



smarter summers.  
brighter futures.

A SUMMER PLAYBOOK FOR ELECTED  
OFFICIALS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADERS





# contents

State Policy Summer Snapshot .....	4
ESSA Guide for Stakeholders .....	5
Five Things Elected Officials Can do to Celebrate Summer Learning Day .....	6
Summer Learning Day Social Media .....	8
National League of Cities Mayors Survey .....	10
Summer by the Numbers Infographic .....	12
Resources .....	14

# WHY SUMMERS MATTER

What happens when learning takes a vacation during summer break? Research shows that summers without quality learning opportunities hold our nation's youth back – year after year – in core subjects like math and reading, and in life experiences like college and career exposure. In fact, the math and reading skills low-income students lose each summer are cumulative and contribute significantly to the ACHIEVEMENT GAP between lower- and higher- income students.

Studies also show that providing summer opportunities, including jobs, learning, and meals, prevent academic regression and weight gain, divert youth from criminal involvement and reduce violence.

## ABOUT NSLA

The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) is the only national nonprofit focused on closing the achievement gap by increasing summer learning opportunities for all youth. NSLA offers expertise and support for programs and communities and advocates for summer learning as a solution for equity and excellence in education.

**“NSLA’s vision is that all children and youth have access to high-quality summer learning experiences to help them succeed in college, career and life.”**



**national summer  
learning association**

# State Policy Summer Snapshot

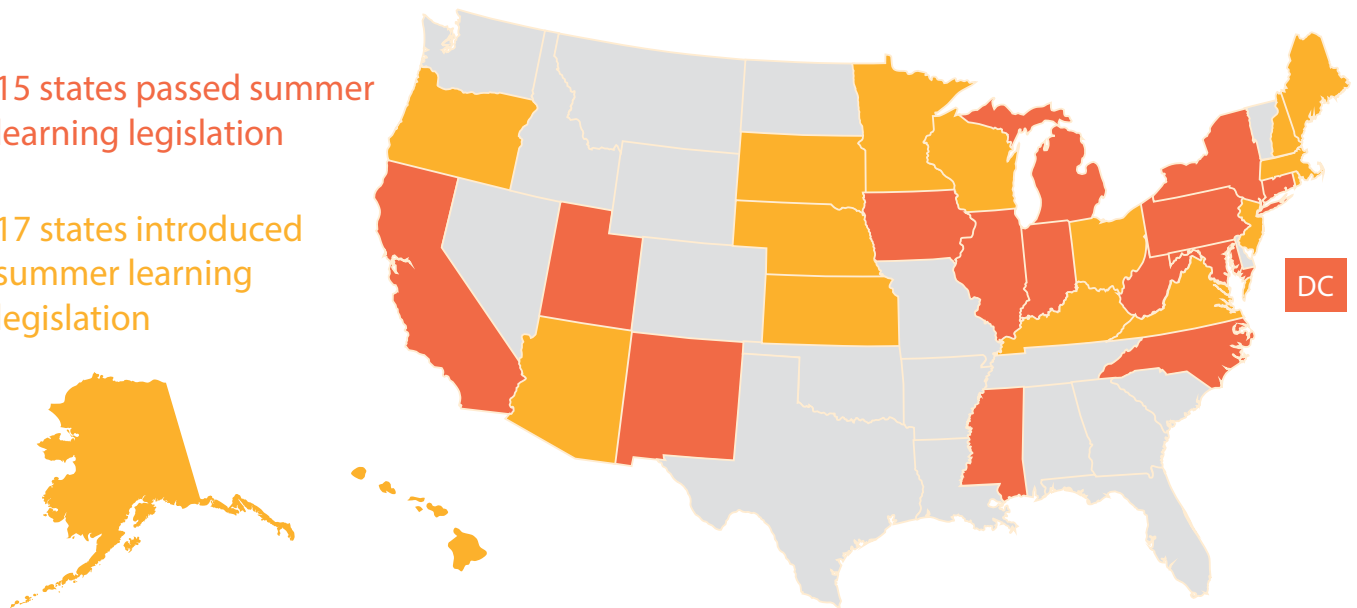
As the national leader on summer learning and its role in education reform, NSLA tracks and responds to policy issues that affect summer learning at the federal, state, and local levels. Working hand-in-hand with coalition partners, policymakers, and local advocates, NSLA provides expertise, tools and resources on a number of policy issues that include 21st Century Community Learning Centers, summer meals, community service and service learning, STEM education, and funding opportunities for summer programs.

