



partnership for after school education

# summer learning guide

enhancing  
educational  
opportunities and  
learning experiences in  
summer programs

partnership for  
after school education

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# Summer Learning Guide

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# Introduction

## Who We Are

The Partnership for After School Education (PASE), a New York City-focused organization, promotes and supports quality afterschool programs for youth, particularly those from underserved communities, enabling them to identify and reach their full potential.

Every day in New York City, more than 500,000 young people in low-income communities are provided safe and enriching environments in afterschool programs run by community-based agencies. PASE helps build stronger afterschool programs, develop successful young people and create more resilient communities by connecting the more than 1,400 agencies that run those programs.

Enabling a critical exchange of resources and ideas among agencies, educators and other partners, PASE is New York City's premier provider of professional development for afterschool staff and youth-serving agency leaders. In its programs and initiatives, PASE promotes best practices in afterschool programs and functions as a strong voice for youth.

## What We Believe About After School Education

PASE recognizes the crucial role that afterschool programs play in fostering young people's intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual growth. We believe that academic skills should be integrated into all aspects of an afterschool program; that parents, youth and community members need to have input into program development; and that programs should make a commitment to be inclusive, foster cultural diversity, and build community.

## PASE programs and offerings

- **Professional development and training opportunities**, as well as technical assistance for **New York City Department of Youth and Community Development Out-of-School Time Contractors** and the **entire afterschool field**
- **Demonstration projects** that model excellence and best practices
- **Networking events** and opportunities
- **Publications, resources, and advocacy** for the field

## PASE's Summer Learning Initiative

The objective of Summer Learning Initiative is to **enhance the educational opportunities and learning experiences in summer programs so that children return to school ready to learn.** Summer camps with creative learning-based curricula benefit the academic achievement of low socio-economic status (SES) urban students.



Since 2001, the Partnership for After School Education Summer Learning Initiative has worked with key staff of summer programs on how to integrate creative youth agency summer programming with activities that support a child's school-year learning and prepares them to meet the challenges of school. This initiative combines interactive training, summer program curriculum, program planning, assessment, technical assistance, placement of college-age tutors, and site visits to create a network of summer programs engaged in closing the summer learning gap with dynamic, community-rich programs.

Camps with rich literacy programming can address learning through attitudinal shifts and concrete skill development. In an independent evaluation of PASE's Summer Learning Initiative, nearly ninety percent of campers indicated they had "learned new things" in camp. Over three-quarters reported that being at camp had made them want to learn new things and try harder in school. Pre and post tests of rising 4th and 5th grade campers suggest that campers did not experience loss in math or reading and in fact were probably helped with their reading skills. (Summer Learning Initiative, Year 3 2006, Preliminary Evaluation Report, Prepared by Anita M. Baker Consulting)

The summer camp experience described in the PASE Summer Learning Initiative is inspiring. It is neither remedial nor restrictive in nature, but it is decidedly enriching, enveloping, stimulating, creative, freeing and intriguing. It encourages the kind of learning experiences that develop a strong foundation for learning. The culmination of this experience is this *Guide to Summer Learning at Camp*.

## How to Use this Guide

This guide is also designed to be used by all staff and volunteers of summer camp programs. PASE believes that when summer camp staff is inspired, they inspire the summer campers. Through your creativity, campers will develop a true love for learning and feel empowered as learners.

What is found in these pages is designed to work on two levels. First it serves as an inspiration as to what can be achieved with youth in summer programs. Secondly it provides practical tools and ideas for camp staff on how to create and support an environment of learning. We embrace the strength of summer camps –the longer days, variety of activities, time to get to know a camper, freedom from worrying about homework – and infuse it with a focus on intentional learning objectives.

You will find an overview of summer learning loss and how children learn, followed by comprehensive exploration of literacy development and camp programs. We also visit math, science and staff development. We have included valuable educational, programmatic and assessment tools, along with sample activities, resources and pre/post planning tips for meetings and field trips.

## Acknowledgements

This guide was developed under the leadership of Janet T. Kelley, founding Executive Director of the Partnership for After School Education, whose clarity of vision recognized the opportunities in and potential of strong summer programs for New York City's youth.

This guide was created by PASE staff, Ellen O'Connell and Shelly Wilson, along with Bonnie Nuzum, consultant, whose contribution to the guide and literacy expertise were invaluable. Thank you to Angela Scardina, Institute for Urban Minority Education (IUME) Graduate Intern at PASE, Veronica Holly (IUME), Marjorie Siegel (Teachers College Department of Curriculum and Teaching), and Emi Gittleman, Elektra Gorski, Lissette Resto-Brooks of PASE for their valuable input in the guide's early stages.

A special thanks is extended to the campers and staff of the programs in the Summer Learning Initiative whose energy and ideas provided the inspiration for this guide. In particular we would like to thank the following people for the time and expertise shared with this initiative: Michele Ashley and Veronica Paredes (Project Reach Youth), Rachel Cytron and Megan Demarkis (Harlem R.B.I.), Clayton Evans (Scholastic, Inc), Sarah Jonas (Children's Aid Society), Lois Lee and Cindy Cho (Chinese-American Planning Council), Marnie Ponce (Bank St. College of Education) and Nicole Rodriguez-Leach (Teak Fellowship). Your time, hard work, passion and commitment have made this guide possible.

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# What is the Summer Learning Initiative?

## Summer Learning Loss

The fact that a pupil's background can be a factor in academic achievement is not new or surprising; however, it appears that a pupil's socio- economic status is instrumental in what is termed – the seasonality of learning or the Summer Learning Gap. Research suggests that summer opportunities are pivotal in determining academic achievement in school. In the Beginning School Study, Johns Hopkins University sociologists, Karl Alexander and Doris Entwisle document that student achievement for middle and low-income students improves at the same rate during the school year. However low-income students experience learning loss during the summer months. Over time this cumulative loss is seen as a source of the achievement gap in schools.

Clearly the effect of the difference between the summer experiences of the lower SES students and their middle class counterparts are a contributing factor leading to the differential in school performance. These observations support providing lower SES children with an enriched summer environment to give them a good start in the fall.

When the family resources are unequal and the family cannot be the mainstay of summer learning, then well-designed summer camps can provide the essential learning opportunities to stave off the seasonal learning gap.

## Good Summer Programs Provide Campers With:

- **Opportunities for Literacy and Math Development:** Youth need opportunities to practice their developing skills so that they remain sharp.
- **Activities that Promote Critical Thinking:** Youth need opportunities to develop their analytical and problem solving skills as the work to become independent learners.
- **Exposure to New Ideas or Concepts:** Youth need exposure to a wide range of information and experiences to add to their store of knowledge. They call upon this knowledge to draw connections and make meaning.
- **Time to Socialize with Peers:** Youth need opportunities to experience positive relationships with people outside of their families. These relationships can provide support and security as youth experience new ideas, feelings, and values.

- **Opportunities to Make Connections to their Culture and Lives Outside of the Program:** Youth need opportunities to explore who they are becoming and how they relate to the world around them as a member of their sex, family, culture and community.
- **Opportunities for them to Demonstrate their Knowledge of New Ideas:** It is common for children to feel self-conscious and unsure of their abilities. They need opportunities to demonstrate to themselves and others that they can do something well. Further, the chance to share their new knowledge facilitates the imprinting of the material.
- **Opportunities to Exercise Choice:** Youth need opportunities for autonomy and to pursue personal tastes.
- **Outdoor and Physical Activities:** Youth need to exercise and develop their growing bodies.
- **Arts Activities:** Youth need opportunities for creative expression and exposure to the variety of disciplines.

## <sup>1</sup>Summer Camp Program Models

From sleepaway to day-camp, from a community recreation center to a forest glen, camps can take a variety of forms. With opportunities for learning and fun combined, camp models should suit your mission and staff capacity. Here we review the common camp models.



### Basic Activity Camp

- Scheduling activities and trips that keep the campers occupied and having fun.
- The planning for such a camp consist of lining up a series of activities that are interesting to the children
- Often planners include specialty days and carnivals to add something new and exciting each week.
- It is the easiest camp to plan and implement; however, it runs the risk of becoming routine and boring

<sup>1</sup> Summer Camp Program Model source: Children's Aid Society, 2001

**Theme-Based Camp**

- Takes a model and organizes the program to relate all activities to the theme. This creates a context for learning for the camp.
- The activities are arranged, explained and processed to help campers find meaning in them.
- Learning occurs as campers grasp the interconnections between the different kinds of knowledge. Gives children the opportunity to make the connections between different experiences or facts.

**Example: Animal Kingdom**

- groups have animal names
- art projects include making animals with paper mache
- each child writes a story with their favorite animal
- a field trip to the zoo – campers will make sure to see a list of animals that represent each continent of the world
- a field day would be a sequence of animal games where children get to act like different animals

**Project-Based Camp**

- This model builds on the theme-based camp by adding a project or culminating event that organizes and integrates the experience
- Staff need to be capable of facilitating the process involved in such an undertaking:
  - There is a lot of problem-solving, group decision making, and conflict resolution needed to complete the project.
  - It may require special skills in drama or visual arts

**Example:** Group may be responsible to design and paint a mural, put on a play, or host a carnival that summarizes the theme and what has been learned.

**Specialty Camp**

- Uses a specific activity that organizes the time and activities of the camp.
- Dance, basketball and computer camps are examples.
- Often expensive because staff must be highly trained in specialty.

Remember while these models can and often do apply to entire camps, there is no reason why a single camp cannot embody more than one model. A camp can be designed to use different models or themes by age group. A particularly talented group of counselors may take the initiative to lead a project.

# An Environment for Learning

## Attending to Learning, Planning and Space

Creating an environment for learning involves attention to how we learn, thoughtful planning, and the careful organization and design of the physical space.

### How We Learn

“Leaders aren’t born, they are made.” The same can apply to learners. For all of us who work with children and youth, it is important to understand how we learn and then construct programming that taps into those qualities.



### Qualities of Good Learners

**Knowledge Base:** Accumulation of experiences and learnings that creates a store of information. Learners draw upon and make connections to that knowledge when encountering a new situation.

**Therefore a primary goal of summer camp should be the exposure to new ideas and experiences that can be added to that ever-growing store of information.**

**Memory:** Have strategies for memorizing and organizing facts and concepts and can systematically and deliberately retrieve information.

**Therefore camps should model good organization by having a clearly understood and displayed schedule and an organized setting with inviting spaces and accessible materials. Campers should know from the outset what is the point of an activity and what they will need to know to perform it successfully. Information should be shared in digestible chunks with adjustments made for the age of camper as well as the environment (if it is sweltering, it is difficult to concentrate). Camps should employ various graphic organizers when learning about a topic.**

**Meta-Memory:** Can talk about the thought process and how they arrived at their answers.

**Therefore summer camp counselors should encourage both one-on-one and group conversations with campers about what, why and how they are learning. Counselors should model for campers their own thought process.**

**Awareness:** Recognize when they don't understand and can ask for help.

**Therefore summer camps should strive to create a safe and accepting space where campers feel comfortable to ask questions of counselors and of their peers.**

**Multiple Intelligences:** Use multiple strategies/intelligences to acquire knowledge.

**Therefore summer camps should offer their campers a panoply of program options: dance, music, art, nature, math, science, literature, writing, etc.**



## Setting Up the Space for Learning

Learners cannot thrive in a noisy, chaotic atmosphere. Therefore the organized design and set-up of the physical space is critical to creating an environment for learning. You are creating various sacred spaces for learning so campers can enter each with the mindset of what they will learn in that area.

