smarter summers.
brighter futures.

A SUMMER PLAYBOOK FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADERS

NLC NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
INSTITUTE FOR YOUTH, EDUCATION, AND FAMILIES

national summer learning association

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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."

nsla

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www.summerlearning.org

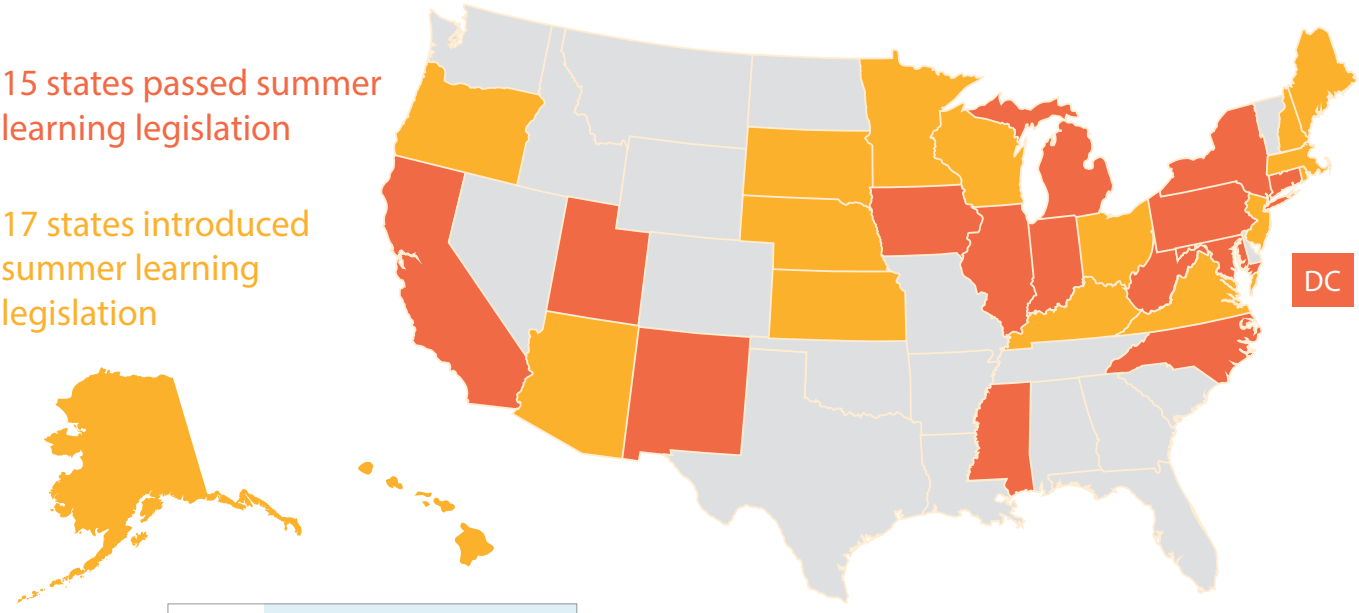
State Policy Summer Snapshot

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



Download the State of Summer Learning 2016 State Policy Snapshot

2017 coming soon

click to download

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

click to download

NATIONAL SUMMER LEARNING DAY
JULY 12, 2018

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

NATIONAL SUMMER LEARNING DAY
JULY 12, 2018

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.
Start posting your events this coming March.

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

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

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

SAMPLE TWEETS FOR TWITTER

The summer off season is a time to get better and stronger, not take a break. 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.

#SummerLearning loss is a significant contributor to the #AchievementGap. Find resources at www.summerlearning.org/knowledge-center. #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

click to download

NO KID HUNGRY SOCIAL MEDIA

Download the Summer Meals Outreach Toolkit

click to download

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 municpal leaders have made
policy changes
in suppport of summer learning

