

THE NEED

Two-thirds of the ninth grade reading achievement gap can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities. The summer learning shortfall, often called the summer slump, experienced by low-income children over the elementary grades has consequences that reverberate all throughout children's schooling and can impact whether a child ultimately earns a high school diploma and continues on to college (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007a). In addition, children gain BMI nearly twice as fast during the summer as during the school year (von Hippel, Powell, Downey & Rowland, 2007).

PROGRAM GOALS

SummerBoost[™] Camp expands upon our school-year programming. The following goals reflect the breadth of SummerBoost[™] Camp:

- Reduce summer loss in reading and math
- Increase in aerobic capacity
- Increase in knowledge and positive attitudes about healthy eating
- Development of community involvement and service skills

PROGRAM DESIGN

A strong summer program creates a culture that is different from the school year and promotes a sense of community. A full day of integrated, themed programming builds skills, knowledge and behaviors that promote academic success and healthy development. Activities reflect a blend of academic and social/emotional development strategies throughout the entire day. Research on summer learning loss from the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) strongly suggests that children need a minimum of 150 hours of summer programming. Save the Children's program runs 6 hours a day, 5 days a week for 6 weeks. Adults working with children are called coaches to foster the unique summer atmosphere and to differentiate from the regular school year program. In addition, NSLA recommends that the program be open to all children, not just those who are currently below grade level.

Morning Activities

In the mornings, after eating a healthy breakfast and participating in opening exercises, children are involved with engaging, hands-on activities aimed at maintaining/increasing academic achievement. The coach to child ratio is 1:10. Children should, ideally, be in grade-alike groups and rotate through 30 minute sessions, with five minute transition breaks that address:

- Guided independent reading practice (GIRP)
- Read-aloud/fluency/vocabulary activities (RAvFL)
- Mathematics (ETA: Hands-On Standards[®]/Scholastic: Do The Math[®]/Fact Fluency & Math Games)
- Healthy Choices – Physical Activity

Before the children have lunch, they also participate in team-building exercises.

The GIRP, RAvFL and Healthy Choices – Physical Activity sessions will occur in the same format as they do in our afterschool program. Math activities are implemented using either ETA: Hands-

On-Standards (K) /Scholastic: Do the Math (1-5), a Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Company within one rotation. The second rotation for math will provide children time to be engaged with math games and resources to practice fact fluency. Each grade level kit provides a comprehensive summer program with powerful review of the grade level concepts and skills identified by NCTM.

Afternoon Activities

In the afternoons, the coach to child ratio remains 1:10 but children work with several coaches in larger groups that combine grade and interest levels. After eating a healthy lunch, all children are involved in four activities, each lasting three weeks: STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), Healthy Choices - Nutrition, one or more community service projects and enrichment activities.

STEM provides hands-on activities working with simple robotics by LEGO®. Children build LEGO® models featuring working motors and sensors; program their models; and explore a series of cross-curricular, theme-based activities while developing their skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, as well as language and literacy. Children may also participate in STEM in Action modules by ETA Hands2Mind along with other hands-on experiments and activities.

Healthy Choices - Nutrition is organized into seven themes related to physical activity, nutrition and screen-time reduction. The lessons incorporate a variety of teaching strategies including physical activity-based activities, individual practice, cooperative learning groups, large-group discussions, educational games, goal setting and hands-on snack preparation.

Enrichment consists of activities determined by each site, based on each site's community and staff strengths and could address sports, dance, yoga, music, theater, crafts such as knitting, etc. In addition, each site identifies one or more community learning service projects such as planting a vegetable garden or growing flowers to beautify an area of the school. Some sites support senior citizens by sharing information about nutrition. Others write and publish books to establish home libraries for children entering kindergarten.

All of these activities involve hands-on, kinesthetic or project-based components that allow children to engage in in-depth investigations with objects, materials, phenomena and ideas and draw meaning and understanding from those experiences. These activities are designed to expose children to something new - a place, idea, material, skill or talent. Most activities promote collaborative learning and interdependence among children. Successful completion requires children to work together to produce a product or display of their shared learning.

On Fridays, staff is encouraged to invite local speakers, go on field trips or do other activities that children would enjoy and learn from. These special activities can provide incentives for attendance and good behavior. Several culminating events at the end of the program reward children for their success and give all children an opportunity to showcase their work or new skills to invited parents and guests.

EVALUATION

The following tools will be part of SummerBoost™ Camp evaluation:

- STAR Reading® and STAR Early Literacy™ Enterprise pre- and post-assessments for reading
- ETA: Hands-On Standards®/Scholastic: Do The Math®