



SUMMER MATTERS

Making Summer Matter for Every Child, Because Learning Happens Year-Round

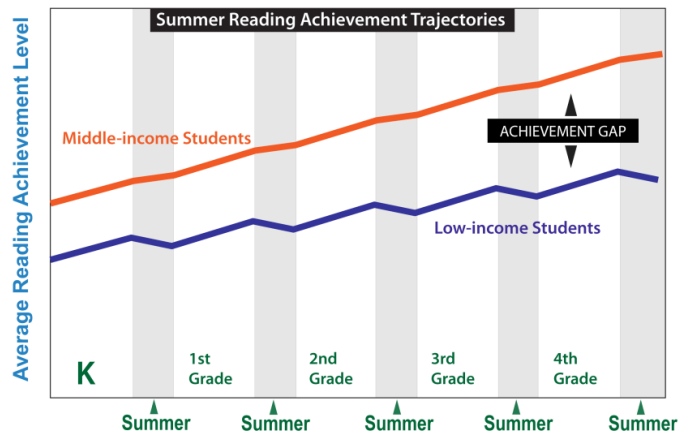
A child's need for meaningful learning and enrichment does not end in June when the school doors close for summer vacation. All children need to be engaged and actively learning during the summer months in order to stay on track when they return to school in the fall. They also need to remain physically active and eat a balanced diet during the summer months. Without ongoing summer opportunities to reinforce and learn skills, children—especially children in low-income communities—fall behind dramatically in many areas of academic achievement and risk negative health impacts from too much sedentary time indoors and poor nutrition.

THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF SUMMER LEARNING LOSS

Summer learning loss is the result of an absence of summer learning. Research shows summer learning loss to be measurable and quantifiable, and the cumulative effects of summer learning loss contribute directly to a widening of the achievement gap between low-income and middle-income students.

THE CRITICAL NEED FOR SUMMER LEARNING IN CALIFORNIA

- Research shows low-income children are nearly three grade equivalents behind their more affluent peers in reading by the end of the fifth grade due to summer learning loss (National Summer Learning Association (NSLA), 2009).
- Unequal summer learning opportunities during elementary school years are responsible for about two-thirds of the ninth-grade achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth. As a result, low-income youth are less likely to graduate from high school or enter college (Alexander et al., 2007).
- Most children gain weight more rapidly when they are out of school for summer, with summer weight gain especially pronounced among African American and Hispanic children (von Hippel et al., 2007). In California, nearly a third of 5th graders are overweight or obese (kidsdata.org; California Department of Education, 2009)



THE SUMMER MATTERS VISION

The Summer Matters vision is that all young people in California have access to high quality summer learning opportunities that support their year-round learning and well-being. Summer Matters' focus is on expanding access to high quality summer learning opportunities for K-12 students with the greatest need and fewest resources. Summer Matters' mission is to promote high quality summer learning programs that provide intentional, engaging, and relevant activities to prevent summer learning loss and support healthy behaviors during summertime.

Specifically, the Summer Matters campaign works to create more programs that include the core elements of high quality summer learning. A high quality summer learning program:

- Broadens children's horizons – by exposing them to new adventures, skills and ideas.
- Includes a wide variety of activities – such as reading, writing, math, science, arts and public service projects – in ways that are fun and engaging.
- Helps children build skills – by helping them improve at doing something they enjoy and care about.
- Fosters cooperative learning – through team projects and group activities.
- Promotes healthy habits – by providing nutritious food, physical recreation and outdoor activities.
- Lasts at least one month – giving children enough time to benefit from their summer learning experiences.



SUMMER MATTERS CAMPAIGN — INFORMING POLICY AND PRACTICE

Chaired by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, Summer Matters is the first-ever statewide campaign focused on creating and expanding access to high quality summer learning opportunities for all California students. Our work is based on a vision of summer learning that boosts student achievement through fun, experiential and relevant programming that includes a mix of academics and enrichment, and keeps children physically active and well-fed throughout the summer. Summer Matters' strategy builds on California's statewide system of more than 4,000 publicly-funded after-school programs. Since launching in 2009, Summer Matters has been engaged in:

- **Developing and advocating for legislation to increase public funding for summer programming** — Senate Bill 798, passed in 2010, allocates a portion of any increase in federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) funds to summer programming. In 2011, Senate Bill 429 was signed into law to provide more flexibility in the use of 21st CCLC and After School Education Safety Program funding for summer programming, including the option to provide more hours of programming per day.
- **Piloting innovative summer programming and technical assistance** in a growing number of low-income communities to serve as high-quality models for future replication. In 2012, these programs reached more than 6,000 students in Concord, Fresno, Gilroy, Glenn County, Los Angeles, Oakland, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Francisco, Santa Ana, and Whittier. Program evaluations document significant positive results in grade level vocabulary, program quality and parent satisfaction.
- **Raising public awareness** about the devastating effects of summer learning loss and the beneficial impact of high quality summer learning programs through communications strategies that have generated print, radio, TV and online coverage of summer learning programs across California.
- **Growing the Summer Matters coalition** and generating increasing momentum and support for expanding access to summer learning opportunities among education, elected, business, civic and philanthropic leaders, together with parents, educators, child advocates and program providers across the state.
- **Evaluating the effectiveness of high quality summer learning programs** that combine enrichment, recreation and academics and rely on partnerships between schools and community-based organizations to deliver their programs.

Summer Matters is an initiative of the Partnership for Children & Youth, a California-based non-profit that supports communities, schools and government agencies to work together as unified systems to ensure all children have the learning, health and social supports they need to succeed in school and life.