



# FAMILY GUIDE

Tips, insights and resources from these leading education and youth-serving organizations to help you harness the power of summer learning.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA



national summer learning association



american camp association  
enriching lives through the camp experience



# NATIONAL SUMMER LEARNING WEEK

**JULY 12 - 16, 2021 VISIT [DISCOVERSUMMER.ORG](https://www.discoversummer.org) TO DISCOVER FUN WAYS TO CELEBRATE WITH YOUR CHILD!**

## WHY SUMMERS MATTER

*The brain's capacity to learn is astonishing. Summer learning isn't about just adding more things to your already full to-do list... Summers are a particularly good opportunity to take into account our children's interests and likes -- building activities around what our children enjoy or want to explore is essential to creating positive summer learning experiences.*

Excerpt from Summers Matter; Mathew Boulay, PhD - Founder, National Summer Learning Association

## DISCOVER SUMMER.

Summer has arrived. The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) invites you to visit [DiscoverSummer.org](https://www.discoversummer.org)— a new online destination, developed in response to COVID-19, to help families discover affordable summer programs, summer meals, parent tips and a

sea of resources to keep kids learning, earning, safe and healthy this season.

This summer will be more important than ever in helping our nation's young people recharge, reconnect with peers, and rediscover the joy of learning. As the nation slowly emerges from this pandemic, we know from recent research that parents just want their kids to be kids this summer, while also finding ways to give them a strong start to the school year ahead. Go ahead... discover the joy of nature, the arts, STEM, or reading and math (skills that children may lose ground in each year without practice).

In this Family Guide, you will find helpful tips and information related to summer enrichment and learning from leading education and youth-serving organizations. Visit [DiscoverSummer.org](https://www.discoversummer.org) and explore!



The “**Summer slide**” is what often happens to disadvantaged children during the summer months. They tread water at best or even fall behind, while higher-income children build their skills steadily over the summer months.



Research shows the **high-quality summer programs** can make a difference in stemming learning loss and closing the country's educational and opportunity gaps.



## SUMMER RECHARGE

After the past year, families deserve (and need) a **RE**charge!

From your child finally getting to see friends and loved ones to finding ways to refuel their passions...learning can be at the center. In fact, kids thrive when they feel connected to who they are learning with and what they are learning.

### Here are 3 simple steps to shape your summer learning plan...

#### 1 **RE**view key skills

Before school is out, ask the teacher which skills are most important for your child to work on over the summer. You can also use the [Readiness Check](#) to know how your child is doing with grade level math skills and get connected to fun, easy-to-use summer learning resources to help your child practice these skills every day.

#### 2 **RE**connect with what matters

Who is your child most excited to spend time with? What interests your child? What makes them light up with confidence? Find out and lean into it this summer. This will help keep your child motivated to learn. For example, to build communication skills, invite your child and their friends to do a "write and tell" to share what they missed most about each other.

#### 3 **RE**fect on progress

Share what you notice about your child's progress with tutors, summer program leaders and new teachers in the fall. For example, "My 4th grader needs support with word problems that involve multiplication and division." You are the expert on your child. Teachers need your insights and questions.

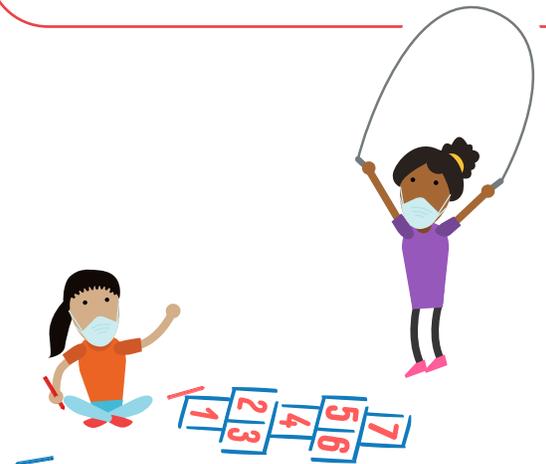
Which **RE**-word captures how you're feeling this summer?

**RE**connect

**RE**cover

**RE**charge

[Check out this family writing activity.](#)



Check out [BeALearningHero.org](https://www.BeALearningHero.org) for more tips and resources.

# EVERY CHILD DESERVES AN AMAZING SUMMER.

The National Summer Learning Association offers these recommendations for identifying a high-quality summer program for your child.