- Have all relevant camp information – camp mission, schedules, rules on prominent display
- Have clearly designated and separate spaces for whole camp meetings and group activities
- Organize and label materials so they are readily accessible and easy to return by campers
- Display finished work
- Create a designated physical space where campers can read independently without distraction
- Have a designated place for campers to sit as a group for read aloud and discussion time

## Program Plans

### ***“What will campers get out of my summer program?”***

You cannot plan an effective summer program without first answering that question. Your answer will guide the subsequent program development as you set out to build a program that helps the campers reach the identified goal(s).

- **Camp Schedule:** Setting up a camp schedule is relatively easy. Many camps place their literacy or academic portions in the morning when campers are most alert with enrichment activities and workshops offered in the afternoon. Field trips are scheduled for a specific day(s) of the week. The camp schedule and a list of field trips should be available for parents and campers as they register for camp.
- **Block Plans:** Each lead counselor or activity specialist should complete a block plan for what they will be teaching during the summer. The block plan is a planning tool that lays out the organizing principles and outline for what will be covered in each session. A typical block plan answers the following questions (Block Plan template available in the resources section):

### **Block Plan**

**TIME FRAME:** How many sessions?

**ACTIVITY/TOPIC:** What are you teaching?

**TEACHING STAFF:** Who will be conducting these sessions?

**THEME:** What is the theme of activity? Or how does it relate to camp theme?

**GUIDING QUESTIONS:** Questions to ask campers to engage in the activity and theme

**LEARNING GOALS:** What will camper understand? What will campers be able to do at the program's end?

**ASSESSMENT:** What will be my evidence of success? What methods will I use to capture this data/information?

**FINAL PROJECT/CULMINATING EVENT:** How will campers demonstrate their learning?

**SESSION OUTLINES:** Objective, Activities, Resources and Materials

- **Activity Plan:** The activity plan is the detailed description of the plan for each session. A typical activity plan answers the following questions (Action Plan template available in the resources section):



### Activity Plan

**ACTIVITY:** What is the specific activity for the session?

**GOAL:** What is the objective of that session? What will campers learn as a result of activity?

**MATERIALS:** What materials are needed? Room set-up?

**DIRECTIONS:** What are the step by step instruction for completing activity?

**ASSESSMENT:** What will be my evidence of success?

**ROLE OF ASSISTANTS:** How will I effectively use my assistants to assist in execution of the activity?

**MODIFICATIONS:** Once activity is completed, what amendments would I make?

# Literacy

If you want to address closing the summer learning gap, then you must begin with literacy. Fortunately opportunities to enhance literacy skills are easy to find in summer camps. Strong literacy-based programs use a varied mix of events, activities and routines to promote the development of specific literacy skills. Regardless of the mission or focus of the camp, literacy-based activities can be infused into the core of the program – be it arts, sports, leadership or community activism.

## Elements of Literacy

To assist in thinking about the structure of summer literacy, we broke literacy into distinct elements. The elements are:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Vocabulary
- Reading comprehension
- Writing
- Background knowledge

## Listening

Opportunities abound for campers to engage in active listening and to demonstrate their capacity to understand and interpret what they hear. Through active listening campers can be exposed to a variety of topics that they might not read about independently and thus acquire loads of information about the world in which they live.

### **Camp Activities to Develop Listening:**

The most common demonstrations of listening tasks are: following or paraphrasing directions; listening to literature in groups or pairs and creating a response; listening for specific words, parts of speech, or tone in a read aloud; listening to music and interpreting feelings; responding to role play activity, or asking questions about something participants have heard.

**Strategies to Support Listening Skills:**

During any activity there are many opportunities for students to listen. The counselor's task is to focus campers on listening, by asking questions, having others ask questions, or having peers restate directions or summarize.

- Tell campers the purpose of the activity and what they will be doing, then ask campers to restate your instruction.
- Ask someone to ask a question one might have about the project.
- Read some background information on the project and ask campers to brainstorm what they heard.
- Read or tell a personal statement about the project and ask campers to interpret how you felt.
- Provide paper and pen for campers to take notes while listening.

**Speaking**

Speaking well involves presenting ideas aloud so others, who are listening well, can understand the meaning, interpret the tone, know the purpose of the statement or question, or follow directions. Through well-organized speech, individuals promote their ideas, and organize or persuade others. Speaking opportunities can occur in group discussions, paired interactions or a conference with the group leaders. To assist, campers can learn to jot down a few notes - listing the topic, point of view and several important items as well as thinking about the audience and timeframe.

**Camp Activities to Develop Speaking:**

Common camp activities that provide speaking opportunities for a young person: read aloud the daily announcements; lead morning/end of day gathering; role play; read a play; put on a play; perform magic/talent show; stage a debate; read their work aloud.

**Strategies to Support Speaking Skills:**

In any activity there are plenty of opportunities for orderly speaking. They can speak to the leader, to a partner or to a group. Report back sessions can be a fine opportunity for group interactions.

- Restate directions
- Summarize feelings
- Summarize the activity to a partner at the end
- State an opinion about the activity
- Construct a question about a topic
- Report on research that was done on the topic

## Vocabulary

A large and varied vocabulary and concept base is central to sophisticated listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Knowing the meaning of key words before reading a book obviously makes understanding the text easier. Campers have to be exposed to a word on several occasions in various contexts to recognize and eventually to recall with ease.

### Camp Activities to Build Vocabulary:

Common camp activities that promote vocabulary for a young person: word games (concentration, balderdash, syllable detective), camp songs and cheers, theme work and field trips, word wall, word bank, word journals, and spelling bees.

### Strategies to Support Vocabulary:

- Identify the related vocabulary (only 4 or 5 words)
- Use and explain the words as they come up
- Word of the day and its synonyms; Publicly acknowledge camper's use of words in speaking and writing
- Keep an on-going list of new and exciting words
- Keep a dictionary handy
- Give campers an opportunity to practice the words through games
- Give the campers an opportunity to use the words when speaking or writing

## Reading Comprehension

Understanding a wide-range of reading material is critical to life-long learning. Camp settings provide creative ways for youth to be actively involved in the reading process. With guidance, campers can use strategies that support active reading and understanding. By working in pairs or groups, campers can approach material that they might not feel comfortable reading alone.

### Camp Activities that Foster Reading Comprehension:

Reading selections should be related to camp theme or camper's interest and represent the various genres. Any camp activity, be it dance or arts and craft, can have a companion reading piece. Material can be read by the teacher, in small groups, in pairs or individually. Hold a reading challenge – if the camp reads a certain number of books in a time period, they get an ice cream party. Don't forget that reading can simply be for pleasure. Have a selection of books available from which campers can choose during quiet or free time.

**Strategies to Support Reading Skills:**

There are so many ways that reading skills can be built into the activity, but it is important to focus on no more than two in an activity. When campers are asked focus on a skill or strategy, the process provides not only practice, but also focus. Strategies include:

- Identifying the main idea
- Visualization or making mental pictures of text
- Summarizing the plot
- Personal identification with the text
- Describing the setting or character
- Predicting what comes next
- Retelling what just read or an ending
- Identifying what is not understood and rereading
- Creating questions about the text

**Writing**

Varied opportunities for creative and expository writing, with comment and revision, help to develop organization, precision, fluency and clarity. Similar to reading, writing opportunities can be incorporated into every project and be done individually, in pairs or as a small group activity.

**Camp Activities that Encourage Writing:**

At the very minimum, camper should be asked to keep a journal, which can capture both free thoughts as well as responses to prompts. Campers can create a newsletter, craft field trip and activity reviews, or compose stories, poems, and plays for publication and performance. Campers can generate signage, write-up recipes and rules, and compose letters to authors, community leaders or other authorities on a topic the camp is studying. Campers can have pen pals from another camp or just between age groups.

Written work improves when there is an opportunity for campers to present their work. Select the format that fits the project: literacy magazine, newspaper, small group presentations, paired presentations, or an open mike night.

Literally switch up what you are writing on. Always writing on lined paper can grow boring and feels very school-like. Have campers write responses to questions in a paper fortune teller. Say you are writing about a trip to the aquarium, have campers write on paper shaped like stingrays and whales.

**Strategies that Support Writing Skills:**

For most young people (and adults for that matter) the challenge in writing is organizing one's thoughts and making sentences interesting. Therefore structuring your activity to focus on these skills is time well spent. Before writing, campers can:

- Talk about the topic in groups
- Assign a leader to take notes
- Brainstorm topics
- Web map ideas
- Outline topic using standard paragraph structure

During writing, campers can:

- Revisit and revise sentences to include more descriptive words and clauses
- Exchange material for peer review
- Use a proofreader checklist to review work.

**Knowledge Base**

The more a child knows the easier it is to learn, read, write, speak and listen. This foundation or "knowledge base" is the source for making connections and drawing parallels between experiences, ideas and concepts. Providing some basic concepts before starting an activity or finding out what students know and want to know about a given topic establishes a foundation upon which to build and provides direction. Field trips, experiential themed activities and projects, and exploration of current events are ways to expand the knowledge base. Globes, timelines, and outlines put factual information in place and help concept development.

**Camp Activities that Build Knowledge Base:**

For every activity and project, counselors can ensure that participants have the foundation upon which to build by including a pre-project activity. These can include:

- Taking a trip to museum or related site
- Discussing the purpose and use of the project
- Incorporating relevant terminology into a game or other activity
- Asking the students what they know
- Read and discuss relevant text
- Raise a question for discussion and map ideas

## Theme-based Programming and Projects

Theme-based programming is a great concept for summer camp as there is time to explore and process a topic with some depth. Projects are stimulating and encompass interesting and relevant subject matter, as well as all aspects of literacy - reading, listening, speaking, writing, development of vocabulary and background knowledge, and group work. Campers use and develop their skills and knowledge as they explore the theme and demonstrate their learning in various projects. If done well, the theme-based programming is more than a project or the exercise of basic school skills, but rather an enriching process that sparks campers' curiosity and creativity. With multiple access points –arts, sports, focused discussions, research, music, to list a few- theme-based programming keeps campers' minds active and readies them for school without seeming like school.



The counselors play a major role in the success of the theme-based learning project. The project is not an unplanned free for all, but a set of carefully orchestrated lessons that build sequentially from one to the next so to complete a project in a timely fashion. The structure provides the focus and organization essential to learning and gives campers the freedom to create.

Choose the project before camp so starts so the goal and the process are clearly specified and understood. In the time before camp starts, counselors have time to gather books as both resources and to be read to the campers, familiarize themselves with background materials, obtain the necessary materials, create a list of important terms and vocabulary, plot out an outline of the scope of work for each session, and identify when the projects will be completed.