## Fifteen states and the District of Columbia passed 40 pieces of legislation affecting summer learning in 2016

(not including appropriations bills funding existing programs)

15 states passed summer learning legislation

17 states introduced summer learning legislation



The thumbnail shows the cover of the report titled "State of Summer Learning 2016 State Policy Snapshot" by the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA). It features a blue and white color scheme with a small graphic of a child. The cover includes the NSLA logo and the title. Below the title, there is a section titled "THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR" and another titled "Fifteen states and the District of Columbia passed 40 pieces of legislation affecting summer learning in 2016". A small map of the United States is also visible on the cover, similar to the one in the main image.

Download the State of Summer Learning 2016 State Policy Snapshot



# ESSA Guide for Stakeholders

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015, and represents good news for our nation's schools. This bipartisan measure reauthorizes the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation's national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students. The new law builds on key areas of progress in recent years, made possible by the efforts of educators, communities, parents, and students across the country.



**Download the ESSA Guide for  
State Level Stakeholders  
Full White Paper**



**NATIONAL  
SUMMER  
LEARNING DAY  
JULY 13, 2017**

**Celebrate  
National Summer  
Learning Day!**

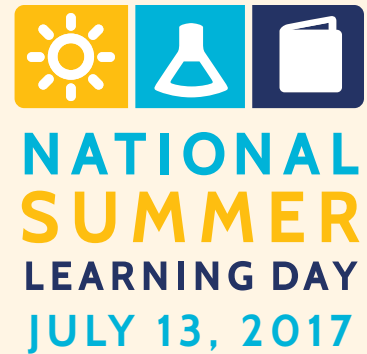
National Summer Learning Day is an annual advocacy day led by the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) to elevate the importance of keeping kids learning, safe and healthy every summer.



**Plan Your Celebration!**

Download our Planning Tip Sheet.

# Five Things Elected Officials Can Do to Celebrate Summer Learning Day



Proclaim Summer Learning Day in your community and register your event(s) on NSLA's event calendar.  
[↓ Download a sample Proclamation.](#)



Spread the word in your local media describing why keeping kids learning, safe, and healthy is important to your community. Promote your community's summer learning, jobs and meals resources to families.



Share your favorite summer photo and/or memory via social media [#keepkidslearning](#) and pay a visit to a local summer program. Challenge friends and leaders in your community to do the same all summer long!



Download and distribute NSLA's family tip sheets with learning and healthy living ideas for the summer months.  
[↓ Download NSLA Family Tip Sheets.](#)



Set a goal for your community to reach more kids than ever before this summer and ask your community to add summer programs and youth served to NSLA's event calendar.  
[📶 Post an event.](#)



cat

fat

mat

sat

# Summer Learning Day Social Media

Help spread the word to [#keepkidslearning](#) this summer.

## SAMPLE POSTS FOR FACEBOOK

By 5th grade, cumulative years of summer learning loss can leave low-income students 2.5 to 3 years behind peers. [#KeepKidsLearning](#) Go to [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)

The size of the achievement gap remains constant during the 9 months of school year but widens during summer. [#KeepKidsLearning](#) To find out more, visit [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)

6 out of every 7 students who receive free- and reduced-price lunches lose access to them when school lets out. [#KeepKidsLearning](#) Find summer meals locations at [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)

## SAMPLE TWEETS FOR TWITTER

The summer off season is a time to get better and stronger, not take a break. [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org) [#KeepKidsLearning](#)

Your brain is a muscle; don't forget to work it out this summer. [#KeepKidsLearning](#) through [#summerlearning](#) at [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org).

