

# Helping Children Learn<sup>®</sup>

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School

Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District  
School Board



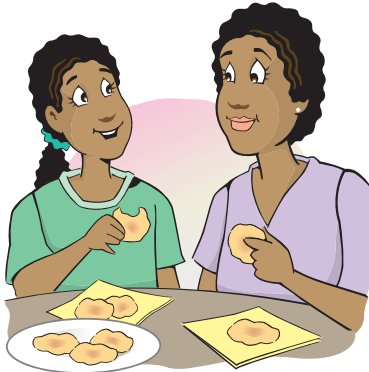
May 2012

## With your child, review this year and set goals for the future

It's the end of a busy school year. Your child has learned a lot. She read new books. She mastered new skills. Now is a good time to talk about the lessons she learned.

Schedule a special time to talk—go out for ice cream or share a favorite snack at home. During your talk:

- **Look back.** What was her favorite project this year? In what subject did she improve the most? Which book that the class read was her favorite? What goals did she accomplish?
- **Look forward.** What excites her about next year? Is there a subject she'd like to improve next year? Are there books she wants to read? Does she have a summer reading list?
- **Focus on the positive.** "You really worked hard this year. You can do challenging work when you put your mind to it!"
- **Plan "thank you."** Who really helped your child succeed this year? A special teacher? Her softball coach? Teachers, coaches and school staff cherish notes of appreciation from students and parents.
- **Make summer plans.** Help her think about something she'd like to learn during the summer. Then together, make a plan to help her achieve that goal.



Source: "Look Back, Look Forward," Legacy Project, [www.legacyproject.org/activities/lookbackfor.html](http://www.legacyproject.org/activities/lookbackfor.html).



## Offer alternatives to 'media time'

Some kids spend their summers staring at TV screens, computer monitors or cell phones. They miss out on time for exercise, reading and friends. As you set limits on media time, suggest alternate fun activities. Your child could:

- **Get a hula hoop.** Even if your child is indoors, a hula hoop is an easy way to get some exercise. Besides twirling it, your child can use it as a jump rope.
- **Explore nearby playgrounds.** There are lots of ways for kids to let off steam—and build muscles.
- **Use sidewalk chalk.** Play hopscotch. Trace your child's body and have him draw in his face and clothes.
- **Learn to juggle.** Check out a book on juggling from the library. This is a great way to teach fine motor skills.
- **Start a book club** and have weekly "book swaps" with friends.
- **Go retro.** Talk about your favorite childhood summer memories, and have your child reenact them!

Source: N. Hellmich, "In Summer, Kids Need Real Play Time," USA Today, [www.usatoday.com/news/health/2009-06-24-play-exercise\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2009-06-24-play-exercise_N.htm).

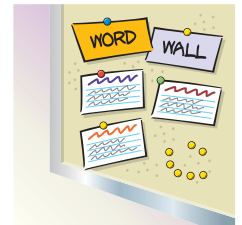
## Expand your child's world

Summertime is a great time to focus on geography. Get a large map of the world. Post it where your child can see it every day. Look for place names and help your child find them on the map. Try looking:

- **On canned and boxed food.**
- **On clothing labels.**
- **In letters and ads.**
- **In newspaper articles.**

## Set up a summer word wall

Here's a fun way to build your child's vocabulary this summer: Create a "word wall" in your home. Each day have your child find a new word in the dictionary. Write the word on the front of an index card and the definition on the back. Post the words on a bulletin board or wall. Be creative—decorate with drawings or outline the words in glitter. And don't forget to review the words together!



## Kids can learn anywhere!

It's time for summer vacation, but as you pack up your child's school things, tuck some in your pool or beach bag—or keep some in the car. Take along:

- **Flash cards.** Your child can review facts from this school year anywhere, at any time!
- **Books.** Bring some books from your child's summer reading list.
- **Paper, pencils, pens and markers.** Why wait for fall to write that "how I spent my summer vacation" story? Encourage daily writing—even just a sentence.





## How can parents encourage learning on a budget?

**Q: My son struggled this year. I don't have money to send him to a summer tutoring program or an expensive camp. What can I do this summer to help him catch up?**

**A:** Your son has had a rough year. But you can use the summer to help him catch up. Here are some steps you can take:

- **Meet with your child's teacher.**

Together, come up with a summer-long learning plan. Find out where your son really needs to improve—then ask for specific activities you can do at home to build his skills. Ask about free summer learning programs.

- **Set some reading goals.** How many books will he read? Let him pick the books—don't worry if they aren't all "classics." Help him find books about his interests and hobbies.

- **Build study time into his summer schedule.** Set aside some time each day. Perhaps his teacher can give you work sheets or an old math book so he can practice. Check the library and office supply stores for resources.

- **Do fun things together.** Learning doesn't have to be drudgery! Visit the zoo or a museum. Look for a free concert. All these are ways to learn that don't cost money.



## Are you preventing the summer slide?

Over the summer, kids can lose up to 60 percent of the academic skills they learned during the year! Answer the following questions *yes* or *no* to see if your child will beat the summer learning slide:

\_\_\_ **1. Does your child** have a library card? Have you checked out your library's summer reading program?

\_\_\_ **2. Does your child's** summer schedule include daily time for reading?

\_\_\_ **3. Will you help** your child learn one or two new things this summer? It will keep her learning "muscles" strong.

\_\_\_ **4. Have you and your child** made a list of places in your community you plan to visit—historic sites, places to enjoy nature, even the fire station?

\_\_\_ **5. Do you look** for everyday ways to practice school skills—like measuring for a recipe?

**How did you do?** *Each yes answer means you're keeping your child motivated to learn. For each no answer, try that idea from the quiz.*

*"You learn something every day if you pay attention."*

—Ray LeBlond

## Three keys to self-esteem

Children who feel good about themselves are more likely to be successful in school and in life. Three keys to building your child's self-esteem are:

- 1. Acceptance.** Send the message that your child is loved and accepted. Be attentive to her needs. Say you love her.
- 2. Limits.** Having boundaries will give your child a sense of security. You can adjust these as she matures and demonstrates responsibility.
- 3. Respect.** Children respect others when they are treated with respect. Use the same manners with your child as you do with your friends. Listen when your child participates in family discussions.

## Banish summer boredom

Worried about what to do when your child says "I'm bored"? Plan ahead! Have your child help you write ideas for fun activities on slips of paper, like "bake brownies" or "play on the swings." Write a few simple chores on slips of paper, too, like "weed the flower bed." Place all of the slips of paper into a jar or bowl. When your child says he's bored, have him choose a slip of paper and do whatever it says!

## Add fun to summer math

Ask casual questions to review your child's math skills during the summer, such as:

- **How much** will we pay for two ice cream cones?

- **How much** change will I get if I pay \$5.00 for this \$3.84 item?



- **What should** the 15% tip be on the \$29.17 bill for this meal?

### Helping Children Learn®

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