Critical to the success of the summer's theme is an overall schedule that identifies start and finish times and when the projects will be displayed and used throughout the summer. Next, look at the weekly schedule and outline when the theme work will fit in the day. Will campers work every day on theme-related projects or twice a week? Perhaps the project lasts one or two weeks or in some cases, for the duration of the camp. How much time is needed per session (don't forget set-up and clean-up!). Once you have made the decisions that set the schedule, inform everyone (staff, campers, parents), and stick to the schedule.

Remember to put the camper in the center of the project. Even if the project is selected and organized before camp starts, there is plenty of room for camper input as their ideas, energy, and interest guide the pace and direction the program. From the start, seek their input. Find out:

- what the campers know on the topic;
- what they are interested in knowing;
- how they think the project will be useful to them;
- what does not interest them;
- how would they like to learn about the topic?

With campers develop/share a timeline and clearly define what a final project will entail. All information for or generated by the campers should be posted on large paper and displayed for them to stay on top of the topic.

## Topics

There is no limit to ideas and sources of inspiration for themes.

**School:** Familiarize yourself with your state curriculum standards for your age group. You can develop theme-based programs on a subject that the students will be covering in school the next year, providing them with beneficial familiarity for the year ahead. The camp project is not like school. For instance, if **Egypt** is the topic there are myriad things that can be done. Build a pyramid; flood the Nile; mummify an apple; write hieroglyphic message board. Say the topic is **the Middle Ages**, you can develop a timeline; build a castle and moat big enough for the campers to inhabit; role play court hierarchy and customs with kings, queens, feudal lords, knights and serfs.

**Staff:** Enthusiasm is contagious so tap into your staff's interests, skills, and background.. The more enthused and invested a counselor is with a topic, the better he can teach the topic. For example, your counselors may be from other countries and the theme could involve exploring **foods from around the world**. What is the staple of a country's diet and why? Create a recipe book. A featured country's food is prepared and eaten each Friday. Maybe your counselors are environmentalists and want to **explore creating a "green" camp** including energy efficient ways to keep cool and a camp-wide recycling program.

**Local/National Issues:** What events such as the Olympics/ World Cup/Presidential Conventions are occurring and would be fun to explore? Campers could host an Olympics or run mock primaries, debates and convention. Is there a **humanitarian crisis**, such as a drought, campers could raise their community's awareness?

**Common Camp Themes:**

- Animal Kingdom
- Where Am I From/Countries of Origin
- Mother Earth
- Around the World: Cultural Exploration
- Health & Fitness
- Olympics/Sports
- Space Exploration
- Time Travel

**Camp Profile: Project Reach Youth**

Imagine you have found yourself on another planet. You're faced with developing the language, currency, and understanding the various life forms, their customs and habits, food, etc. This was the summer-long challenge presented to the campers at Project Reach Youth Summer Camp. Each group (campers are grouped by age) was a planet and they pushed their creativity and imagination to the outer limits as they developed their planet's life and culture. Talk about far out!



For over 20 years, Project Reach Youth (PRY) Summer Camp, has provided the children of Sunset Park (Brooklyn) a rich and diverse summer camp experience, exposing the students to countries, eras, jobs and new worlds all through a commitment to strong theme-based programming.

The success of PRY's summer camp does not come with easy-to-assemble instructions. Rather it has evolved from collaborative planning process, which combines both clear guidelines and objectives with staff's strengths and interests.

Beginning in the spring, PRY's Director of Education and staff identifies collectively what will be this year's camp theme. Each camp teacher is given freedom to develop how he will approach this year's theme. Staff are charged with exposing campers to theme in ways that utilize literacy, research, writing, and math skills, demand artistic expression, and support social development.

Morning sessions find campers reading books and other texts and doing math activities related to their themes while the afternoon session has campers working on projects related to their theme.

Recent summers have found the campers operating as Young Entrepreneurs. Working with their counselor, each group developed their own business. The oldest campers developed a carnival with tickets, games and food for their fellow campers to enjoy. Another group focused on advertising, initially selling their sign-making services to the other “businesses” and then progressing to promotions with hats and t-shirts. Still another group ran the camp movie theater, running movies and selling popcorn for campers seeking an escape from the heat during free period. Even the youngest crew - kindergarten - got into the act, selling edible jewelry such as cheerio bracelets.

The year before found campers traveling back in time to different decades. One group explored the 1960’s learning about freedom marches and ending of segregation based on the experiences of their teacher who grew up in the south in that time. Another group explored chivalry, sword play, and castle design in the Middle Ages.

By the projects’ very nature, campers are called upon to use reading and math skills. Creativity is thriving and the campers are gaining new ideas and knowledge which they carry forward into the school year. There is an endless supply of great ideas to be turned into fabulous summer camp themes. Taking the time to plan, providing staff the resources, and giving them the freedom to meld their imagination with that of their campers is critical to the successful development of a comprehensive theme-based summer camp.

## **Author Studies**

Author studies involve an in-depth study of an author and his/her body of work. Author studies work well in camps due to the finite time frame. Campers read a variety of selections by an author while also learning about the author’s life and writing style. Author studies provide multiple ways for campers to engage with text. What are common elements (themes, style) found in the stories? Are their autobiographical elements to be found in the stories? How has his style evolved?

Author studies are easy to organize and develop. A search on an on-line bookseller can yield a list of the books written by an author. More importantly, your local library can provide resources (much more cheaply) and guidance on how to structure your author study. Lastly, many favorite authors have a homepage that lends itself to the creation of an author study.

## **Author Study Profile: Chinese American Planning Council - Dr. Seuss Centennial Carnival**

### ***Plant a Trufful seed***

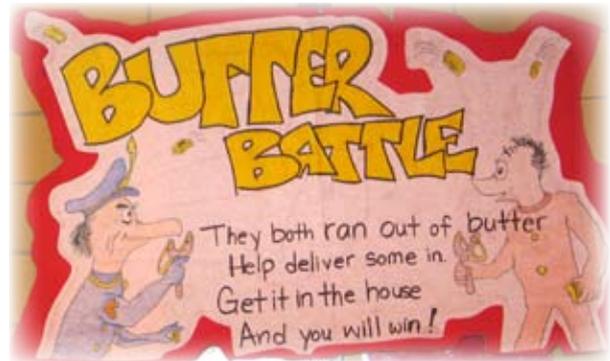
New Trufful trees are in need  
A hole in one, you are done  
You'll know that you have won

So read the camper-penned rhyming instructions for the putt-putt game inspired by *The Lorax*, one of the over 20 books read by the campers at Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC) Queens School-Age Daycare at PS 20 in honor of Dr. Seuss's Centennial.

For three days at the end of each summer, campers host a carnival for the community in which all the games, prizes, tickets, promotions, and food are inspired by that summer's selected author study and more importantly designed by the students. For nearly twenty years, Director Lois Chin Lee and her staff have devoted their summer camps to taking a traditional author study (in which students conduct an in-depth study of an author's work) and turning it into this creative and thrilling camper-run culminating event.

The planning for the carnival begins in the spring when staff selects the author and theme, and work begins in earnest from camp's onset. Amidst the usual program of arts & crafts, cooking, science, drama, swimming, and field trips, campers have scheduled time devoted to exploring the silly, strange, and thought-provoking world of Dr.

Seuss. In this time, students read many Dr. Seuss treasures. They discussed the themes and morals of the stories and captured their thoughts in journals. For example, *The Butter Battle*, which focuses on war and peace, allowed campers to draw parallels with the war in Iraq. *Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?* found students discussing the idea of luck and just how fortunate many of them are.



The students became really excited when they viewed all the books. “Look just how many books he wrote!” “Wow it can teach something different.” The more they read of an author, the more analytical they become as they bring to the conversation their expanding knowledge of (in this instance, Dr. Seuss ) themes, interests, and style.

Under the guidance of arts & literacy coordinator, Cindy Cho, campers begin the process of turning these stories and ideas into games and booths. The carnival provides a fun and creative way to reinforce comprehension as campers must decide “how we can take this story and turn it into a game or booth for the carnival.” Campers develop the theme and construct the games and booths, and lastly write the versed directions.

When carnival days arrives, campers and guests enter a gym transformed into a spectacle of Seuss inspired games and booths. At the “I Can Read with My Eyes Shut Book Draw” children reach in a closed box for books designed and written by fellow campers. “Play the game, it’s as pie/Cause King Yertle wanted to reach the sky/Flick it hard to get it far/Get it to Yertle and Be a Star” read the instructions for the a Yertle the Turtle Shuffle Board with stacked turtles replacing typical shapes and numbers. And of course, all attendees can buy yummy treats at the Green Eggs & Ham Snack Bar.

Over the years, CPC Queens School-Age Day Care at PS20 Summer Camp has explored authors such as Roald Dahl and H.M. Rey (Curious George) Ms. Lee wants all of her campers to feel confident about themselves. Her author-study carnival approach is both fun and educational as students of all skills and learning styles master an author and collaboratively develop an event

**Author Study Resources:**

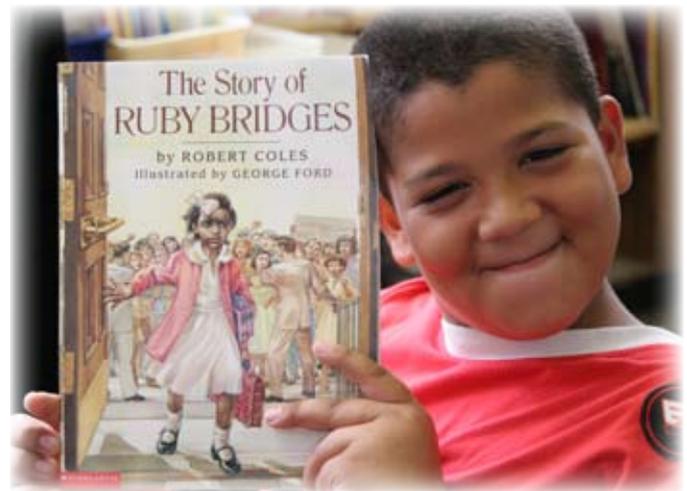
- Local Public Library can provide assistance in selecting an author and identifying books.
- Scholastic.com- Author Studies Home Page provides authors, lesson plans, and strategies.
- Various popular authors have pages devoted to author studies.

### ***Reading Groups: Harlem R.B.I.***

Imagine a school cafeteria filled to capacity with campers attired in their respective baseball team uniform listening to a fellow camper recommending a book he has read this summer. Envision the announcement of individual and team champions whose totals are based on runs earned by modeling the camps themes of Effort, Teamwork, and Respect.

Another successful camp season draws to a close at Harlem R.B.I. R.E.A.L. Kids (Reading and Enrichment Academy for Learning) which combines a structured a literacy and enrichment program with a baseball and softball sports program for children ages 9-12.

Deputy Director, Rachel Cytron explains “We think literature is a really good tool to explore same things as on teams. We see the whole program as a learning environment and don’t differentiate” between the classroom and the playing field. The success of the Harlem R.B.I. R.E.A.L. Kids is based on the interweaving of the cultivation of a love of reading and learning, development of physical skills and healthy bodies, and positive relationships with peers and adults through exploration of Harlem R.B.I.’s Values of Respect, Effort and Teamwork.



At the beginning of camp, students participate in tryouts. These tryouts involve not just throwing, catching, and batting, but also reading and writing assessment tests. Based on tryouts, campers are placed on teams, whose names are from the Negro League (Roberto Clemente Division/ Jackie Robinson Division), and issued uniforms, which they wear everyday.

