.pdf