## SAFE

Safe and secure program space with first aid kits, supervision, [COVID-19 safety protocols in place.](#)

[Visit here for questions you should ask your camp director about COVID-19.](#)

Program staff model mutually respectful behavior between their peers and students

Program offers nutritious meals, outdoor time, and physical activity to fuel growing bodies and minds

## MINDFUL

Consistent schedules and positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior

Social and emotional skill development through a variety of team projects, games, and group instruction

Vibrant and dynamic environments to support different modes of learning

## INCLUSIVE

Opportunities to work in teams, engage in informal play, and experiment with new ideas

Community-building rituals, including greetings, cheers, awards, and activities that build spirit and a sense of belonging for every child

Celebrations of and exposure to diverse cultures, ideas, and communities

## LEARNING

Clear learning objectives

Age-appropriate and adaptable curricula and learning materials

A maximum of 15 students per 1 adult during instruction

## ENGAGED

Opportunities for students to grow confident in making decisions and using their voices

Events, field trips, service projects, and guest speakers offered to connect with families and community members

Respectful and regular communications with parents, feedback requests, volunteer roles, and student progress

Look for these positive cues when deciding on a summer program experience for your child.



## COVID-19 AND SUMMER 2021

With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic came many questions from parents/guardians about what camp would look like in summer 2021.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK:

#### 1. What is your camper drop-off/ pickup policy?

Drop-off and pickup might look different this year than it has in years past. To limit exposure, your camp may have implemented a new policy regarding how many people can be at camper drop-off/pickup. Make sure to ask if there have been any changes.

#### 2. Are you changing your staff time-off policies?

Previously, summer camp staff would be able to go off-premises during their time off and between sessions. Ask your camp director if any changes have been made to those policies to help minimize exposure risk.

#### 3. What conversations are you having with your staff around what will be different this summer?

Most camp directors are looking at ways they can reduce exposure this summer, which may include limited group activities, changes to mealtimes, and more.

#### 4. What are some things you aren't doing this summer that you have done in the past?

Some special camp events may not be possible this year due to local restrictions or safety concerns.



This resource of questions and considerations was put together with aid from camp directors across the U.S. to help guide parents in their conversations with camp directors about the upcoming summer.



## EMOTIONAL HEALTH CHECK-INS DURING COVID-19

The top priority of the whole country right now is to stay healthy. And while we recognize that right now physical health is the biggest focus, kid's emotional health is just as important. Try to incorporate these emotional check-ins into your daily schedule of activities. Give them a chance to think, then share their mood. They can choose to explain and elaborate on their feelings, or not.



**INTERNAL WEATHER REPORT:** Ask your children, "If your mood were the weather, what would it be?" For example, if you're angry it could be a thunderstorm, or if you're happy it could be sunny.



**FEELINGS 1-10:** Ask kids, "Rank your mood today on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the worst mood and 10 being the best."



**POP CULTURE:** Ask youth, "If your current mood were a song or movie, what would it be?" For example, if you're having a great day your song could be "Happy" by Pharrell, or if you're grumpy your movie could be "The Grinch."



**HIGHS & LOWS:** Ask youth to think of their "high and low" of the day – this is the best thing that they experienced during the day, and the worst thing that they experienced during the day.



**ROSE, BUD, THORN:** Ask youth to think of their "rose, bud, and thorn" of the day – this is the best thing that happened to them during the day (rose), something they're looking forward to (bud), and the worst thing that happened to them today (thorn).

Ultimately, it's important for children to know that it is OK to feel how they are feeling – everyone experiences a range of emotions every single day. It's normal to feel sad, excited, angry, calm, or nervous every day, multiple times a day. What matters is how youth cope with these feelings, especially during times of uncertainty.

# SUMMER RESOURCES

Summer is a great time of year to enrich and inspire youth and prepare them for the school year ahead. **Click on the resources below to discover the joy of learning in STEM, the outdoors, the arts, career readiness, and academics!**



**Game Builder GARAGE™**

Learn to Make Games from the Minds of Nintendo

This advertisement features a bright yellow background. On the left, a hand is shown interacting with a Nintendo Switch screen that displays a colorful game interface. To the right of the screen, three small, white, blocky robot characters are shown in various poses, some appearing to be in motion. The text 'Game Builder GARAGE™' is prominently displayed at the top in a bold, black font.