The R.E.A.L. Kids Program operates around three main components: Literacy Workshops, Team Clubhouse, and Team Time. Grouped according to reading levels, players spend mornings in **Literacy Workshops**, which are led by a certified teacher and two college coaches who serve as assistant teachers.

The Literacy Workshop daily curriculum includes: *Read Alouds or Free Writes* designed to strengthen students' comprehension and their abilities to respond to literature both verbally and in writing; Independent Reading and Reading Response Journals in which players select books, magazines or newspapers of personal interest for independent reading and respond to what they have read in personal Reading Response Journals. Teachers review students' journals and discuss the journal writings as well as guide players in individual book conferences; Book Clubs where groups of campers work with teachers in guided reading practice; Mini-Lessons find teachers using engaging texts to improve players' skills in phonetic awareness, fluency and comprehension strategies; NY Times Style Book Reviews where campers write and publish at least one book review in order to complete the program.

After the morning Literacy Workshops, participants join their co-ed teams in Team Clubhouse sessions. A teacher from the Literacy Workshop and two college coaches engage participants in team building activities that complement materials covered during the Literacy Workshops. The Team Clubhouse curriculum includes: Team Time where Coaches lead a discussion about the teams' experiences on the field. Youth are given an opportunity to explore team norms, discuss conflict, and celebrate shared successes. Shared Writing/Group Challenge - At a weekly camp-wide community meeting, all youth receive a writing challenge that highlights a R.E.A.L. Kids Value theme (e.g., write a team cheer or a spoken word poem about teamwork). Active Team Building through group problem solving initiatives, conflict resolution role-plays, and other team building activities are offered each day; and lastly Project-based Learning - Youth develop a summer-long project to share with their families at the end of summer at R.E.A.L. Kids Exhibition Day. These projects commemorate team experiences, demonstrate group collaborations, and require youth to employ the four elements of literacy: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Projects have included: a video documentary, a simulated sports highlight show, life-sized baseball cards, a summer yearbook, and a history of baseball rap.

The remainder of the day is spent in Baseball/Softball Activities. Participants practice on the ballfield with their team or play against other R.E.A.L. Kids teams. Practice and play time provide R.E.A.L. Kids participants opportunities to build teamwork, communication and baseball/softball skills.

***Harlem R.B.I. R.E.A.L. Kids is the winner of the 2006 Excellence in Summer Learning Award by the Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University.***

## More Literacy Activities in the Summer

The following activities can be used in your camp regardless of your camp structure.

### Read Alouds

In a read aloud, the counselor reads aloud the selection to a group. Campers benefit by hearing something read well. Therefore the counselor has read the selection and practiced for fluency. A well-constructed read aloud provides multiple avenues for making of meaning, including discussion, vocabulary, and connection activities. A read aloud includes:

- pre-reading activity or discussion to familiarize campers with the selection: this could be a preview of the cover, predictions of what we think the selection is about, venn diagram, KWL chart (*see page 43*), game, discussion prompt.
- identification of vocabulary: select words with which the listeners will be unfamiliar as well as rich, descriptive words.
- discussion topics and questions for campers: identify where you will pause for discussion and generate questions for campers to discuss.
- connection activity: Here's the fun part – art, poetry, debate, cooking. There is no limit to activities that relate to the story selection and its theme.

### Paired Reading

As its name implies, paired reading involves two campers reading together. The two can be of different reading levels as the stronger reader can assist the weaker reader and model good reading. However the material must be matched to one reader's independent reading level. Paired reading should include the same pre-reading, vocabulary, discussion topics, and connection activities.

### Book Talks

In book talks, small groups read the same book independently and then participate in discussion of the book. Campers should be grouped with students at similar reading level to avoid frustration at reading too difficult or easy of a book. Book talks give campers autonomy as they read independently and lead their own discussions. The counselor's role is to facilitate discussion by generating a list of discussion topics or posing a specific question for discussion that session and providing post-it or journals for campers to take notes during reading and discussion.

**Journals**

While journals can take many forms, in general they provide an easy way for campers to collect their thoughts, develop vocabulary, document their summer experience, and respond critically to prompt. Journals can include drawings, mementoes and pictures from activities and field trips. Time can be scheduled for campers to share excerpts from journals. Counselors should collect journals and periodically review campers work.



***Check out Quick Literacy Activities and Word Games in the Resource Section***

# Math & Science

With all the focus on literacy, we often overlook the equally important areas of math and science.

## Math

**Both low and middle income students lose 2.6 months of grade level equivalency in computation skills over the summer. That is roughly a quarter of a school year lost.**

Researchers surmise that all students are less likely to practice math skills during the summer. Just as a gymnast or pianist retains and betters his skills by practice so too campers must be given opportunities to “practice” their computation skills.

Fortunately camp provides plenty of informal and fun ways in which to practice math skills. Remember any time you as a counselor needs to count, sort, or budget you can ask for a camper’s assistance. “Hey I count 33 bag lunches, can you double check for me?”

## Math Practice

- Calculate how long it will take to travel to a field trip location (computation)
- Write and follow recipes (fractions, measurements)
- Budget and expenses for field trip (computation)
- Staff and manage camp store (currency, decimals, computation)
- Scorekeepers and statisticians for games (computation, probability)
- Card games (numeracy, probability, computation, patterns)
- Weekly estimation (estimation)
- Problem of the day (word problems, logic puzzles and pattern recognition)

## Math Curriculum

After-School Math Plus, The Educational Equity Center at the Academy for Educational Development

AfterSchool KidzMath Curriculum, Developmental Studies Center

*Books You Can Count On: Linking Mathematics and Literature* by Rachael Griffiths and Margaret Clyne

## Math Games & Activities

*Beyond Facts & Flashcards: Exploring Math With Your Kids* by Jan Mokros

*Family Math* by Jean Stenmark, Virginia Thompson and Ruth Cossey

*I Hate Mathematics! Book* by Marilyn Burns

*Math for Smarty Pants* by Marilyn Burns

**Check out Quick Math Activities and Word Games in the Resource Section**

## Science

Fewer students are pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) even as our economy is growing dependent on people with these skills (NSF 2004, NASA 2003). Staff tend to shy away from science because they remember their own school science experience or feel as if they need to have an expertise. Science, however, can be a home run in camp. Activities are hands-on and many can be held outside. Kids are asked to use all their sense and can get wet or messy for the sake of science.

One of the best approaches to science you can take with campers is to practice the scientific method, the tool scientists use to answer questions. Observe a phenomenon. Make a hypothesis or theory as to why, test your hypothesis, and draw conclusions. Remember you are drawing your conclusions based on your observations. A hypothesis is more likely disproved than proved.

***Let's put this method to action:***

### **Fruit Punch vs. Lemonade**

Observed Phenomenon: more campers choose fruit punch over lemonade at lunch. Hypothesis: campers choose fruit punch because they like the red color.

**Test:** Put food coloring into fruit punch so that it is dark brown. Offer lemonade and colored fruit punch and see how many are consumed.

**Draw conclusions:** did less people, more or same number of campers select fruit punch.

It may not win you the Nobel Prize, but the above example demonstrates a fun way for campers to test out theories, construct experiments, and record observations. All of which are the tools of a scientist. There are no limits to theories to be put to the test during your summer camp.

### **Common Science Topics**

- Plant Seedlings
- Environment/Recycling
- Solar System/Moon Journal
- Weather
- Ecology
- Human Body/Health

### ***Science Curriculum and Resources***

*After-School Science Plus*, Educational Equity Center at the Academy for Educational Development

*Consumers Guide to AfterSchool Science Resources*, Lawrence Hall of Science UC Berkeley  
 Science Resource: Coalition for Science After-School

# Field Trips Full Out

## Strategies for Deepening the Experience

Field trips and other excursions during summer camp present a rich opportunity for discovery and learning. A well-conceived field trip provides exposure to ideas, cultures, and worlds previously unfamiliar to a camper or it can provide a new perspective on a familiar place.

Throughout a field trip a camper can be called upon to flex their skills in reading, writing, research, problem-solving, note-taking, group work, and the arts, to list but a few.

Field trips should be envisioned not merely as one-shot excursion to the local museum, but rather a learning experience with an intentional beginning, middle, and end that can extend over multiple camp sessions.

### Learning on Field Trips

#### **Questions to ask before any field trip:**

- What is the importance of the trip?
- How will this experience be used for learning?
- How will you know if the trip helps meet your goals?

#### **Pre-trip activities:**

- Relate the site and trip to the participant's learning experiences in some way.
- Introduce your field trip theme and/or the site through activities; use displays, photos or music, etc.
- Review site maps - when appropriate.
- Review rules and procedures.

#### **Field trip activities to keep the students engaged:**

- Speak with site personnel to acquaint them with campers' interests, experiences, skills and backgrounds.

- Find out what can the site offer to enhance your students' learning experiences. Many sites have an education department who can be helpful.
- Pose questions about the site to your students.
- Create opportunities for students to work alone and within groups.
- Document observations and make personal notes during the trip.

#### **Post-trip activities:**

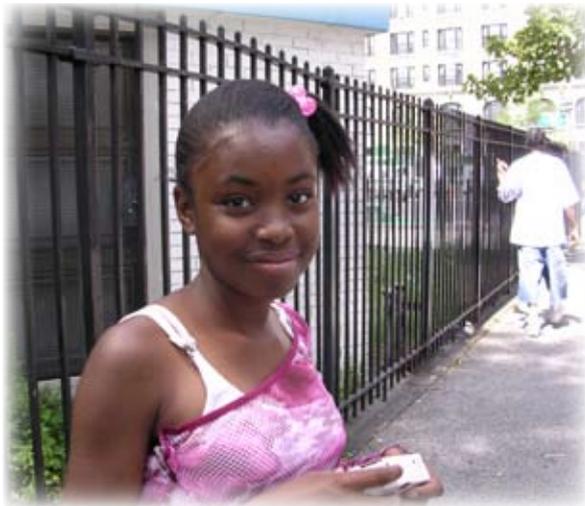
- Follow-up with discussion about the experience.
- Develop extension project based on trip.
- Review and analyze personal notes.
- Get feedback from the students and staff about their experiences using assessment forms or journals.

## Field Trips: a Multi-Session Design Approach

### Public Murals/Public Stories

Community murals, be they found in a school, government building, playground, or wall of shopping center, are public picture books, using a vivid visual text to tell a story. In this example, we used a trip to a national landmark, a former Customs House in Lower Manhattan to view WPA-sponsored murals as a complement to the camp's plans to spruce up the center's entrance with student's murals. These murals reflected the New

York City's heyday as a shipping center. Over the course of this mural project, campers tapped into their knowledge of community murals, gained some New York and national history, and challenged themselves to use a visual medium to tell a "story" that can be "read" by all.



In our example, the work involved in this project extended over numerous days. "Before the Trip" work was spread over two 45 minute blocks. The trip itself took ½ day. "After the Trip" took at least 4 sessions as campers created their entrance murals.