[#SummerLearning](#) loss is a significant contributor to the [#AchievementGap](#). Find resources at [www.summerlearning.org/SummerLearningDay](http://www.summerlearning.org/SummerLearningDay). [#KeepKidsLearning](#)

## FLASHBACK FRIDAY

Use [#FBF](#) or [#FlashbackFriday](#) on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram to share pictures or memories from your own summers growing up! [#KeepKidsLearning](#)

## Follow NSLA

Twitter: [@SummerLearning](#)

Facebook: [@SmarterSummers](#)





## LEARNING HEROES' SUMMER STRIDE SOCIAL MEDIA



Download the  
Summer Stride  
Social Media  
Toolkit



## NO KID HUNGRY SOCIAL MEDIA



Download the Summer  
Meals Outreach Toolkit



# National League of Cities Mayors Survey\*

## MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP

Municipal leaders are demonstrating their support for summer learning:

**31%**

Have realigned  
**city funds**  
to support summer  
programming

**24%**

Have dedicated  
**city resources  
or investments**

**33%**

Have made efforts to  
**improve the quality**  
of summer programs

**36%**

Have convened new  
**partners/funders**  
to address summer needs

**25%**

Have eliminated barriers or  
**provided incentives**  
for youth and parents  
to increase participation

**25%**

Have encouraged the use of  
**data and  
accountability**

---

Room for growth:

**19%**

Of municipal leaders have used the  
**bully pulpit**  
to promote summer learning