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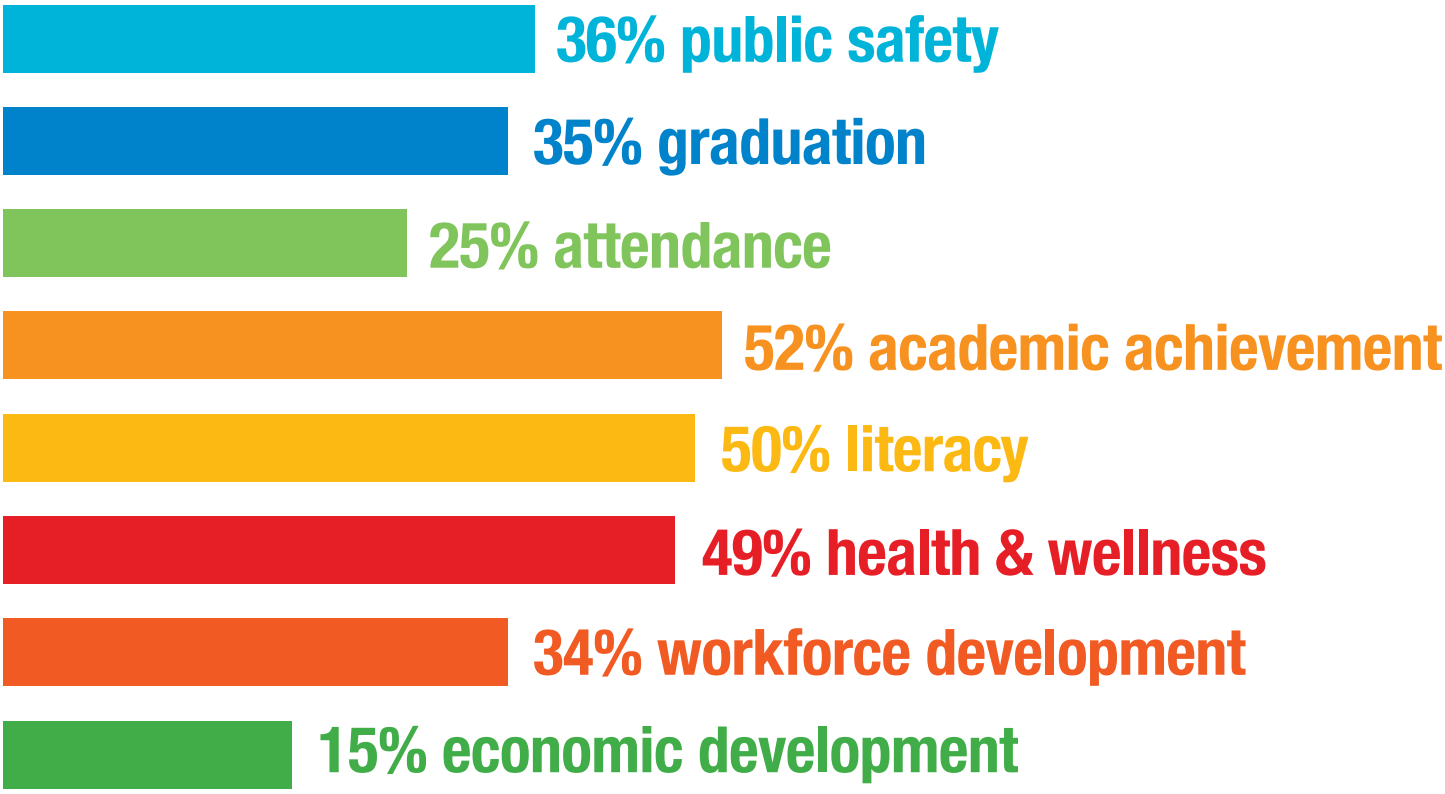
*Note: Survey results are based on responses from 320 municipal leaders in a 2015 NLC survey. Statistics reflect the percentages of "respondents" who participated.

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.

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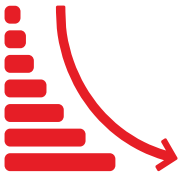
SUMMER BY THE NUMBERS

THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

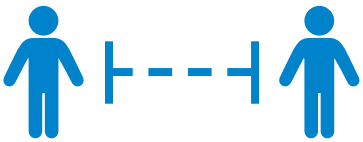
WHAT HAPPENS TO CHILDREN DURING THE SUMMER?