<b>Mural Project Field Trip Planning Guide: Trip Specifics</b>	
When	
Where	Customs House, Bowling Green, Manhattan
How	
Numbers	Children      Staff      Parents
Cost	No admission fee.
<b>Type of Trip:</b> Why are you taking the trip?	1) To observe Reginald Marsh WPA murals at Customs House to better understand how murals are form of narrative. 2) Identify techniques and ideas to create own community murals. 3) Learn about history of Customs House and New York City
<b>Before the Trip</b>	
Background Information	Vocabulary: mural, customs Who was Reginald Marsh WPA-sponsored murals
Discussion Topic	What are roles of murals? What oldest kind of mural (Cave man)? What examples of murals seen in city? Neighborhood? History of Customs House
Reading Material	Description of Customs House Excerpt on Reginald Marsh? Mural books
Project/Activity	List out murals in their community. Where are they located? What is the subject matter? How does the picture tell the story? Who is/are the artists?
<b>During the Trip</b>	
Guidelines	1) Go to Rotunda in CH. 2) Observe & sketch Murals
Observation/Focus	1) What story are these murals trying to tell? 2) Pick one mural that appeals to you. Why? 3) Make a sketch of the mural 4) What artistic choices did the muralist make?
Materials	Note taking guide, pencils, colored pencils
<b>After the Trip</b>	
Discussion Topic	Review note taking guide What story were murals telling? Why? What goes into making a mural? – Scale
Project/Activity	1) Working in small groups, design a mural that communicates a significant event/ person/spirit of your community that would go in community center entrance way. Sketch out draft. 2) Presentation to peers & feedback 3) Complete “murals” on large paper. 4) Mount completed murals in community center entrance way
Materials	Sketch paper, pencils, paper, arts materials (paint, markers)
Evaluation: What’s Evidence of Success?	1) Mural proposals; rationale 2) Murals 3) Discussion post trip 4) Assessment Forms (staff & students)

## Passport Model

A real passport has the stamps and dates from each country visited. A camp passport has a page for each field trip. The page can be laid out with space for campers to draw/glue picture or memento from trip and responses to trip “I will remember this trip because....” or “After this trip, I know....” Providing each camper with his/her passport is a fun and easy way for them to document each field trip. Campers are writing and making meaning of the trip and have a document to share with their parents and teachers in the fall. (Source: University Settlement).

## Low/No Cost Field Trips

Field trips do not have to set your camp budget back. While bowling, water parks, and movies can cost a camp a bundle, the bulk of your field trips can come at little to no cost. Any change of locale is greeted warmly by most campers. Remember your field trip goals should be a mixture of exposure, exploration, and fun.

- Local Sites: What’s in your immediate community (fire house, community garden, public mural, local businesses)?
- Cultural Performances: Tap into local cultural performances. Are there performances targeting young audiences? Are there free dress rehearsals?
- Museums and Cultural Institutions: Contact the education departments. Many have programs specifically designed for summer. As not-for-profits, many will be granted-funded to provide services at no cost or for a small fee.
- Parents’ Workplaces: Survey campers’ parents. What kind of jobs/sites of employment? Would any be interested in hosting a visit?

## A Word about Logistics

All the best plans and activities can be for naught if you don’t attend to the logistics of a field trip. Field trips are detail heavy experiences, but much of the planning can be done in advance. In fact, for many camps plotting out their field trips is first step in their planning process so they can ensure reservations for in-demand spots.

## Trip Preparation Checklist

### Visit the site ahead of time

- Review the site, check areas or exhibits of interest
- Get enough copies of maps or other literature about the site to develop activities and share with campers
- Are programs, tours or lessons available for your campers?
- What are the costs?
- Learn the rules and procedures for group visits
- Become familiar with the physical layout of the site
- Make plans for meals

### Make advanced arrangements

- Follow your agencies procedures for arranging field trips
- Contact the site and make reservations
- Arrange for necessary transportation
- Keep copies of all correspondence and confirmations
- Send out permission slips. Some camps have a master permission slips that lists all trips and dates. This saves tracking down permission slips for each trip
- Determine staff roles and if need additional chaperones
- Make payment arrangements for any trip expenses

### Preparations for the day of the trip

- Prepare supplementary materials for your own use
- Remind campers night before to wear camp t-shirts
- Review field trip plans with camp staff
- Explain staff's roles and duties
- Distribute an info/activity packet for staff (if haven't already)
- Gather what materials you will need for the trip... **DON'T FORGET FIRST AID!**
- Encourage bathroom visits before leaving
- Conduct head counts at all stages: before leave camp site, while traveling, before entering site, at lunch, etc.
- Regroup at periodic times for bathroom and meals

# Sneaking Up On Learning

## Opportunities for Learning in All Activities

Summer usually means fun for school kids- it's a break from school. In a summer camp environment, youth can experience new and creative ways to help shape and reinforce their learning. This can be a model for school learning as well.

Picture the outdoor area during free time.

What do you see?

A group of campers singing while demonstrating their developing double dutch skills. A fierce basketball game peppered with the occasional boisterous negotiation over a foul. Energetic six-year olds engaged in fantasy play with a decidedly complex storyline. Some campers seeking the cool of shade by the stairs, playing checkers or cards.

What you have envisioned is free time and campers electing to play or do what they want. However this snapshot also provides evidence of learning strategies at work.

In the complex rhymes of the double dutch, students are using memorization skills- essential for learning spelling, vocabulary, math facts, and social studies. The basketball players are engaged in group work, able to work as a team and reach agreement over infractions. The six-year olds' baroque storylines reveal the active imagination that thrives on the rich narratives found in the stories read aloud. These read-aloud also develop vocabulary, language skills and expand the child's knowledge base. The checker players are using strategic skills, problem solving, and planning as well as seeing patterns all evidence of higher level thinking.

As a camp director and staff you want to recognize the learning occurring in these moments. Encourage staff to point out to a camper what they are practicing, making that link to the skill or strategy the camper is using and its association with more formal learning.

Here are just few ideas to get you thinking about teachable moments:

### **Signage**

Everyday some piece of information needs to be communicated to the campers. A change in schedule, reminder about the swim trip on Friday, complaints about fooling around in the bathroom. Yes, as the camp director, you could stay late tussling with the jammed printer to print these up. However, here is a perfect opportunity for students to practice writing skills by having them create the signs and notices.

**Rule Books**

Campers are sticklers for rules. These folks may not read the game box for rules (or it may not have lasted through the first week), but they will have developed highly complex rules for the games. Encourage campers to write up the directions and rules for the games they play and invent and compile it in master camper rule book.

**Scorekeepers**

Assign a person to be scorekeeper for a game. Have them record scores and practice their computation skills simultaneously. Teach camper to keep statistics on a basketball game percentage of free throws and baskets per game; number of penalties.

**Assistants**

We are not talking the violation of labor laws, we promise. You need to dispense snack. Call in two campers to help you. "We've got 50 kids and 5 tables, divide up the snack equally." Perfect way for campers to put their math skills to work.

**Rhymes**

Camper is still struggling to remember his times tables. Turn it into a rhythmic chant. Take a topic you're studying and turn into a rhyming rap.

None of these activities require advance planning. Rather it is seizing that teachable moment and giving license to your and the campers' imaginations.



# Selecting, Developing, and Supporting the Summer Staff

In order to stage a successful summer program, considerable time should be spent selecting the staff and developing the summer curriculum/program plan. The effectiveness of the summer staff can be the deciding factor as to whether your summer program is successful or not. For staff it is the one time a year when they are not inhibited by the public school calendar or testing schedule. They are free to create programs and activities which inspire the youth to try new things and visit places that are only accessible in the summertime.

If you start planning your summer program early enough then you will have time to put all of the pieces into place before the first day of camp.

Below is a suggested timeline you can use to help with planning your summer program. This timeline is a guide you can use to map out your staff training and development calendar and help you in planning your summer program.

## **March/April**

- Begin thinking about possible summer themes
- Begin brainstorming summer goals/outcomes for youth
- Assess resources needed including current staffing, supplies, and budget

## **May**

- Start formalizing summer program plans with returning summer staff
- Hire new staff

## **June**

- Hire any additional new staffing
- Finalize summer plans
- Intensive summer training begins

## **July/August**

- Summer program begins
- Weekly check-in meetings for staff
- Continue staff training

## Assessing Program and Staff Roles

In early spring, start thinking about your vision for the summer program. Once you have a basic concept of how you want the summer program to look, you should ask the following questions:

- What are your outcomes/goals for the summer program?
- What projects do you want the staff and campers to complete by the end of the summer?
- Do you have the staffing necessary to accomplish your goals?
- What is your budget for staffing?

For example, if you would like your campers to collectively produce a summer newsletter illustrating all of the activities and trips which occurred throughout the summer, then you will need staff members who are good at editing articles/stories, newsletter layout and design, and creative writing. If you do not have staff members on board with these skills then you must either teach your current staff members these skills or hire new staff members who possess them. Occasionally it is easier to hire new staff with the skills you need but in the event of budgetary constraints that might not be possible. An alternative to hiring a whole new summer staff is to assess the skills of your current staff and develop a training plan to teach them the skills you need them to possess for the summer program. You might be surprised to learn that your staff may have inadvertently hidden some special skills or talents from you.

## Questions for Assessing Current/Returning Staff

In assessing your current or returning staff, it is important for you as the director to both independently reflect as well as pose questions to the staff. Here are some examples of questions:

- How can each member contribute?
- Who on staff has the skills necessary to accomplish the specific tasks of the summer program? (have the specific tasks and requisite skills written out)
- Who is eager to learn a new skill or take on a more demanding role?
- What are some of your personal passions and talents that you would like to share?
- What are your future aspirations?
- What have you found to be successful working with our participants/campers?
- What have you found to be challenging working with our participants/campers?
- What would you say the participants/campers most enjoy about our program?

Once you have obtained the answers to these questions whether through one-on-one meetings or a survey, then you are ready to plan your summer program and create the staff development plan. Use the information you gathered to determine whether your staff is capable of implementing your original vision for the summer program or what adjustments must be made to your plans. If you find that some of your staff are missing essential skills or knowledge pertinent to the implementation of your summer program, then make sure you provide them with the opportunity to develop those skills during your staff trainings. Lastly now you need to begin to hire new staff.

## Hiring New Staff

In hiring new staff, you are looking for someone who can complete the rigors of the job as well as someone who will fit in with their fellow staff members. Remember just because someone has the requisite skills does not mean they will be well-suited to the culture of the camp. In developing an interview protocol, beside their education and prior experience, it is important to capture:

- How they would respond to an emergency situation
- Ideas for a sample lesson based on a topic
- How they would communicate with co-workers
- How they would communicate with campers
- Their vision for a summer learning environment

## Staff Training and Development

When you are developing your staff training plan, you should also include the following key elements:

- An orientation/overview of the vision for the summer program
- Explanation of the theory behind Summer Learning Loss
- Examples of best practices in Summer Learning (video available from PASE)
- Descriptions of staff roles and responsibilities (include safety and field trips)
- Strategies and tools they need to be successful including program content and positive group and behavior management
- Opportunities to build staff unity and teamwork

The first order of staff training is to **build staff unity and teamwork**. While training time is limited, time spent on group building activities can yield a big payoff with a cohesive, committed team of employees. Staff unity and teamwork can be developed through 1) stand-alone group building activities (getting to know one another; problem-solving; goal-setting) 2) co-planning program offerings; 3) identification of camp tasks and routines and soliciting from staff their role in completing tasks. You can avoid many grievances by having everyone understand their role in lunch distribution, travel safety, etc; and 4) and discussion of the goals for the summer program. When your staff gets time to connect with each other, they build trust, community and open communication. This transfers to the youth and is a healthy model for them to emulate.

