

Education Is Never Out Of Season

Kids Don't Need A Vacation From Learning

(NAPSA)—When school is out, many parents look for fun and educational activities for their children.

They can find both through the American Federation of Teachers' (AFT) online interactive Summer Learning Calendar, at www.aft.org/calendar. This year's calendar is all about food. It features activities and games for kids from age 6 to 12, although younger children can participate with their parents' help.

"Many students lose ground academically over the summer," said Sandra Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers. "Learning shouldn't stop at the end of the school day, school week or school year."

The calendar is full of fun facts about food such as what vitamins are in strawberries and how the tongue tastes foods. For budding chefs, there are lots of kid-friendly recipes. Using the food calculator, kids can see how long it would take to burn off the calories from their favorite foods. It even teaches children how to go grocery shopping and combine different kinds of food to make healthy meals.

Want to go pick blueberries or participate in a corn-on-the-cob eating contest? The Summer Learning Calendar lists lots of family-friendly events, as well as Web site links to farms, fairs and other food-related venues.

For years, teachers have given the Summer Learning Calendar to their students to keep their minds and imaginations sharp. "I don't want my students to take a vaca-



When school is out, you can help keep your youngsters learning. For example, teach them how to plan and care for a garden.

tion from learning just because it's summer," said Deborah Rawls, elementary school teacher in Jackson, Mississippi.

Parents should stay involved in their youngsters' learning year-round, but it is especially important in the summer. Research shows students experience significant learning loss during the summer which can be countered through constructive learning activities. What can you do together this summer that's educational and enjoyable?

- Make weekly visits to the library and participate in special summer reading programs.
- Take books wherever you go so your child can read while you wait in traffic or in line.
- Set a good example. Let your youngsters see you learning from the world around you, reading the paper and enjoying books.

For more activities, you can also call the AFT's toll-free Learning Line, at 800-242-5465, which features a new activity every week.