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.[1]

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.[2]
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.[3]

Elementary school students with high levels of attendance (at least five weeks) in voluntary
SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS
experience benefits in math and reading.[4]

9 IN 10 TEACHERS
spend at least three weeks re-teaching lessons at the start of the school year.[5]

Sources: [1] 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 [2] Alexander, K. L., Entwisle D. R., & Olson L. S. (2007a). *Lasting consequences of the summer learning gap.* American Sociological Review, 72, 167 [3] New York Times. (Feb 9, 2012). *Education Gap Grows Between Rich and Poor, Studies Say.*
[4] 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).
[5] Surveyed by the National Summer Learning Association. Retrieved from http://rer.sagepub.com/content/66/3/227.abstract and http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.summerlearning.org/resource/resmgr/press_releases/nsla_summer_release_130528_f.pdf and http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.summerlearning.org/resource/resmgr/Publications/Impact_on_Teaching_and_Learn.pdf

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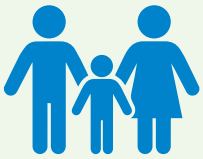
ACCESS TO AND DEMAND FOR SUMMER PROGRAMS



51% OF FAMILIES
not participating in a summer program say they would if one was available to them.[6]

Of families who pay for summer programs, the average weekly reported cost is
$288 PER CHILD
per week[7]

SUMMER HEALTH AND NUTRITION FOR KIDS

In 2016, only **1 IN 7** 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.[8]

Minority children gain weight up to
TWICE AS FAST
during the unstable months of the summer as during the school year.[9]

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.[10]

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.[11, 12]

Sources: [6] 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 [7] Ibid. [8] Sims, K., Anderson, S., FitzSimons, C., Burke, M., & Kapp-Klote, H. (2016). *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. [9] 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. [10] 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. [11] Heller, S. B. (2014). Summer jobs reduce violence among disadvantaged youth. *Science, 346* (6214), 1219-1223. [12] 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.

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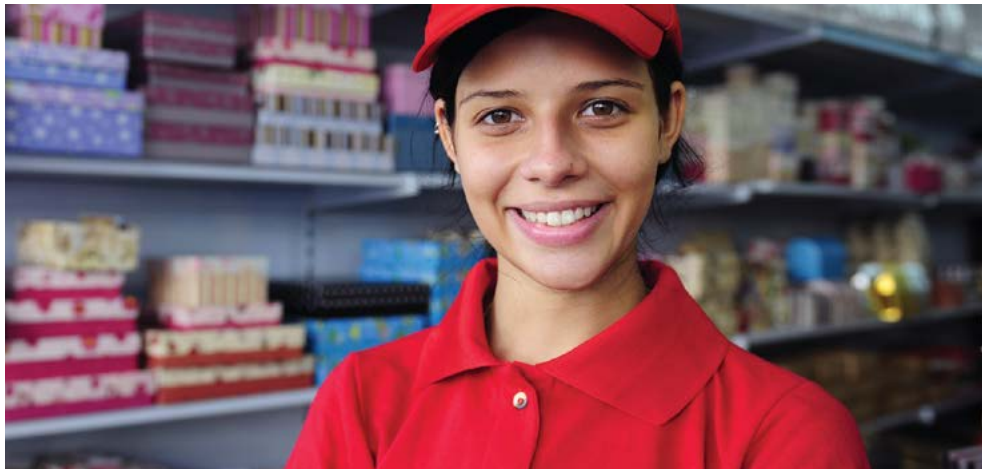

research in brief >

Summer Youth Employment Programs Offer More than Just a Summer Job

RESEARCHERS

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

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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.

>

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Download NSLA's Summer Youth Employment Brief

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#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 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

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**!

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#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.

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.

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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.