You should explain the term **Summer Learning Loss** and give the staff an opportunity to **discuss what Summer Learning means to them**. Staff can discuss their memories of summer camp and what they enjoyed the most about it. They should understand that infusing literacy and math activities into the summer program is not an attempt to replicate the school day or summer school, but rather a way to make learning fun for the kids. Nor are they expected to raise a camper's grade level in reading, writing, or math by the end of the summer. They are expected to keep children actively learning throughout the summer. The staff should brainstorm ways to make summer learning fun for the kids. They should have the opportunity to experience fun and engaging activities that support literacy and math skills and feel as though they have a stake in the design and theme of the summer program.

***Below is a list of possible topics for staff trainings:***

- What is the Summer Learning Gap/Overview of Summer Learning
- Summer Literacy Activities
- Summer Math Activities
- Supporting Summer Learning through Games and Activities
- Maximizing Learning thru Trips

Once your staff starts to expand their definition of Summer Learning then they will be able to enjoy and embrace the concept. Since this concept of Summer Learning might be new to your staff, you should plan several trainings which are geared specifically to developing activities, that promote literacy and math development. These trainings will help your staff to develop and implement activities that support literacy and math skills throughout summer camp.

If possible, staff should visit agencies, which have successfully implemented activities that promote summer learning. If your staff is unable to visit an agency then you can request the Closing the Summer Learning Loss tape produced by PASE. This tape provides an overview of summer learning loss and highlights several successful summer programs. It is a great tool that you can use to introduce the concept of Summer Learning to your staff and show actual examples of activities that worked well.

### **On-Going Staff Trainings and Meetings**

Once your summer program begins, you should schedule weekly meetings to check-in with your staff. Summer programming can be a very stressful time for staff. The program days are longer, the weather is hot, and staff often finds themselves surrounded by throngs of children constantly looking to be engaged. They will need your support and the support of their colleagues to keep their energy up and passion ignited. Even if the meeting is no more than thirty minutes, you should check-in with them regularly. Regularly scheduled meetings gives staff the opportunity to share their successes and ask for help when they need it.

Staff meeting and trainings are an opportunity for staff to teach and learn from one another. During staff training they should take turns modeling for the entire staff which activities worked well and discuss which activities didn't go as planned. During this exchange, the staff will have the opportunity to leave the meeting with several different activities or strategies that they can use with their groups. Staff should also learn tips on behavior management, how to develop a lesson plan, and receive strategies on what to do with the kids when you have tried everything and nothing is working. **With time so precious in the summer, it is important that staff members walk away from a meeting with tools and activities in their pocket.**

***Scheduling staff meetings can be a challenge. Below are suggestions for finding the time:***

- Budget an extra hour for staff time and program staff meetings into master schedule.
- Buy staff lunch and hold during their lunch hour one day/week.
- Stagger staff coverage and do smaller pullout meetings with counselors.

## **Integrating Summer Youth Employees/Teen Assistants into your Staff**

The young teen workers should be treated as though they were new staff members joining your team. They should attend all staff orientations and meetings and receive an overview of the program goals, rules, and staffing. Ask for their input on what they would like to contribute to the summer program and stress to them the importance of their role. Too often teen counselors are unsure of their roles. “I’m there to assist, but assist what?” Remember you are developing future lead counselors. It is strongly recommended that you create a work plan (sample included) with your teen workers, which details their projects and responsibilities for the summer.

### ***You should also:***

- Help the teen worker get familiar with the program and staff by inviting them to observe the camp in action before they actually begin.
- Work with staff to plan out how they will utilize the teen workers.
- Involve the teen workers in ongoing activity planning.
- When possible, invite teen workers to staff meetings.
- Provide teen workers with ongoing guidance and feedback.
- Give teen workers time to ask questions and share information with the staff.

## **Other Players: Volunteers, Parents and Tutors**

### **Volunteers**

Line staff is often uncomfortable providing supervision to volunteers. Spend time clarifying roles and how to work together. On-going training and meetings can be extended to your volunteer.

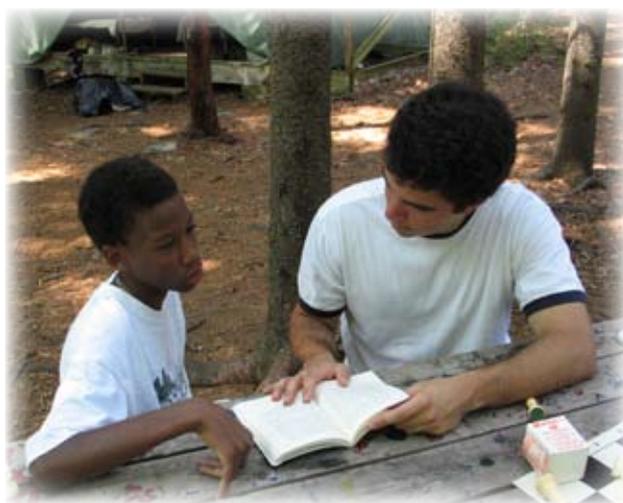
- When appropriate, involve volunteers in meetings.
- Invite volunteers to shadow stronger staff members as mentors or buddies.
- Tap into your volunteers’ talents and abilities. Aside from providing assistance, they may have something special to offer the program too.
- They should receive an overview of the summer program and be informed of all summer goals.

### **Community Service Learners**

Some volunteers are high school or college students working in the program for their own learning experience. Creating an environment for teachable moments in professional development helps these staff members get the most out of their experience. Invite community service learners to set up a few goals for themselves. Journals, weekly meetings, or a final project are great ways for them to document and process their discoveries. Tap into their skills and talents! Aside from assisting with activities or other regular volunteer duties, provide your community service learners with work that allows them to enhance their skills, while practicing and enhancing learning from their experience in the camp program.

### **Parents**

Parents are a wonderful asset to your program. Invite them to an orientation meeting to review the summer program, goals, rules and expectations. At this orientation survey parents to find out their special skills, talents, or hobbies and distribute a sign-up sheet to collect names of parents who are willing to be contacted for support. You may discover that some parents possess certain skills that you can use to enhance your program. You could use parents to come in to speak to your students once a week about different careers or they help facilitate an activity once a week. Remember it doesn't cost anything to ask!



### **Utilizing a tutor**

A tutor can be a valuable resource. Besides providing specialized services for individuals and small groups, s/he can help children learn new talents, skills and activities. Tutors can teach the staff new or unfamiliar techniques and methods of delivering and enhancing learning and recreational activities.

### **Value each and every staff member**

Everyone has something special to offer! The greater staff members are aware of their value, the greater motivation and cohesion you will see in your program! The same goes for the youth.

# Assessment

That initial question that guided your summer planning: “What do I want my campers to know by summer’s end?” However you answered that question, the follow-up question is “how will I know if campers learned it?” There are any numbers of ways to measure the acquisition of knowledge and development of campers.

## Informal Assessment

In every session plan, you should have a basic answer as to what will be your definition of success for that activity. For example if the big idea of your read-aloud is friendship, then your outcome could be that campers held a discussion on the qualities of a good friend. Your collection method could be observation, notes from discussion and journal work.

## Project-based Assessment

For campers a final project or performance is the most fun and interesting way to demonstrate what they know. This final project/performance has them pull together the various strands of what they have been learning and showcase acquired skills and knowledge in a creative format.

## Games

Jeopardy-style games are another fun way for you to assess what campers have gained from a topic especially if the topic involves data and facts.

## 3-2-1 Reflection and KWL Charts

3-2-1 Reflection has campers reflecting on what they have learned by completing the following prompts:

**3 - Things You Found Out**

**2 - Interesting Things You Want to Share with Others**

**1 - Question You Still Have**

Depending upon what you are teaching, you can modify the 3-2-1 anyway you want.

The KWL Chart stands for:

**K - What do I already know about topic?**

**W - What do I want to learn?**

**L - What I did learn?**

The K & W are completed before you start a topic and the L post lesson. The KWL chart can be completed individually or by the entire group and is a quick and easy method for engaging youth with their learning.

## **Formal Assessment**

Rubrics, observations, and surveys are more formal methods for collecting data on your program. These instruments help to identify program strengths and weaknesses as well as outcomes. These can be completed by campers and staff to provide the richest perspective on what is being assessed (Source: Anita Baker Consulting).

### ***Rubric***

An assessment method created and used by campers and staff to rate level of progress. A rubric contains performance criteria, a scale, and levels of proficiency.

### ***Observation***

Observations work best when conducted repeatedly within a selected timeframe (e.g. an entire afternoon session, mid-week, at various set points during program cycle) of routine events and presentations. Can be used to measure individual and group outcomes, depending on how observations are focused.

### ***Surveys***

Usually administered as written questionnaires, with either open-ended or pre-coded responses. Surveys are ideal for seeking information from a large number of participants, but do not provide much depth. Can be used to measure knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, and to gather specific information about program involvement and participants. When used a single time, surveys are best for information gathering and needs assessment. To measure change, surveys have to be conducted before (pre-program survey) and after (post-program survey).

The following page shows examples of each using the elements of a successful field trip.

**Rubric: Staff Field Trip Assessment Rubric**

**Goal/Objective**

<b><i>Campers were:</i></b>	<b><i>Not Meeting Expectations</i></b>	<b><i>Progressing</i></b>	<b><i>Proficient</i></b>	<b><i>Exemplary</i></b>
Engaged in field trip by asking questions & exploring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exposed to new ideas or concepts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participated in creation of final project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Given opportunities to demonstrate knowledge/create something (written paragraph, sketch, pictures for project, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked successfully with other group members to complete project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Able to exercise choice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excited about final product	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Rubric: Camper Field Trip Assessment Rubric**

**Goal/Objective**

<b><i>I was:</i></b>	<b><i>Not Meeting Expectations</i></b>	<b><i>Progressing</i></b>	<b><i>Proficient</i></b>	<b><i>Exemplary</i></b>
Interested in the field trip	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exposed to something new	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asked questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An active participate in creation of final project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Given opportunities to demonstrate knowledge/create something (written paragraph, sketch, pictures for project, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked successfully with other group members to complete project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Able to exercise choice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excited about final product	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Observation: Staff Observation

### Activity: Field Trip

<i>In today's activities were campers:</i>					
	No, Not At All	No, Not Yet, (But Will)	Yes, Somewhat	Yes, A Lot	Don't Know
Engaged in field trip by asking questions and exploring	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Exposed to new ideas or concepts	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Active participants in the creation of a final project	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Able to make connections to their culture and lives outside the program	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Able to successfully work with other group members to complete project	<input type="checkbox"/>				
If you answered "No, Not At All" for any questions:					
Any particular group?					
Why do you think that might be?					
What changes would you make for next time?					

