



Gap Academy

4 John Street, Weston, Ontario M9N 1J3 ☎ 416 249-1500 Fax 416-246-9155
www.gapacademy.com

Summer Learning, reprinted from The Toronto Star
by Paola Breda, Prinipal, Gap Academy

“If you want your kids to stay in touch with their education and perform better in September, why not try these suggestions:”

Ask them to read 5-10 minutes per day. Better yet, make reading a bedtime routine. You read a sentence; they read a sentence. Keep on alternating. If they're a little older, you could alternate pages or chapters, instead of sentences.

Have them write a journal every weekday. It can be done simply in a colourful dollar store notebook.

If you have a computer, let them type it out. Instead of using spell check, try it the old-fashioned way. Print it out and have someone check the spelling and grammar and have them revise it. (In this way, they will start to learn the valuable art of self-correction.)

Read the kids section of The Sunday Star and do the various projects.

Go to the ROM or the Science Centre or your local museum.

Get a tutor - even for just an hour weekly. It helps them stay or even help them catch up, if they're a bit behind.

Make riding in the car fun. Create little games like: “Who can find a license plate that's not from Ontario?”; Or, “Count the number of kids you see wearing glasses.”

Practise the if-then consequence concepts: If you see a man with a beard, then say 'bingo'. (Or play the old punchbuggy routine.) They'll be reading, thinking, and problem-solving all at the same time.

Have them write out your weekly grocery list and then engage them in helping you at the supermarket by reading out their list while you search together for products.

Used the closed caption feature of your TV so they can read while watching.

Look up one simple research subject each week on the internet. (There are lots of great sites geared towards kids.) If you don't have access to the net, then visit your local library once a week and use the internet there.

Each time they research a topic, have them make a '1-minute Presentation' to the family at dinner every Friday.

Help them set up a free e-mail address on your system (or use Yahoo's free e-mail), then encourage them to e-mail their cousins, their friends, or even you! This gets them writing more fluently and acquaints them with the internet.

Take a trip to Chintatown and talk to your kids about the different Asian cultures. If you don't have a local Chinatown, take the kids to another local cultural enclave. Tie this into their research on the net, or a baking/cooking party.

Take a trip to your local reference library - you won't believe your eyes!

Visit your local native peoples museum, then talk about the native peoples of your country. Have the kids pretend to dress up as a native woman, or native man, and ask them to imagine what life would be like as a native. Then have them write about it.

Bake a cake together while having your child read out the instructions and measure the ingredients. (I love this one because it's a combo - Math and English together.)

Get a pen pal overseas and write weekly letters the old-fashioned way. Have them learn to buy stamps, address envelopes, and mail their letter.



Summer Learning Page 2/..

Buy a small, inexpensive camera and some film. Promise to develop the film if they shoot their photos wisely. Tell them it's called a photoessay. Have them make up a scrapbook with annotated photos to send to grandma or to keep as a souvenir. Maybe this could be a special event for certain day trips.

Have a games night for the neighbourhood kids. Make popcorn and refreshments, and supervise. Pull out the old Monopoly Board, Sorry, Battleship, and Operation. They're sure to make a hit. (And they're practising all kinds of math and social skills here.)

Encourage them to have a lemonade stand.

Have them organize a garage sale. Make the posters, put them up, organize the stuff being offered, price it, sell it. Then have them choose something from the store with the money they made, and have them pay for it directly.

Donate it to a local charity, like the local food bank. Take a tour and make an 'official' donation of food or money.

Or, open up a kid's bank account at your local bank branch, and teach them how to make a deposit weekly. Have them learn about how to fill out the deposit slip and calculate how much money they'll have before they have their book updated.

If they're old enough, set up a stock market account and have them watch their own stocks. (Some companies do this for little or no fees.) They can do this over the internet - with supervision - or through their bank account when it reaches a certain level.

Have them make up a rap song to the times tables. Or buy a CD for times tables at your local book store, or teacher's supply store. Make sure they listen or sing for a few minutes each day.

Get a math or language CD rom and encourage them to use it daily.

Create a READ-A-THON. After reading each book, reward them with a few dollars for each book read that will go towards their weekly deposit at the bank.

Have them weed the garden, and calculate the amount of money earned for each weed. Have them create and send you an Invoice through the mail. Add the few dollars to their weekly deposit.

If they go to a friend's house, have them practise leaving you a note with their friend's name, number, and address - even if you already know it. This is a good habit to encourage for later when they're more independent.

If you have a backyard, invite their friends for an outdoor sleepover. Pitch a tent, and then pass around a 'scary book' to read with a flashlight, while the other kids munch on popcorn. (They'll always remember this one, I guarantee it!)

Go to a travel store and ask for last year's glossy travel destination booklet. Have your kids play a trip by making appropriate plans and figuring out how much it will cost to take the family and a friend. (There are great chart reading skills, math skills, problem-solving skills, etc. being learned here.) Have them look up the destination in an atlas and find out how far away it is from Toronto.

And my personal favourite: Plan to live 'in the olden days' for one night. Turn off the electricity, disconnect the phones. Play games with rocks and language. Listen to the radio as a family, just like the olden days. If you have a fireplace, have a cookout. Grilled cheese on the fire sure tasted good when my nonna did this for me when I was a kid, and I've never forgotten it.

Most of all, remember that learning can be so much fun; it doesn't even have to feel like learning!