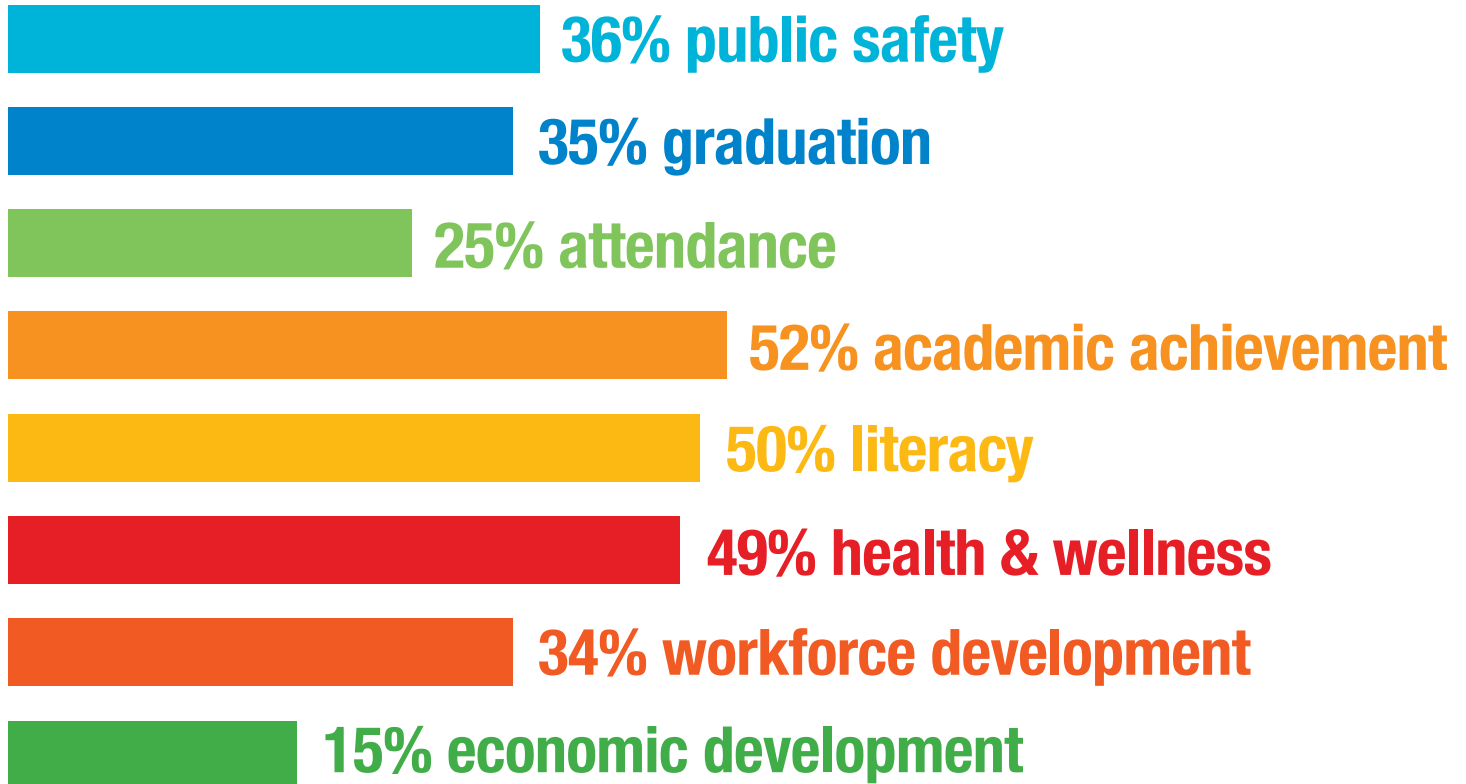
**11%**

Of municipal leaders have made  
**policy changes**  
in support of summer learning

# National League of Cities Mayors Survey\*

## ISSUE AREAS

Cities are using summer learning to address a number of city issues:



## FUNDING

**40%**  
Of respondents indicated that their city  
**dedicated municipal dollars**  
to summer learning

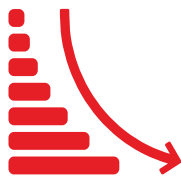
Additionally, a large majority  
of respondents explained that their city  
**donated in-kind resources**  
such as pool passes, bus passes and physical  
space to summer learning programs

\*Note: Survey results are based on responses from 320 municipal leaders in a 2015 NLC survey. Statistics reflect the percentages of “respondents” who participated.

# SUMMER BY THE NUMBERS

## THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

WHAT HAPPENS TO CHILDREN DURING THE SUMMER?



### THE “SUMMER SLIDE”

is what often happens to disadvantaged children during the summer months. They tread water at best or even fall behind, while higher-income children build their skills steadily over the summer months.



Most students lose

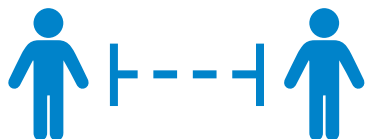
### TWO MONTHS

of mathematical skills every summer, and low-income children typically lose another two to three months in reading.<sup>1</sup>



Summer learning loss during elementary school accounts for two-thirds of the achievement **GAP IN READING** between low-income children and their middle-income peers by ninth grade.<sup>2</sup>

*Based on a study by Johns Hopkins University*



### THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

between children from high- and low-income families is roughly thirty to forty percent larger among children born in 2001 than among those born twenty-five years earlier.<sup>3</sup>



Elementary school students with high levels of attendance

(at least five weeks) in voluntary

### SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS

experience benefits in math and reading.<sup>4</sup>



### 9 IN 10 TEACHERS

spend at least three weeks re-teaching lessons at the start of the school year.<sup>5</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Afterschool Alliance. (2009). *American after 3 pm: The most in-depth study of how America's children spend their afternoons*. Retrieved from [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3_Full_Report.pdf) <sup>2</sup> Alexander, K. L., Entwisle D. R., & Olson L. S. (2007a). *Lasting consequences of the summer learning gap*. *American Sociological Review*, 72, 167 <sup>3</sup> New York Times. (Feb 9, 2012). *Education Gap Grows Between Rich and Poor*, *Studies Say*.

<sup>4</sup> Catherine H. Augustine, Jennifer Sloan McCombs, John F. Pane, Heather L. Schwartz, Jonathan Schweig, Andrew McEachin, and Kyle Siler-Evans. *Learning from Summer: Effects of Voluntary Summer Learning Programs on Low-Income Urban Youth*. RAND Corporation. (September 2016).