## Survey: Student Field Trip Survey

<i>Name:</i>	<i>Date:</i>		
	Yes	No	Sort Of...
Did you find the field trip fun?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain:			
Did you learn anything on the field trip?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain:			
Did you get to ask questions and express thoughts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you get the chance to be part of the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain:			
Did you enjoy working with other members of the group?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain:			

# Connections to School Year

If one of our goals is for campers to return to school ready to learn, then it behooves camps to take the steps to make connections with the campers' school year setting. While camps may draw campers from a variety of neighborhoods and schools which makes significant linkages with school impractical, there are some relatively easy ways for schools to know just what work has been done with their students.

## State Curriculum

Find out the state curriculum topics by grade and think about how you might explore the topic in the summer camp. For example, in 4th grade, social studies curriculum covers Colonial America. The camp theme "Back in Time" could have students exploring food and culture in Colonial America.

## Communication with School

Identify what schools your campers attend and send the principal and curriculum specialists a letter which describes what and how you studied during the summer. List the campers that attend their school and ask that they distribute the letter to the respective classroom teachers.

## Camper Journal

Encourage campers to share their journals and other projects from their summer camp with their classroom teacher so the teacher can see just what the student learned and thought about their learning during the summer.



# Resources: Literacy

## Quick Literacy Activities

### Literacy Activity: Who Am I

**Purpose:** Tap background information about genre or assess retention or interest of book(s) read.

**Stage of group:** Any though good during middle and end to confirm content

**Materials:** Tape, scrap paper or index cards

**Size of group:** Any size

**Instructions:**

- Write names of books and/or character from book that group has read or with whom participants will be familiar.
- State name and purpose of the activity.
- Without participants seeing card, tape card face forward on their backs.
- When all taped, have participants circulate asking yes or no questions to determine who they are.
- If guess correctly, place card on your front and assist others

**NOTE:** Good to model yes and no questions with children before they begin.

**Variation:** You can do this with any topic area (food, countries, animals, etc.)

### Literacy Activity: Headliners

**Purpose:** Community building and literacy.

**Stage of group:** Beginning through middle

**Materials:** Newspapers, front page template, paper, pens, markers

**Size of group:** Any size

**Instructions:**

- Discuss the front page of a newspaper. The role of headlines, pictures, text.
- Have participants create front page of newspaper about themselves. "Article" prompts are encouraged as such "One thing I'm excited to try this summer" or "My favorite summer day"

**Variation:** Pair up participants. Have them interview one another and create a front page on partner.

**Literacy Activity: Everything Has a Story**

**Purpose:** Get to know your community building. Can also serve as brainstorm for writing experience.

**Stage of group:** Any time – though good for a group that already has some knowledge of each other because sharing will be richer.

**Materials:** None

**Size of group:** Any size

**Instructions:**

- Ask participants to identify something on their person (could be jewelry, something in their pocket, etc.) that has a story attached to it.
- Encourage people to identify something that is significant in their lives and has meaning to them
- Everyone takes a turn to show their object and to explain why they chose it.
- Debrief: Did you learn anything new about your colleague? Get to know them better?

**NOTE:** good to model yes and no questions with children before they begin.

**Variation:** Use this activity as warmup/brainstorm to identifying a writing topic.

**Literacy Activity: Sense Program**

**Purpose:** Energizer, literacy.

**Stage of group:** Middle

**Materials:** Paper, pencils, chart paper & markers, opening line prompts.

**Size of group:** Any size

**Instructions:** Take two minutes to envision some place they will all have knowledge of (i.e. program, subway, playground).

**Individual Poem:** Distribute sense starter prompts “Look around my \_\_\_ and you will see...” “Breathe deep in my \_\_\_ and you will smell....” “Listen carefully and you will hear...” Be creative with prompts, but tap the five sense as well as one or two emotions. Allow participants to complete. Once completed, share with others

**Group Poem:** Have prompts written on chart paper mounted throughout room. Participants add response to each chart. Invite volunteers to read completed charts aloud. Encourage them to be creative in their delivery.

**Literacy Activity: GoTogethers**

**Purpose:** Energizer, vocabulary development, categorization.

**Materials:** None

**Size of group:** Any size

**Instructions:**

- Pick a category, i.e. winter words: sled, snow, cold. . . Go around room and have each child add aloud a word to category.
- Record words on list
- Note: to switch it up, read word, one at a time from category. Let child try to guess category after each word is read aloud.

**Literacy Activity: Word Phrase Relay**

**Purpose:** Energizer/tap into background knowledge/teamwork.

**Stage of group:** Any

**Materials:** Chart paper and markers

**Size of group:** Large enough for two relay teams

**Instructions:**

- Divide group into two equal teams
- Select a word that is related to topic studying, i.e. neighborhoods
- Write the word vertically on two sheets of chart paper and place them parallel on the wall.
- Have teams stand equal distance back from sheets
- First person from each team runs to sheet of paper, takes first letter from word and writes word that begins with that letter that is related to that topic, i.e. Neighborhoods, N – noisy. They run back and hand marker to the next person who adds word to second letter, etc.
- First team to use all the letters and complete word wins

**Literacy Activity: Book Covers**

**Purpose:** Get to know you/community building/literacy – consider how & why we select books.

**Stage of group:** Any though good at the beginning of group or unit.

**Materials:** Childrens books.

**Size of group:** Any size

**Instructions:**

- Have a variety of children’s books on display.
- Give participants time to browse
- Ask them to select a book that speaks to them.
- Once done, find a partner and discuss why they selected that book. For example, the colors, funny title, recognize the author.

**Literacy Activity: ABC’s**

**Purpose:** Teamwork, cooperation, listening skill development.

**Materials:** None

**Size of group:** Large

**Instructions:**

- Everyone in group closes their eyes. Participants are told that as a group they are going to recite the alphabet. Only one person may give one letter at a time.
- Anytime two people speak at the same time, the group starts back at the beginning.

**Literacy Activity: Group Story**

**Purpose:** Literacy/Teamwork

**Stage of group:** End of group/activity

**Materials:** Paper and pens.

**Size of group:** Any Size

**Instructions:** A participant of group shares a sentence. Each next participant adds to that sentence to create a story.

**Literacy Activity: Parts of Speech****Purpose:** Literacy/Teamwork**Materials:** Index cards**Size of group:** Any size**Instructions:**

- Each person in a group is assigned a part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, if have 56 people add prepositional phrase and another adjective or prepositional phrase).
- Players think of a word matching their part of speech and then reveal it to their group. Group has to arrange words to create a sentence
- Optional part includes writing words on cards so participants can see their sentences and move words around.
- If have several groups, can have participants line up in order of their words and go down line reciting their word of the sentence to the group.

**Literacy Activity: Team Sentences****Purpose:** Practice writing & spelling; understand sentence structure; build anticipatory thinking skills; teamwork.**Goal:** For participants, working in teams, to race against one another to formulate a sentence to which each team member has added a word.**Materials:** Blackboard with chalk for each team OR newsprint and marker for each team**Instructions:**

- Explain that the participants will be competing to see which team is the first to complete a group sentence.
- Divide into teams of 6 to 10 participants. If the group contains an uneven number, one participant may compete twice.
- Set up blackboards or newsprint for each team.
- Teams line up 5 to 10 feet from their board. After giving the first person in each team's line a piece of chalk or marker, the leader explains the rules of the game. The rules are as follows: Each team member is responsible for adding one word to the sentence. The players take turns; after they go to the board and write one word, they run back to give the next player the marker, and then go to the end of the line. (The sentence must contain the same number of words as there are members on the team.) A player may not add a word between words that have already been written.
- Process the activity with a discussion on sentence structure, the value of anticipatory thinking, and group cooperation & support of team members.
- Can add a level of challenge by having each person go twice to make a longer sentence.

**Literacy Activity: Goofy Sentences**

**Purpose:** Understand parts of a sentence; understand sentence structure; creative thinking; team work.

**Goal:** Create goofy sentences that are structurally correct using words brainstormed about a specific theme.

**Materials:** Index cards, markers, newsprint.

**Instructions:**

- Explain that participants will be competing to see which team can come up with the goofiest sentence that is grammatically and structurally correct.
- Divide into smaller teams of 4-5 participants (punctuation, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions). Can brainstorm 12 of the categories as a large group if teams would be too small or to demonstrate what they will do.
- Give each team 10 to 20 index cards and a few markers
- Teams brainstorm a list of words from their category and write one word per index card.
- Cards are mixed up and teams are given a selection of cards from each of the categories. Teams compete to create the goofiest sentences using the cards they have received. As an additional piece, teams can combine their sentences to make a story.
- Process the activity with a discussion on sentence structure, sentences in sequence to create a story, critical thinking, and group cooperation.

**Literacy Activity: Magic Squares**

**Purpose:** Reinforce vowel sounds and vowel diagraphs; Encode words.

**Goal:** Create as many new words using vowel sound in center.

**Materials:** Magic Square Board.

**Instructions:**

- Start in any letter box and move from one letter to another to make a word. Horizontal, vertical, and diagonal moves are permitted.
- Do not jump over any letter. A letter from a box may be doubled.
- 3 Points for 3 letter word; 4 Points for 4 letter word, etc.

**Magic Square Sample:**

CH	I	W
B	A	R
M	SH	P

**Literacy Activity: Same or Different****Purpose:** Literacy – Practice with lookalike words**Materials:** Strips of paper**Size of group:** 1-3**Instructions:**

- On each strip of paper, draw a line down the middle. On each side of the line, write two sets of letters. Make some of them the same, and some different

rstu	rstp
------	------

- Hold strips down, so player can't see. Then flip strip over for 12 seconds for player to view. Then turn strip writing side down again.
- Ask player "were the two sets of letters the same or different?" Flip strip over to check answer with student. Continue through pile (say 10 at a sitting).
- Note: Mix it ups between sets of letters and real works.

**Literacy Activity: Rabbit Jump****Purpose:** Reinforce letter and blend sounds through a variation on hopscotch.**Materials:** Chalk or post-its and tape.**Size of group:** 12 youth**Instructions:**

- Design a playing board that resembles a hopscotch board. Instead of numbers in the center, place letters and blends. If outside, can draw board on ground with chalk. If inside can use tape to demarcate a hopscotch board and place labeled postit notes inside each square.
- Tell child which lettered square to jump to, but don't name the letter. Instead, call out "jump to the first sound in donkey" or "jump to the square that sounds like "duh".
- When child jumps to square, have him name letter and sound.
- If child doesn't know the name of the sound, then tell them and let them jump.

**Note:** Create your board, depending on the age and skill level of the child. A more challenging board might include vowels, vowel and consonant blends.

**Literacy Activity: Where's the Sound: Beginning, Middle or End**

**Purpose:** Reinforce letter sounds.

**Materials:** Three paper cups, jellybeans/skittles, treats that are small and can be tossed.

**Size of Group:** 12 youth

**Instructions:**

- Place cups in a horizontal line on floor (or table). From left to right, label cups beginning, middle, end.
- Ask child to identify where in the word a sound appears. For example, "where's the d sound in detective" or where's the "where's the v sound in television" Child drops the candy in the cup where he thinks sounds occurs. Have child say word and sound. If correct he gets to eat the candy, if wrong, then not.

