

End of the School Year...Not the End of Learning

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The end of the school year has arrived and summer vacation fun is on the minds of many little faces! We would like to suggest some activities to enjoy with your children during these summer months. Hopefully, your children will find the activities fun and you won't have to mention they are learning something too!

If you prefer to do a little traveling, how about visiting the Science Center of Connecticut in West Hartford. The museum offers many hands-on activities and picnic tables to have an outdoor lunch while being protected by a huge whale! The Dinosaur State Park in Rocky Hill provides all the information craved by a dinosaur fanatic and also some walking trails for a little exploring. If you travel on I-395 to exit 89, you can explore the Quinebaug Valley Hatchery. It is one of the largest fish hatcheries east of the Mississippi! If you continue on I-395 to exit 88, the Children's River Bend Mining Company in Oneco will provide mining hats in your search for gems and fossils. The child who loves trains may want to visit the Essex Steam Train and Riverboat and explore the Connecticut River Valley. The future aviator in your home will enjoy a visit to the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks. If wildlife is on your little ones mind- take a drive to Goshen and explore the animals at the Action Wildlife Foundation. Barker Animation Art Galleries at 1188 Highland Avenue in Cheshire will capture the hearts of old and young while admiring artwork of their favorite Looney Tune character. Lastly, two must-see places for anyone living in or visiting Connecticut are the Peabody Museum in New Haven and the Mystic Aquarium and Seaport.

Prefer to stay at home this summer? How about placing different types of birdfeeders around the yard and using a field guide to graph the variety of birds that visit your feeders. Sidewalk Chalk and/or Water Painting (bucket of water and a variety of paintbrush sizes) will help develop fine motor skills and encourage your child to work on math facts, writing his/her name and/or drawing a picture with details. Never forget the backyard games of badminton, bocce, kickball, volleyball and horseshoes; all of which help develop large motor skills. The less adventurous child may enjoy bubbles, paint-by-numbers, and/or creating sandcastles in the sandbox. The creation of a scrapbook/folder displaying some of the special papers/activities/photographs of the school year is a great way to end one school year and prepare for the next one. Social interaction can continue throughout the summer by planning activities with children in the neighborhood, past classmates and friends met at out-of-school activities. You can also contact your local recreational department for summer activities planned in your area.

Before the end of the school year, you may want to conference with your child's teacher and discuss any skills your child can improve during summer vacation. We suggest the continuation of reading to your child at least 15-20 minutes a day. If your child is entering grade two or is a fluent reader, encourage them to set aside a time each day to read independently. Maintaining basic math facts can be achieved with keeping a summer calendar, flash card activities, math workbooks and/or allowing your child to assist with cooking/measuring activities. To encourage writing, your child may send postcards/e-mails to friends/family about their summer activities. A summer journal is also another idea to maintain writing skills and writing for a reason.

If you think your child may have difficulty maintaining their skills throughout the summer, you may want to seek additional academic support. Your local school can be contacted to provide you with information regarding summer school and/or tutoring. Many universities and community colleges also offer academic support and/or enrichment activities. If the above suggestions are inappropriate or not offered in your town, you may contact a private educational consultant. An educational consultant can offer assessments, tutoring (individual or small group) and be your child's advocate. For more information, please contact Linda and Tricia (your local educational consultants) at L&M Educational Consultants- 860-871-2827 or by email at LINDAMASSUCCI@aol.com

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