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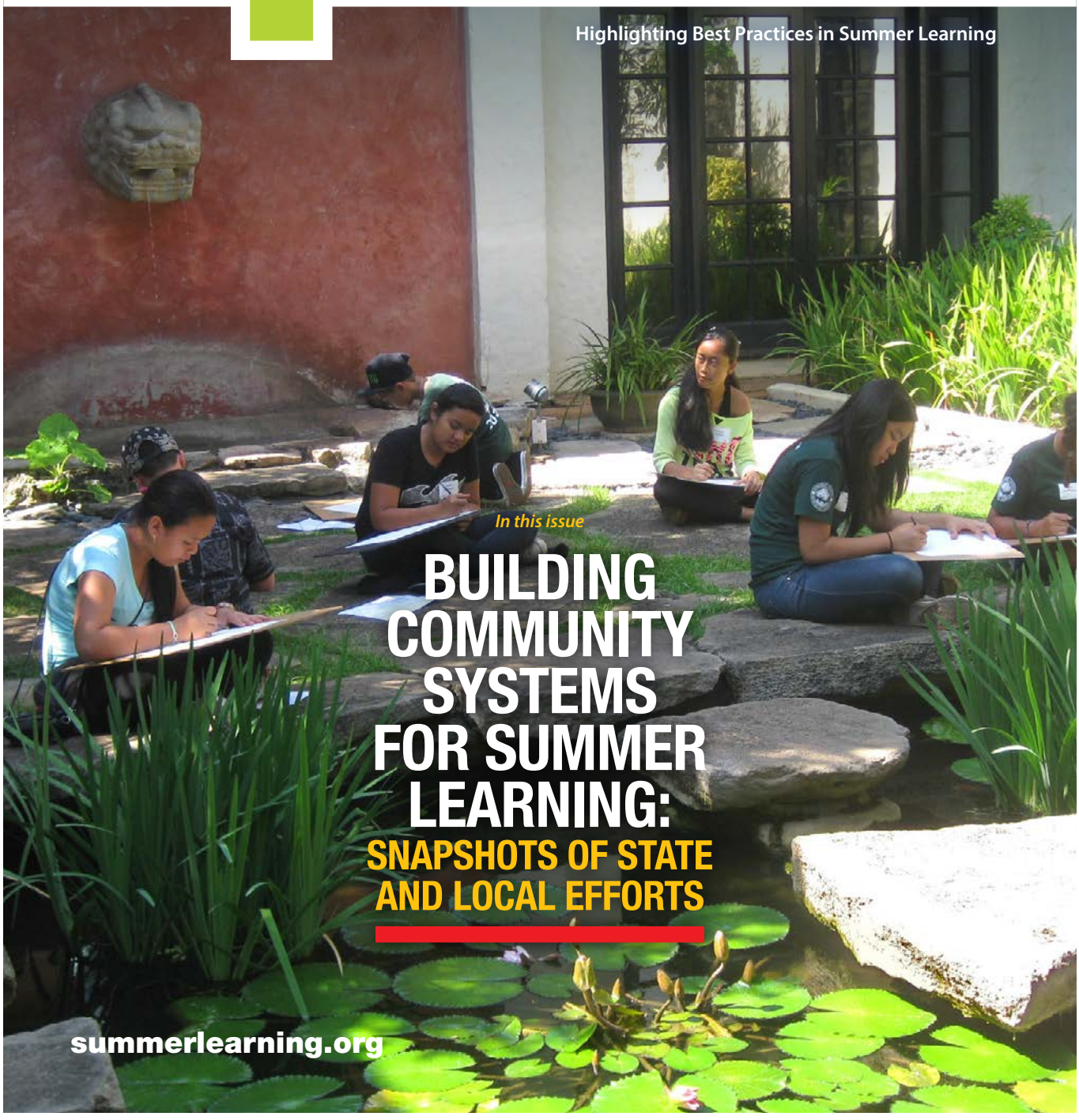
NATIONAL SUMMER LEARNING ASSOCIATION

spark!

No. 1

Highlighting Best Practices in Summer Learning



In this issue

BUILDING COMMUNITY SYSTEMS FOR SUMMER LEARNING:

SNAPSHOTS OF STATE AND LOCAL EFFORTS

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View the first issue of NSLA's Spark! Magazine

NATIONAL SUMMER LEARNING ASSOCIATION

spark!

No.2

Highlighting Best Practices in Summer Learning

In this issue:

CREATING A SUMMER OPPORTUNITY PORTFOLIO

summerlearning.org

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View the second issue of NSLA's Spark! Magazine

nsla smarter summers. brighter futures.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL SUMMER LEARNING ASSOCIATION

The National Summer Learning Association is the only national nonprofit exclusively focused on closing the achievement gap by increasing access to high-quality summer learning opportunities. NSLA recognizes and disseminates what works, offers expertise and support for programs and communities, and advocates for summer learning as a solution for equity and excellence in education. NSLA's work is driven by the belief that all children and youth deserve high-quality summer learning experiences that will help them succeed in college, career, and life.

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