



Summer Learning from A to Z

Have fun learning and exploring this summer! To receive more ideas all summer long, go to www.thinkstretch.com/newsletter.

Apps: Educational apps are a great way to reinforce key skills. Have your kids write mini-reviews of the apps they play to extend the learning further.

Bowling: Many bowling centers offer free games to kids over the summer. Or, you can try bowling at home! Watch YouTube videos on the physics of bowling in advance!

Cooking: Following a recipe helps kids practice their nonfiction skills, and measuring reinforces fractions, volume and mass.

Design: Invite kids to redecorate a small space or even a whole room. But first, ask them to graph their plans and make a budget.

Engineering: Try a simple engineering challenge, such as building a bridge from marshmallows and toothpicks.

Film: Many movie theaters offer a summer discount program for kids. Look for movies that have a connection to books, then talk about the differences.

Gardening: Gardening teaches kids about spatial planning, design and the needs of plants and animals. And a "garden" can be the size of a small pot!

Hiking: Hiking offers lots to observe and talk about, and you don't even have to be in the great outdoors! Look for recommended urban hikes in your area.

Instagram: Challenge kids to start an account where they preserve shapes they find in nature, letters on cool signs or even fun bumper stickers.

Journaling: Invite kids to keep a travel journal, a look journal, or a brainstorm box-the possibilities are endless!

Kite flying: Can kids build a kite that actually flies? What are the best conditions for kite flying? This is an activity that leads to observations galore!

Libraries: Chances are, your local library system offers a summer program that goes way beyond books; science, music and art are often on deck!

Minecraft: Google "learning with Minecraft" to find out how you can turn your kid's obsession into a meaningful educational experience.

Nighttime fun: Have kids read books about space or the history of constellations, then observe the starry night sky.

Outdoor games: Challenge kids to create their own "Olympic events" (such as a ring toss or an obstacle course) using household materials.

Puzzles: Puzzles improve concentration, fine motor skills and spatial thinking, all of which play into school success.

Quiet time: Build in time for rest, reading and relaxation even for older kids. Their brains will need a break after getting such a workout!

Roller coasters: A trip to the amusement park offers the chance to talk about physics and engineering. Google "roller coaster STEM" for help.

Sidewalk chalk: Encourage kids to write poems along with rainbows and dragons, or challenge them to draw an interesting shape.

Tide pools: If you live near the beach, have kids document what they find in photos and writing. (If you're landlocked, try a small corner of a yard.)

Umbrella walks: Take a stroll on a rainy day and ask kids what they see, smell, hear, and feel. Then write a rainy-day sensory poem.

Vacations: If you're going on a trip, read books about your destination and study maps in advance. If you're staying home, plan a dream trip instead.

Workbooks: Today's workbooks have come a long way in challenging kids to think creatively. We love the summer learning ones from ThinkStretch.

Xbox writing: If you have a die-hard gamer, challenge him or her to write an instruction manual or guide for a favorite game.

Yesterday and today: Begin each day with a simple activity: Ask kids to write about what they did yesterday and what they want to do today.

Zoos: Read a book about a favorite animal, then pay it a visit at your local zoo (many offer free family days during the summer).