



Pointers for Parents

Keeping Young Minds Sharp During School Breaks

(NAPSA)—It's a smart idea to keep kids learning during school vacations.

Studies in the *Journal of Educational Research* report that without any academic stimulation over long breaks, children could lose approximately 2.6 months of math-computation knowledge that is important when they return to the classroom.

Parents looking to prevent summer learning loss can incorporate learning into their families' favorite activities.

"The continued loss of knowledge over long breaks leads to knowledge gaps, which can be detrimental to the child's future. But personalizing your child's learning experiences over vacations fosters a passion for learning and keeps his or her mind sharp," says Dr. Mary Mokris, education specialist for Kumon Math and Reading Centers.

Dr. Mokris suggests these tips based on a recent survey by Ipsos Public Affairs for Kumon Math and Reading Centers:

- **Taking Trips**—Travel offers an interactive and experiential way of learning. Before departing, encourage children to research the weather forecast and the local attractions as well as calculate the miles to the destination. Invite older children to plan an activity and propose it to the family. Just remember that day trips to a park, zoo or museum don't have to cost a lot.

- **Camping**—Children can learn about the environment and survival skills by reading books about camping and researching the camping site. Encourage them to map out a hiking tour with specific natural attractions of flora and fauna and calculate the total distance of the hike.

- **Going to the Beach**—The tides at the beach offer a great les-



A number of favorite vacation activities can help keep kids thinking.

son in science and math. Eager surfers can research the tidal table to find the best waves. You can also take a walk on the beach and collect shells. Talk about where the shells come from and afterwards help your children research their sea treasures.

- **Swimming**—For older children, combine basic math skills with everyday application by having children measure or estimate how far they can swim, whether it is across the pool or to a point in their favorite lake. Then ask them how many times they would have to swim that distance to swim a mile.

- **Fishing**—Involve children in researching locations, bait and fish types so everyone is prepared. Engage their imagination with questions about the size and color of the fish. During the trip, encourage children to measure the fish or count their gills.

Parents who want to help their children maintain or increase their academic skills can enroll them in programs such as Kumon. Information for both young students and more advanced students is available at www.kumon.com or by calling 800-ABC-MATH.