INTRODUCTION
Summer vacation is in full swing, and is a great time for your kids to relax and have fun. You may have some last minute places to go or people to see this month before getting back in the routine of school. Just because your kids are on break from school doesn't mean they need to be on break from learning. Whatever you may be doing this summer, it is important to find those teachable moments in everyday life to make sure your kids’ brains stay active.

LEARNING ON SUMMER TRIPS
July and August are some of the busiest times to travel. Because kids are out of school and the weather is nice, summer is a popular time for families to go places. Whether you are traveling to visit other family members, see some local sites you haven't visited, or to just relax, take this time to share new knowledge with your kids. Research shows that people are more eager to learn when they experience it first-hand. Since learning also happens outside the walls of a classroom make your trips this summer count. Something as simple as a trip to the post office, can show your kids how mail moves from one place to another. Or talk about the ocean if you are at the coast. If you are traveling a further distance, even the ride there can be a learning experience! Check out some ways to encourage learning while traveling.

This series of newsletters is inspired and created just for parents. If you have suggestions, comments or ideas for future newsletters please share on our Facebook (Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative) or Twitter page (@OPECParentingEd).

Play on the Go!

Fun ways to learn while in a car, bus, train, or plane
- Look around and describe what you see outside. Read out loud the signs that you pass.
- Ask questions about safety and what different signs mean.
- Look at a map together and talk about where you are and where you are going. If you are on a bus or train see if your child can pick the right line to take.
- Count the number of stops you make.
- Tell your child a story of one of your trips, for example, "When I was your age I took the bus to the zoo, and I had fun doing..."
- Play a game like "I spy."

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SUMMER LEARNING LOSS: What is it, and How to Prevent it

Learning is a skill, and like all skills, you need practice in order to improve. When kids do not use what they learned in school over the summer they can forget it, and will have to be retaught in the fall when they return to school. Often teachers spend several weeks trying to catch kids up to where they were before summer break started. Studies have found that most children lose about two months worth of knowledge over the summer. But the good news is research shows that parents who are active in their kids' education not only help their kids learn, but can also prevent loss over the summer. Areas of greatest concern are reading and math. As parents, try to find ways to incorporate reading and math into everyday tasks. At the grocery store, have your kid read the shopping list and count out items. Also, setting aside 15-30 minutes a day to work with your kids can greatly help ease their return to school. Not only will this support your kids' ability to learn and practice skills they need, it will also strengthen the bond between you and your kids by spending quality time together! Check out some sites below for more information on summer learning loss and parents' role in education.

- **National Summer Learning Association** - Dedicated to closing the achievement gap through high-quality summer learning. http://www.summerlearning.org/
- **Delaware State Education Association** - Preventing Summer Learning Loss. http://www.dsea.org/content/preventing-summer-learning-loss

**FUN WITH YOUR KIDS**

Create an ABC Nature Book!

Get the kids out of the house this summer and go on a nature walk. Have your kids collect items they find for each letter of the alphabet. After your walk, glue the items onto paper and write what they are.

**REFERENCES**

- Scarce, Rk, "Field Trips as short-Term Experimental Education" Teaching Sociology 25, no. 3 (1997): 219-226
- “ABC Nature Book” by Mary Anne Edwards as part of www.education.com

**Find your local parenting resources at:** http://orparenting.org/

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