

## How can student learning be supported at home during the summer?

Summer is an opportunity for children to continue to grow and develop even though they may not be in school. Creating a learning environment at home and in the community teaches them they can learn anywhere, anytime with resources at their fingertips or in their own backyards.

It may be overwhelming to know where to begin when developing at-home learning opportunities. A good starting point is a child's natural interests. For children and youth, self-directed learning is about the joy of investigating the world and building their confidence by allowing them to explore new subjects. Engaged children will carry skills learned during the summer into the new school year and be more likely to embrace learning when they return to school.

The information in this brief was developed to help families support learning during the summer.

### THINGS TO CONSIDER

Summer provides opportunities for families to explore learning specific to their child's needs, interests and passions. This will look different from community to community and from family to family – there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Learning should be interest-driven and family-focused to meet the needs of each child.

The pandemic has opened a world of online resources for families, regardless of their location. This means greater access to quality learning tools, especially in remote locations where families may have limited access to providers and programs. [Start with a book](#) to explore and engage with interesting topics. [Activities to keep kid's brains active in summer](#) can include fun virtual learning resources,

including a [zoo safari with behind-the-scenes animal encounters](#). Families can [observe the weather together](#) and discuss how to stay safe during Oklahoma storms. Using available resources (e.g., local artists, farmers, welders, craftsmen, etc.) to accelerate learning can also engage young learners. Many children enjoy photography and can use a camera to capture pictures of wildflowers, insects or wildlife.

[Tools to Teach: Helpful Tips for Parents](#) provides examples of how to promote learning with everyday activities such as walks, games, baking, conversations and picnics, and shows how to [use questions](#) to reflect on learning. Real-life situations accelerate learning and can be fun, collaborative and cost-effective.

## KEY INSIGHTS

- Summer learning should be fun! Kids learn more when they are enjoying themselves, so it is important to engage in activities that are interesting to the child.
- Keep summer learning simple. Pick a few key skills and focus on those.
- Engage in just a few minutes of learning per day. This helps keep children's brains humming and ready to learn more.
- Continuing learning through the summer does not necessarily mean spending money. Work with what is accessible and convenient and take advantage of community offerings.

## SEE ALSO

- [The Oklahoma State Department of Education's Oklahoma Family Guides](#)
- [How can summer enrichment activities support student learning, well-being and success?](#)
- [The Oklahoma State Department of Education Family Engagement Framework](#)

Free and low-cost activities are available in many Oklahoma communities. Local parks and recreation departments, youth-serving organizations (e.g., YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs, etc.) and community organizations (e.g., churches, tribal nations, career and technology centers, community colleges and universities) plan summer sessions with high-interest topics for youth.

Exploring [Oklahoma's top free activities and attractions](#) will open doors to learning opportunities, while [Oklahoma library summer reading programs](#) are perfect for summer reading adventures and building literacy skills. [Find the nearest location](#) to participate in onsite, hands-on classes.

### ATTENDING TO EQUITY

Addressing the needs of the whole child is important in any type of summer learning. For access to [local food programs](#), [food resources](#), [tools to address social or emotional needs](#) or basic needs (e.g., shelter, healthcare, etc.), families can connect with a school administrator or counselor, a faith-based leader or the county health or human service office for assistance. The [Oklahoma 2-1-1 Heartline](#) service also includes a number of helpful resources.

In many homes, technology (e.g., computers, tablets, etc.) and internet connectivity are not sufficient to access online learning resources. If the local school is open for summer programming, it may be able to help. Discuss options such as loaner devices for the summer or explore [low- or no-cost hotspots and devices](#). Locations in the community – including libraries, churches and youth centers – may offer free internet access. [Common Sense Media](#) provides resources for families to address online safety and [digital citizenship](#).

### RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS

- Use [Learning Heroes' Summer Parent-Teacher Planning Tool](#) to guide at-home learning. Families can also use an online [Readiness Check](#) for math and reading to identify understanding of key skills.
- Discover free resources available from online resources such as [Khan Academy](#), [PBS Kids \(PreK-12 Resources\)](#) and more. Experience the [joy of summer learning](#) with National Summer Learning Week and its resources for families.
- [Work together on important skills to master for future careers](#) and [explore conversations around careers](#). Learning should be fun for everyone involved.