

PROVEN  
PARENTING  
PRACTICES

Good nutrition helps  
kids learn

Physical activity helps  
kids learn

Sleep helps kids learn

Routines at home help  
kids learn

Learning at home  
helps kids learn at  
school

Setting limits with  
love helps kids learn  
at school

Community programs  
help kids learn at  
school

# Dare to Excel: Summer Success

MAY 2011

DES MOINES COMMUNITY

## Summer Learning Loss: Fact or Fiction?

Fact! While some children are able to maintain what they learned during the summer months, research shows that the time away from school over the summer has a negative impact children's academic progress.



Learning loss is most common in the areas of math, language and spelling. Moreover, some children can take weeks or even months to recover from summer learning loss when they go back to school in the fall.

It is important to know that your child's intelligence does not influence their ability to lose learned information. Learning loss is natural, but there are things that you can do as a parent to limit summer learning loss.

**Some children can lose up to 1 or 2 months of their previous grade level learning over the summer.**



**Tips for parents to help children prevent summer learning loss.**

- Encourage your children to read for fun and see if your local library has summer reading programs.
- Read to and with your children. Show them by example that reading is important by reading yourself.
- Get your children involved in summer programs that provide opportunities in several areas of learning such as combining academic activities, outdoor recreation, crafts and field trips.
- Look for places where you can practice your child's math skills such as when you are grocery shopping or calculating your gas mileage.

## Summer Camp Scholarship Opportunities



**Camp can be a great time for kids, but it can also be a financial burden on some families. Here are some opportunities to give all kids a chance to go to camp.**



**YMCA of Greater Des Moines** provides many activities to the community such as summer camp experiences for kids. They have several branches throughout the Des Moines Metro area. To find the branch nearest you call (515)282-9622 or email [metro@dmymca.org](mailto:metro@dmymca.org) To apply for financial assistance visit the website: [http://www.dmymca.org/support/pdf/financial\\_assist.pdf](http://www.dmymca.org/support/pdf/financial_assist.pdf)



**Campfire USA** prides itself on building caring, confident youth and future leaders. It strives to make its programs available to as many children and families as possible. The deadline for Day Camp is June 18<sup>th</sup>. Please visit this website for financial assistance information and application process: [http://www.campfire-usa.org/camp/Campership\\_Info.htm](http://www.campfire-usa.org/camp/Campership_Info.htm)

## Summer Activities & Summer Snack Ideas



During summer months, keep snacks on hand that children can grab and eat.



Allowing children to start making decisions for themselves, will help them to become successful adults.



For More Information:  
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- **Plant** a small vegetable or flower garden. If you do not have room in your yard, you can plant one in a large wooden box with some potting soil.
- **Spend time** at a local park with your family.
- **Enroll** your children in summer day or week long camps.
- **Carrots or Celery** with ranch dip or peanut butter makes for a good treat.
- **Peanuts and Raisins** make a quick and easy snack to make and store ahead of time.
- **Apple slices with Peanut Butter** has fruit and protein to help keep kids full until dinner time.
- **Grapes with Cheese Cubes** or just cheese sticks are great to have around and provide quality nutrition.

## Summertime is Not the Time to Drop Routines

### Research Shows:

- Having a predictable schedule that kids can count on makes them feel safe and secure.
- Routines tell children that their needs are being met and will be met in the future.
- Routines give children a chance to feel successful because they know what is going to happen next. As a result, it encourages a strong sense of self-control and self-esteem.
- Keeping a regular routine during the summer will help children feel less anxiety and stress, and show fewer acting out behaviors.

### What Parents Can Do:

- **Keep regular bedtime routines.** This can help kids fall asleep faster and be up less at night.
- **Have sit down meals** with your family at least 4 times per week to provide opportunity to maintain strong relationships and stay connected over the summer.
- **Maintain a chore schedule.** This will promote and teach cooperation and responsibility. It will also help them understand the importance of fairness and commitment as they age.

## Growing Up; When is it OK to Start Letting Go?

### It is important children slowly begin to gain more responsibility as they grow older

- When youth are able to start contributing to family decisions and rules, they are more likely to display the behaviors their parents want from them.
- Children need to be able to do more and more things for themselves. When parents do not allow their children to start solving problems on their own, it can make it hard for them to become responsible when they grow up.
- The goal for children is for them to learn how to become self-sufficient in order to prepare for adulthood.
- If parents are too controlling, children can have trouble developing decision making skills. Children might react in negative ways such as being rebellious, use drugs or alcohol, or behave in other dangerous ways.
- For more information go to <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/homefamily/parenting/teens.htm>.

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