american CAMP association

enriching lives through the camp experience

Search for a Camp Near You

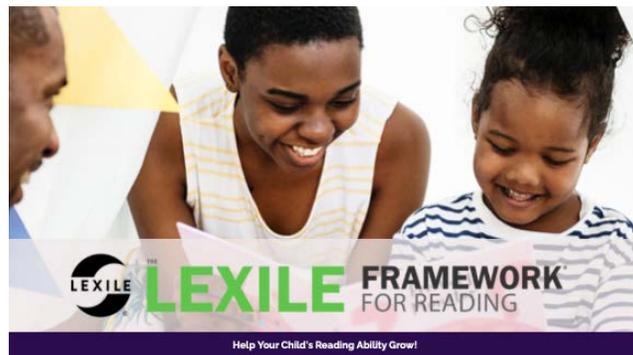
The logo for the American Camp Association is centered on a white background. It features a stylized figure in blue and red, with arms raised in a 'V' shape. To the right of the figure, the words 'american CAMP association' are written in a blue, sans-serif font. Below the logo, the tagline 'enriching lives through the camp experience' is written in a smaller, blue font. At the bottom of the card, the text 'Search for a Camp Near You' is displayed.



MENTOR

Find a Youth Mentor or Become One!

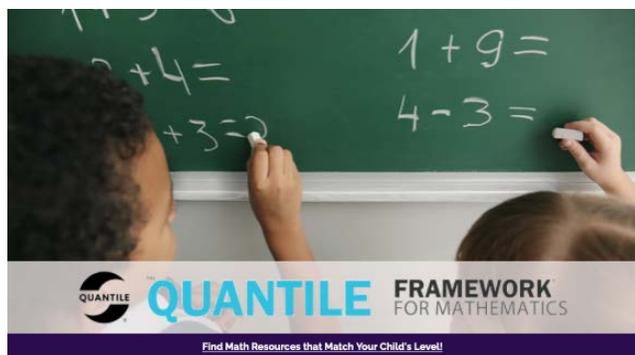
The advertisement shows a group of diverse young people in blue shirts, viewed from above, with their arms raised and hands touching in a circle. The word 'MENTOR' is written in large, white, bold letters across the center of the image. Below the image, the text 'Find a Youth Mentor or Become One!' is written in a smaller font.



LEXILE FRAMEWORK FOR READING

Help Your Child's Reading Ability Grow!

The advertisement features a photograph of a woman and a young girl looking at a book together. The Lexile logo, a black circle with a white 'L', is on the left. The text 'LEXILE FRAMEWORK FOR READING' is in green and black. Below the image, the text 'Help Your Child's Reading Ability Grow!' is written.



QUANTILE FRAMEWORK FOR MATHEMATICS

Find Math Resources that Match Your Child's Level!

The advertisement shows a close-up of a chalkboard with math problems:  $1+9=$ ,  $4-3=$ ,  $2+4=$ , and  $4+3=$ . A hand is seen writing on the board. The Quantile logo, a black circle with a white 'Q', is on the left. The text 'QUANTILE FRAMEWORK FOR MATHEMATICS' is in blue and black. Below the image, the text 'Find Math Resources that Match Your Child's Level!' is written.



LEARNING HEROES

SUMMER RECHARGE

Recharge This Summer

The advertisement is an illustration of a man sitting at a desk with a laptop, reading a book. A woman is sitting on the floor next to him, also reading. The background is blue with a grid pattern. The text 'LEARNING HEROES' is in a red and blue box on the left. 'SUMMER RECHARGE' is in large, yellow letters at the top. Below the illustration, the text 'Recharge This Summer' is written.



YJC YOUTH JOBS CONNECT

YouthxJobs

Find a Summer Job or Internship

The advertisement has a solid blue background. At the top left, 'YJC' is written in large white letters, with 'YOUTH JOBS CONNECT' in smaller white letters below it. In the center, 'YouthxJobs' is written in large white letters. At the bottom, the text 'Find a Summer Job or Internship' is written in a smaller font.



KEEPING YOU CONNECTED To What Matters Most

EDUCATION

The advertisement shows a group of students in a classroom, some wearing face masks, working at desks. A globe icon is on the left. The text 'KEEPING YOU CONNECTED To What Matters Most' is written in white over the image. Below the image, the word 'EDUCATION' is written in a smaller font.

**FRIENDS,**

**FREE MEALS**

**AND**

**FUN!**



**TEXT 'FOOD' TO 877-877**

**TO FIND FREE SUMMER MEALS NEAR YOU**

Kids and teens in your neighborhood can get a healthy, delicious meal and have a fun and safe place to hang out with their friends.

Call 1-866-3HUNGRY to learn more.  
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.





### **Creating Smarter Summers, Brighter Futures**

The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) is a national, non-profit organization whose mission is to convince, connect, and equip program providers, education leaders, families, and communities to deliver high-quality summer learning opportunities to our nation's children and youth in order to help close the achievement and opportunity gap and support healthy development.