



NEWS RELEASE
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Summer Learning Programs Can Help Low-Income Students Succeed in School

***New Issue Brief Provides Data, Case Studies Highlighting the Many Ways
Summer Programs Inspire Learning, Keep Children Safe and Healthy***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A significant body of research shows that children lose much of the information they learned in school over the summer, but new studies reveal that summer programs can not only stem those losses, but even help improve students' grades the following school year. A new Issue Brief from the Afterschool Alliance highlights the ways summer programs help students academically, and keep them healthy and safe during the months when schools are closed. It also identifies several programs that do this work especially well.

Summer: A Season When Learning is Essential notes that studies dating back to 1906 find that children score lower on standardized tests at the end of summer than they do in the spring when schools close. Summer programs that address the needs of the whole child seem to be most successful at boosting academic achievement. They also motivate students to want to learn, and help them develop new skills and talents.

In more and more communities, the afterschool programs that operate during the school year are morphing into summer programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give working parents confidence that their children are safe and supervised during the months when schools are closed. The kind of "summer learning" programs that afterschool-turned-summer programs create can help prevent "summer learning loss," the Issue Brief says.

In addition, these programs help children get nutritious meals. The federal Summer Food Service Program helps programs at YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs and elsewhere provide the meals and snacks that children from low-income families get in school lunch programs during the school year, but might otherwise go without during the summer months. Summer programs also give some children who might otherwise be kept indoors to ensure their safety the chance to engage in physical activity, which can help to combat obesity.

Safety is a serious concern for many parents during the summer, when child care and fees for summer day and overnight camps may be out of many parents' reach. For these children, summer programs offer affordable and safe alternatives to self- and sibling-care.

“Given the vast, well-documented benefits offered by quality summer programs, we are asking policy makers, corporate leaders and the philanthropic community to make funding for these programs a priority,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Doing so can help mitigate the summer learning gap that plagues so many low-income children, and give many more children and youth the chance to be in safe, supervised settings where they can learn and participate in sports and other activities. If we increase funding for afterschool programs, these programs will be able to serve more kids during the school year and continue operating in the summer to support children who otherwise would be unsupervised and at risk for summer learning loss.”

Summer: A Season When Learning is Essential is a joint publication of the Afterschool Alliance and the Center for Summer Learning. It is available on the research page of the Afterschool Alliance web site, at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_br.cfm.

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.