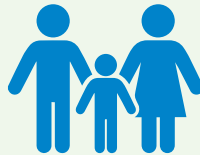
<sup>5</sup> Surveyed by the National Summer Learning Association. Retrieved from <http://rer.sagepub.com/content/66/3/227.abstract> and [http://c.yecd.com/sites/www.summerlearning.org/resource/resmgr/press\\_releases/nsla\\_summer\\_release\\_130528\\_f.pdf](http://c.yecd.com/sites/www.summerlearning.org/resource/resmgr/press_releases/nsla_summer_release_130528_f.pdf) and [http://c.yecd.com/sites/www.summerlearning.org/resource/resmgr/Publications/Impact\\_on\\_Teaching\\_and\\_Learn.pdf](http://c.yecd.com/sites/www.summerlearning.org/resource/resmgr/Publications/Impact_on_Teaching_and_Learn.pdf)

[www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)



**national summer  
learning association**

## ACCESS TO AND DEMAND FOR SUMMER PROGRAMS



**51% OF FAMILIES** not participating in a summer program say they would if one was available to them.<sup>6</sup>



Of families who pay for summer programs, the average weekly reported cost is **\$288 PER CHILD** per week<sup>7</sup>

## SUMMER HEALTH AND NUTRITION FOR KIDS



In 2014, only **ONE IN SIX** youth eligible for the federal Summer Food Service Program received these subsidized meals during the summer, leaving millions of dollars in federal funding on the table and many young people to needlessly go hungry when school is not in session.<sup>8</sup>



Minority children gain weight up to **TWICE AS FAST** during the unstable months of the summer as during the school year.<sup>9</sup>

## SUMMER JOBS, SUMMER MELT AND OLDER YOUTH



Without summer counseling and support, **ONE-THIRD** of first generation college attenders fall victim to the “summer melt” and fail to enroll in the fall, even after being accepted.<sup>10</sup>





Waiting lists for summer youth jobs are **IN THE THOUSANDS** in most major cities, despite promising findings around reduced crime and mortality rates for participants.<sup>11,12</sup>

Sources: <sup>6</sup> Afterschool Alliance. (2009). *American after 3 pm: The most in-depth study of how America's children spend their afternoons*. Retrieved from [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3_Full_Report.pdf) <sup>7</sup> Ibid. <sup>8</sup> Sims, K., Anderson, S., FitzSimons, C., Burke, M., & Kapp-Klote, H. (2014). *Hunger doesn't take a vacation: Summer nutrition status report 2014*. Food Research and Action Center. Retrieved from [http://frac.org/pdf/2015\\_summer\\_nutrition\\_report.pdf](http://frac.org/pdf/2015_summer_nutrition_report.pdf). <sup>9</sup> Von Hippel, P. T., Powell, B., Downey, D. B., & Rowland, N. J. (2007). The effect of school on overweight in childhood: gain in body mass index during the school year and during summer vacation. *American Journal of Public Health, 97*(4), 696-702. <sup>10</sup> Castleman, B. L., Page, L. C., Winkle-Wagner, R., Bowman, P. J., John, E. P. S., Meyer, H. D., & Hu, S. (2014). *Summer melt: Supporting low-income students through the transition to college*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press. <sup>11</sup> Heller, S. B. (2014). Summer jobs reduce violence among disadvantaged youth. *Science, 346* (6214), 1219-1223. <sup>12</sup> Gelber, A., Isen, A., & Kessler, J. B. (2014). *The effects of youth employment: Evidence from New York City summer youth employment program lotteries* (No. w20810). National Bureau of Economic Research.



**national summer learning association**

[www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)  

# RESOURCES



**national summer  
learning association**

[summerlearning.org](http://summerlearning.org)



## research in brief >

## Summer Youth Employment Programs Offer More than Just a Summer Job

### RESEARCHERS

#### SARA B. HELLER

*Assistant Professor of Criminology  
University of Pennsylvania*

*Summer Jobs Reduce Violence  
among Disadvantaged Youth.  
Science, 346, 1219 (2014).*

#### JACOB LEOS-URBEL

*Associate Director  
John W Gardner Center for  
Youth and Communities*

*What is a Summer Job Worth?  
Journal of Policy Analysis and  
Management 33, 4, 891-911 (2014).*

Expanding opportunities for youth still in school to work during the summer provide youth not only a wage, but a chance to learn social and soft skills that are valuable in both school and the workforce, such as self-efficacy and impulse control. Engaging students through mentorship, training and paid work is shown to have positive impacts on their behavior, skills and academic performance.

