



According to summerlearning.org, research shows that students score lower on tests at the end of summer vacation than they do on the same tests at the beginning. Most students lose about two months of grade level equivalency in math over the summer, and low-income students typically fall behind in reading achievement. Parents tend to agree that summer is a difficult time to find productive learning activities, but there are many easy ways to keep kids learning and close the achievement gap.

Five Summer Learning Tips for Parents

- 1 Dust off the library card.** Reading is the best and often cheapest way to keep kids' minds from going soft. Whether fiction or nonfiction, poetry or prose, magazines or newspapers, reading is reading. A great way to keep students reading throughout the summer is to designate a specific, preferably quiet, time of day, like after breakfast or before bed. Both the Houston and Harris County public libraries have reward systems for summer learning, so get your young one signed up early!
- 2 Hit the "off" button.** Kids nowadays love their electronic devices, but with no studies to pull them away from their screens, kids are in danger of spending an unhealthy amount of summertime barely lifting a thumb. While a little bit of TV or tablet time is fine, it should be limited. Otherwise, kids may find little motivation to get much-needed exercise or do other summer learning activities.
- 3 Get creative.** Painting, drawing, constructing—these are the types of things kids love to do when they're at school, so why not encourage them to do the same at home? Craft and DIY ideas appear every day on websites like Pinterest and YouTube. Whether it's small-scale, like making Origami cranes out of scrap paper, or large-scale, like repainting the kitchen, kids learn by doing.
- 4 Leave the house.** It's common for children to gain weight in the summer months because they lose set exercise times when school is not in session. The best way to prevent unhealthy weight gain is to stay active. Going to a park or riding a bike may not sound like "summer learning," but science shows that healthy bodies and healthy minds are linked. If your kids are not outdoorsy, there are still ways to keep them up and moving. You can take them to museums, for example, which often have exhibits geared towards kids. And in Houston, most museums offer free admission on Thursdays.
- 5 Don't forget two plus two.** Remember those two lost months of grade level equivalency? Math over the summer is the only way to take that number back down to zero. Keeping kids' STEM brains in gear doesn't have to be painful. Measuring flour and sugar for baking recipes is one way; calculating the grocery bill is another. If nothing else, flash cards or free online worksheets may be the simplest way to make math a part of June, July and August. And don't underestimate the value of science! Kids love experiments—help them create their own and measure their results.

Summer Learning Resources for Houston-area parents

Aim for the Stars - Houston Public Library sponsors this summer reading program to encourage reading or listening to books from June 1 to August 1. Children and families can earn rewards such as museum tickets, food coupons, sport tickets and even bikes! Special events and free lunch for children up to 18 are offered at local branches. Visit www.houstonpubliclibrary.org/summer for more details.



Harris County Public Library summer reading program kicks off on June 6 and includes activities, prizes and access to free lunch for children at 13 branches. Visit www.hcpl.net for information.

Online Resources for STEM Learning

- The Museum of Science and Industry (www.msichicago.org/experiment/hands-on-science/)
- Exploratorium (www.exploratorium.edu/explore)

All kids need safe, supervised environments throughout the day with opportunities to help prepare them for the future. To learn more about CASE for Kids, call 713-696-1331 or visit www.afterschoolzone.org

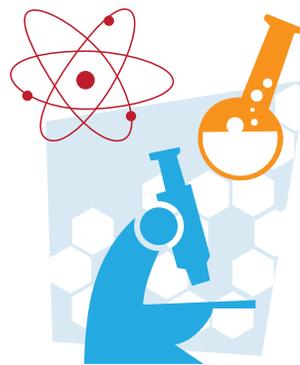


Free Museum Thursdays



Children's Museum Of Houston

Children's Museum of Houston is free 5-8 p.m.



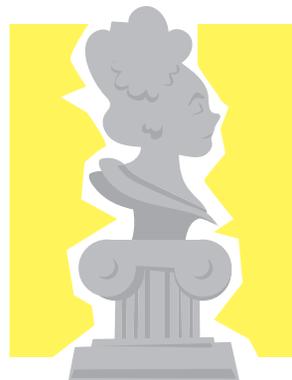
The Health Museum

Health Museum is free 2-7 p.m.



theHoustonMuseumofnaturalscience

Houston Museum of Natural Science's main exhibits are free 3-6 p.m.



The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Museum of Fine Arts is free 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.