



Pointers For Parents

School's Out, But Learning Goes On(line) With The Internet

(NAPSA)—For many school-children, summertime means days of fun in the sun, family road trips and visits from the ice cream truck. But many parents don't realize that summer can also mean learning loss. Studies have found that nearly all children lose knowledge over the summer. In fact, when children head back to school in the fall, they are one month behind academically. This loss adds up year after year, especially for students from low-income families who may not have access to summertime enrichment opportunities, like camp, tutoring, and regular trips to the library. This can significantly impact a child's success in school and in life over the long term.

Overcoming Learning Loss

One way families can overcome summer learning loss is to make sure they have in-home Internet access for their children. The Internet provides access to an infinite number of online resources for all ages and across all subjects.

While it can be easy to slip out of the routine of learning when school is out, it's possible to keep kids engaged over the summer with online educational games, research on topics of interest, downloadable programs to brush up on math and grammar, or simply by reading a book online.

Unfortunately, about 30 percent of Americans, many of whom live below the poverty line, do not have



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Internet access in their homes. This is particularly concerning because children from low-income families have been found to have a steeper rate of learning loss over the summer, specifically in the area of reading. To help connect these families to the Internet, Comcast is offering a program it calls Internet Essentials.

Closing The Digital Divide

Described as the nation's largest, most comprehensive broadband adoption initiative, it's designed to help close the digital divide between those who have Internet in their home and those who don't.

The program provides families who have at least one child eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program with Internet for \$9.95 a month; the option to buy a computer for less than \$150; and access to digital literacy training.

With a service such as this, students and families can connect to free, online educational tools over the summer, including some of these top suggestions from Parenting.com:

- PBS Kids (pbskids.org)—Find learning games associated with your favorite PBS Kids characters, including Clifford, Curious George, The Cat in the Hat and more.

- National Geographic Kids (kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids)—Keep kids engaged with interactive and educational games, photos, video and information.

- FunBrain (www.funbrain.com)—Math baseball and Mad Libs Junior for kids of all age levels.

- Spatulatta (www.spatulatta.com)—Find kid-friendly cooking tips and recipes with lots of helpful videos.

- NGA Kids (www.nga.gov/kids/kids.htm)—Explore art adventures with help from the National Gallery of Art.

Programs such as Internet Essentials have the capacity to change the lives of students for the better by providing opportunities for learning when school is not in session.

To learn more, visit www.InternetEssentials.com, or InternetBasico.com for Spanish. Educators or third parties can visit InternetEssentials.com/Partner. Parents looking to enroll students can call 1-855-846-8376, or for Spanish, 1-855-765-6995.