Conversations with researchers Sara Heller and Jacob Leos-Urbel explore two established summer youth employment programs in Chicago and New York respectively, the varied impacts they have had, and the potential for these kinds of programs to expand and improve.

## about the programs:



### WHAT ARE SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS?

Summer Youth Employment Programs are a way to engage youth during the summer through part time employment along with opportunities for skill development. In the two programs studied here, the average age of participants was 14-21. About 90 percent of the participants in both programs qualify for free and reduced price lunch. Additional characteristics of the participants depended on the outcome the researchers were trying to study. Heller focused on the impact on violence of the participants in the Chicago OSP program. Data show that 20 percent of the participants had previous records of either arrest or victimization. These participants worked for eight weeks in part-time jobs that pay a minimum wage of \$8.25 an hour for 25 hours per week.

The participants of the New York Summer Employment Program (NYSEP) worked for about 25 hours a week for seven weeks in various entry level jobs at private, nonprofit or public sectors. These jobs are funded by various federal, state and local sources. Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are responsible for intake and training of the participants in NYSEP.



click to  
download

**Download NSLA's Summer Youth Employment Brief**



#KeepKidsLearning

## KEEP KIDS ACTIVE AND HEALTHY DURING THE SUMMER

It's important for all young people to keep active and eating healthy while school is out. Without the structure and resources that the school year offer, children are at greater risk for weight gain and unhealthy eating habits during the summer months. Here are some ways you can incorporate fun activity and nutrition into your child's summer.



Look for a local summer program that promotes physical activity and healthy eating.

Ask about the activities your child will be involved in, as well as the type of meals they will be eating.



Encourage your child to get outside and play.

Ride a bike, join in on a neighborhood basketball or soccer game, or take a nature walk. Just make sure your child drinks plenty of water while out in the heat.



Be active with your child.

Take a walk together or create a scavenger hunt. It's a great opportunity to not only get some physical activity for you and your child, but it's a chance to bond.



Take advantage of local pools and recreation centers.

Many communities have free or low-cost facilities for youth. Call or check your local city or town's website to obtain more information on what resources are available for your child during the summer.



Keep healthy snacks around the house.

Freeze some grapes or place a popsicle stick in the middle of a yogurt cup to make a frozen treat. Fill half your child's plate with fruits and vegetables daily. Select fruit and vegetables in season. They taste better and are usually cheaper.



Turn off the TV and computer.

According to a study by the YMCA of the USA, 50 percent of parents said computers, cell phones, and the television keep kids from being active and healthy. Encourage your kids to turn off the gadgets and be active with friends or family instead.



Give kids toys that encourage active play.

Basketballs or soccer balls, jump ropes, or kites encourage physical activity. Outdoor games that the family can play together, such as dodge ball or baseball, are a great way to get everyone moving.



Find a summer food site near you.

Many programs, libraries, and other locations provide federally-funded summer meals through the USDA Summer Food Service Program. Visit [www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks](http://www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks) to find a summer meal site near you.



Make healthy food with your child.

Involve your child in preparing healthy meals and snacks. Take your child grocery shopping for ingredients and discuss foods that are good for them, such as fruits and vegetables.



Summer Learning Day is a national advocacy day recognized to spread awareness about the importance of summer learning for our nation's youth in helping close the achievement gap and support healthy development in communities all across the country. Find an event or program near you at [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)!



Download this Tip Sheet





#KeepKidsLearning

## TIPS TO KEEP TWEENS AND TEENS LEARNING DURING THE SUMMER

No matter their age, it's important for ALL kids to keep learning over the summer. Here are some ways to keep your tween or teen learning over the summer.



### Talk with your child's teacher.

Attend or ask for parent-teacher meetings to find out how your child can use the summer to get ready for the next grade. Find out what subjects are your child's favorite. Ask the teacher for some fun and creative ideas to practice skills during summer.



### Read with your child.

Ask if your child's teacher has a book list or ideas for reading that will interest your tween or teen. You can also check with the school librarian. Let your child choose the books they read. Start a "book club" by reading a book with your child and talking about it.



### Talk about college and career.

Summer is a great time to explore college and career options with your child. Visit college campuses. Connect your child with a mentor who works in a career that interests them. Help them write a resume. Find a summer internship or job with websites like [www.LandMe.org](http://www.LandMe.org).



### Be active.

Keep your child active in the summer. Kids gain weight two to three times faster during the summer than the school year. Play a game of basketball, visit your community pool, or take regular walks as a family.



### Get outside.

Summer is the perfect season to take advantage of outdoor resources in your community. There are a lot of learning opportunities outdoors. Contact your local parks and recreation program to learn more.



### Plan a project.

Does your child want to give his or her room a new look? Have them sketch out design ideas, plan a budget, calculate the area needed for paint, price materials, and manage a timeline.



### Make it social.

Many tweens and teens want to spend free time with friends. Talk with the parents of your child's friends and plan a group project or series of activities that involve reading, being outside to explore, or even brushing up on math through cooking, or having a yard sale.



### Let them choose.

As they become more independent, tweens and teens want more choices and input into how they spend their time. Give them ideas and options, but let them choose.



### Use rewards.

Think creatively about rewards for your tween or teen to keep them learning over the summer. Create "Dad" or "Mom dollars" to complete "learning challenges" that can be spent to purchase privileges or experiences—a sleepover with a friend or their favorite meal or treat.



Summer Learning Day is a national advocacy day recognized to spread awareness about the importance of summer learning for our nation's youth in helping close the achievement gap and support healthy development in communities all across the country. Find an event or program near you at [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)!



## Download this Tip Sheet



#KeepKidsLearning

## SUMMER LEARNING IDEAS AT HOME AND IN YOUR COMMUNITY

All kids need to keep learning over the summer. If they don't, they lose what they've learned during the school year, and those losses add up year after year. Following are some ways you can help your child learn during the summer months and send them back ready for the new school year.



### Read at home every day.

Help your child pick books that interest them, set reading goals, and reward their efforts. Start a family book club. Read a book, watch the movie, and talk about the differences with your child.



### Visit a library.

Libraries have more than just books. Your child can experience technology, create new things, and often get a healthy meal at some local libraries. Sign you and your child up for your library's free summer programs so you can explore and learn new skills together.



### Keep a summer journal.

Have your child keep a journal about the books they are reading, their favorite summer events or activities, and the new friends they've made.



### Look for free or low-cost activities near you.

Take trips to your local museum, aquarium, zoo, park, or nature center. Encourage kids to write about their trip and what they thought about it in their summer journal.



### Plant a garden.

Start simple with a tomato container garden or fresh herbs grown on your kitchen window sill. It's a great way to encourage healthy eating with your child.



### Use counting skills in daily activities or errands.

Baking a cake? Let your child help count out the ingredients or minutes to mix the batter. Turn a grocery trip into a math lesson. Use coupons and help your child determine the discount.



### Volunteer together.

Volunteering builds life skills and compassion. Help spruce up a school or local park, collect supplies for a shelter, or serve food at a soup kitchen.



### Be active.

Get outside with your child. Visit a park for a nature walk, ride bikes, or check out your community's parks and recreation programs that may offer many fun options.



### Get creative.

Let your child's imagination soar. Turn everyday household items like cardboard tubes into rockets or old socks into hand puppets. Let them make up their own songs or dances.



Summer Learning Day is a national advocacy day recognized to spread awareness about the importance of summer learning for our nation's youth in helping close the achievement gap and support healthy development in communities all across the country. Find an event or program near you at [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)!



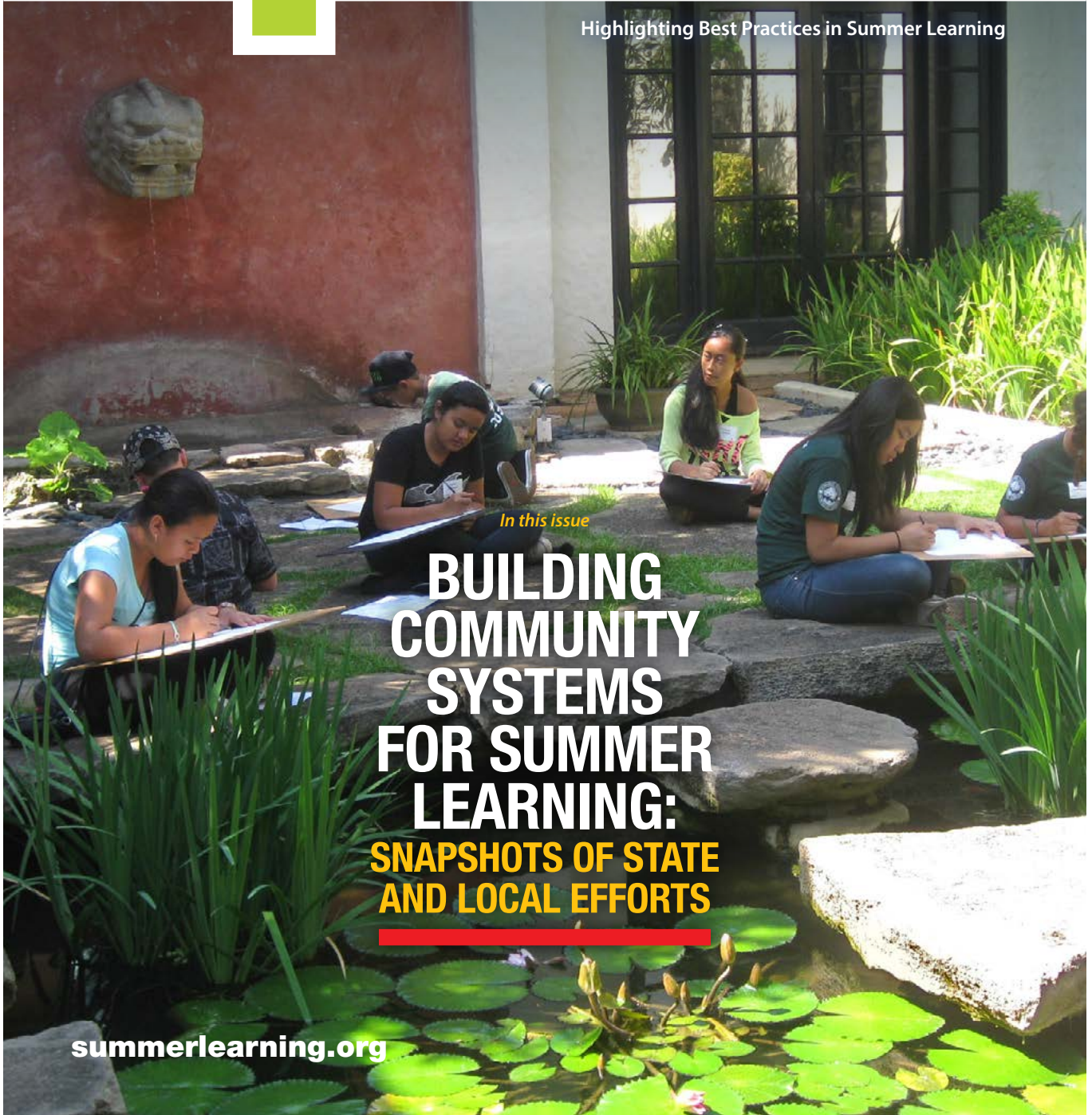
## Download this Tip Sheet

NATIONAL SUMMER LEARNING ASSOCIATION

# spark!

No.1

Highlighting Best Practices in Summer Learning



*In this issue*

## **BUILDING COMMUNITY SYSTEMS FOR SUMMER LEARNING: SNAPSHOTS OF STATE AND LOCAL EFFORTS**

[summerlearning.org](http://summerlearning.org)



View the full issue of  
NSLA's Spark! Magazine