**Note:** can add level of difficulty for older students, by making a farther toss.

**Literacy Activity: Syllable Detective**

**Purpose:** Practice counting syllables.

**Materials:** Paper & pencils.

**Size of Group:** Any Size

**Instructions:**

- Tell students, today they are going to be detectives and on the search for syllables.
- Alone or in pairs, students are asked to go around room and identify as many multisyllable words as they can in a 5 minute time period.
- They will be award points based on number of syllables. For example, "chalkboard" = 2 points; "eraser" = 3 points.
- Child with most points, correctly identified wins.

# Resources: Math

## Quick Math Activities

### Math Activity: Beach Ball Multiplier

**Purpose:** Practice math operations; Develop handeye coordination.

**Materials:** Beach ball with the numbers 0 through 9 written/taped on ball. Distribute numbers evenly around ball

**Size of group:** Any size

**Instructions:**

- Have group stand in circle
- For each round, decide on operation, i.e. addition
- Have students toss ball to one another. As the catch ball with two hands they identify the two numbers their hands cover. Then they must perform the operation, i.e. "2+9".
- Keep ball tossing and switch up operations as see fit.

### Math Activity: Guess My Number

**Purpose:** Reinforce various math facts; logic.

**Materials:** Board/Chart Paper

**Size of group:** Any size

**Instructions:**

- Write numbers 1 through 20 on the board/paper. Beneath numbers, draw t-shape, label one side yes, the other no.
- Identify a number; write it on a piece of paper.
- Using yes and no questions, ask students to try to guess the number you wrote down.
- As students ask question, mark question in yes/no column. After each question, student can guess number.
- Keep playing until number guessed.

**Math Activity: Place Value**

**Purpose:** Reinforce place value.

**Goal:** With each participant holding a number, create multi-digit number.

**Materials:** Index cards with numbers 0 through 9 on each card.

**Size of Group:** 26

**Instructions:**

- Give each participant an index card with a number from 1 to 9 on it. No duplicate numbers
- Have group stand in front of room and face rest of class/facilitator
- Reinforce reading numbers from left to right
- Teacher/student calls out a number and those with the digits step forward to create that number
- Recommend that you start with two digit numbers and increase depending on skills and size of group

**Variations:** encourage speed; equations

**Math Activity: Make the Number**

**Purpose:** Practice operations.

**Goal:** Taking turns, consider all possible operations to create identified number, i.e. 20 until can no more combinations left.

**Materials:** None

**Size of Group:** Large

**Instructions:**

- Write numbers 1 through 20 on the board.
- As individuals or pairs, ask participants to identify an operation with those numbers that make 20. For example,  $7 + 13 = 20$ .
- If the operation is correct, cross out those two numbers.
- Continue until there are no more combinations left
- Variations: a) Kids can play this together in pairs after it has been modeled for them. B) For younger children have it only go up to 10.

**Math Activity: Math Tag**

**Purpose:** Practice operations; Exercise; Mental math.

**Goal:** Students practice operations while trying to be not tagged.

**Materials:** None

**Size of group:** Large

**Instructions:**

- Have students stand in two lines facing each other. You want an even number
- Identify a base on either side of lines. Just enough distance for students to run to.
- Standing at the head of the line, announce operation the students will be using, i.e. addition
- Call out two numbers.
- Using the identified operation each child must solve for those two numbers.
- Facing your pair, the first to call it out correctly, run to identified base
- The partner, who did not call out the number, must now try to tag that person before they reach base.

# Resources: Reproducible Forms

## Summer Block Plan

<b>Projected Timeline</b>	
<b>Sessions:</b>	<b>Total Hours:</b>
<b>Activity/Topic:</b>	
<b>Teaching Staff:</b>	
<b>Theme:</b>	
<b>Guiding Questions:</b>	
1)	
2)	
3)	
<b>Learning Goals</b>	
<b>Campers will understand:</b>	
<b>Campers will be able to:</b>	
<b>Assessment:</b>	
<b>Final Project/Culminating Event:</b>	

**Block Plan Project/Activities**

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Objective/s:</b>  <b>Activity/ies:</b>	<b>Resources &amp; Materials:</b>
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Objective/s:</b>  <b>Activity/ies:</b>	<b>Resources &amp; Materials:</b>
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Objective/s:</b>  <b>Activity/ies:</b>	<b>Resources &amp; Materials:</b>
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Objective/s:</b>  <b>Activity/ies:</b>	<b>Resources &amp; Materials:</b>

# Resources: Reproducible Forms

## Session Activity Plan

<b>Activity:</b>
<b>Goal:</b>
<b>Materials:</b>
<b>Directions:</b>
<b>Evaluation:</b>
<b>Role of Assistants during Activity:</b>
<b>Modifications:</b>

## Field Trip Planning Guide

Trip Specifics			
<b>When:</b>			
<b>Where:</b>			
<b>How:</b>			
<b>Numbers:</b>	# Children:	# Staff:	# Parents:
<b>Cost:</b>			
<b>Type of Trip: Why are you taking the trip?</b>			
Before the Trip:			
<b>Background Information:</b>			
<b>Discussion Topic:</b>			
<b>Reading Material:</b>			
<b>Project/Activity:</b>			
During the Trip:			
<b>Guidelines:</b>			
<b>Observation/Focus:</b>			
<b>Materials:</b>			
After the Trip:			
<b>Discussion Topic:</b>			
<b>Project Activity:</b>			
<b>Evaluation: Evidence of Success?</b>			

### Staff Rubric

<b>Goal/Objective:</b>				
<b>Campers were:</b>	<b>Not Meeting Expectations</b>	<b>Prograssing</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
Engaged in activity by asking questions & exploring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exposed to new ideas or concepts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participated in creation of final project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Given opportunities to demonstrate knowledge/create something (written paragraph, sketch, pictures for project, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked successfully with other group members to complete project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Able to exercise choice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excited about final product	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Camper Rubric

<b>Goal/Objective:</b>				
<b>I was:</b>	<b>Not Meeting Expectations</b>	<b>Prograssing</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
Interested in the activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exposed to something new	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Able to ask questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An active participant in creation of final project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Able to show what I learned and create something	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Able to work with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Able to have choices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excited about final product	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Observation: Staff Observation

### Activity:

<i>In today's activities were campers:</i>					
	No, Not At All	No, Not Yet, (But Will)	Yes, Somewhat	Yes, A Lot	Don't Know
Engaged in activity by asking questions and exploring	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Exposed to new ideas or concepts	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Active participants in the creation of a final project	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Able to make connections to their culture and lives outside the program	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Able to successfully work with other group members to complete project	<input type="checkbox"/>				
If you answered "No, Not At All" for any questions:					
Any particular group?					
Why do you think that might be?					
What changes would you make for next time?					

## Survey: Student Survey

<i>Name:</i>	<i>Date:</i>		
	Yes	No	Sort Of...
Did you find the activity fun?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain:			
Did you learn anything?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain:			
Did you get to ask questions and express thoughts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you get the chance to be part of the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain:			
Did you enjoy working with other members of the group?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain:			

### Supporting Literacy Sample Agenda

Time	Content	Who	Materials
15 Minutes	<p><b>Opening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feelings Barometer (How do you feel about summer camp ?)</li> <li>• Welcome</li> <li>• Opening activity: Sock Game</li> <li>• Training overview</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign-in sheets</li> <li>• Chart Paper</li> <li>• Feelings Barometer</li> <li>• Socks, beanie babies,</li> <li>• Agendas</li> </ul>
60 Minutes	<p><b>Supporting Literacy (10 min)</b> No single approach to literacy is ideal for all youth because literacy is affected by the experiences, cultures and learning styles</p> <p><b>Camp Theme Jumble (15 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Object of the game is to make as many words as you can out of the camp theme, i.e. rain forest. The group who finds the most words wins</li> <li>• Break large group into groups of 4-5</li> <li>• Groups must make as many smaller words out of the camp theme</li> <li>• Groups read out words. Which group had the most words (repeats not counted). How many words did we create as whole?</li> </ul> <p><b>Camp Theme Skits (25 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groups must use as many words on their list to write a skit, commercial, rap, song, or poem related to the theme of the camp.</li> </ul> <p><b>Debrief (10 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did this activity support literacy</li> <li>• How can it be adapted?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing Literacy handout</li> <li>• 5 sets of letters spelling camp theme</li> <li>• Markers</li> <li>• Library lists</li> <li>• Cardboard pieces</li> <li>• Chart Paper</li> </ul>
15 Minutes	<p><b>Spread the News (Closure)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On index cards print the following: Bugs Bunny &amp; Co., soap opera, newscast, talk show, situation comedy, game show. Distribute one index card per group. Tell group to present highlights or something that they learned from the training in the format described on the card. The presentation should be 3-5 minutes.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Index Card</li> </ul>

## Summer Camp Orientation Sample Agenda

Time	Activity	Who	Materials
30 Minutes	<b>Welcome/Introduction/Icebreaker</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants respond to graffiti wall prompts about past camp experiences: What was best field trip? Camper's favorite book last year? Share a good game to promote math skills?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance sheets</li> <li>Graffiti Wall</li> </ul>
30 Minutes	<b>Expectations for the Initiative – Sun Rays</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Want to access what their expectations for the initiative</li> <li>Process: On sentence strips, persons write their expectations for summer camp Be creative. Each strip contributes as ray of sun. Sun is "Summer Learning Initiative"</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sentence Strips</li> <li>Markers</li> </ul>
45 Minutes	<b>Summer Camp Components</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of the components of camp</li> <li>Summer Learning Video</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Camp Schedule</li> </ul>
60 Minutes	<b>Promoting Learning in Summer Programs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summer Learning Best Practices</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sample activities</li> </ul>

# Sources

***Back Pocket Adventures* – Karl Rohnke & Jim Grout**

**Center for Summer Learning**

**Children’s Aid Society (NYC)**

**ChineseAmerican Planning Council SchoolAge Day Care @ PS 20 (NYC)**

**Developmental Studies Center**

**Good Shepherd Services (NYC)**

**Games for Reading – Peggy Kaye**

**Harlem R.B.I (NYC)**

**Project Reach Youth (NYC)**

***QuickSilver Adventure Games* – Karl Rohnke & Steve Butler**

***Recipes for Reading* – Frances Bloom & Nina Traub**

***Teaching Phonics and Word Study in the Intermediate Grades* – Wiley Blevins**

**University Settlement (NYC)**

***Warm Ups & Wind Downs 101: Activities for Moving and Motivating Groups* – Sandy Hazouri and Miriam Smith McLaughlin**

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## Participating Camp Programs

Abraham House

Abyssinian Development Corporation

Arab-American Family Support Center

Aspira of NY, Inc

Better Brooklyn Community Center, Inc

Boys & Girls Harbor Inc.

Brooklyn Children's Museum

Bushwick Beacon Lighthouse BGTTF @ IS  
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CAMBA

ChaRosa Foundation Corporation

Children's Aid Society

Chinese-American Planning Council

Chinese Christian Herald Crusades

Christ Fellowship Baptist Church

City of New York Department of Parks &  
Recreation

City of New York Housing Authority

Cypress Hills Local Development

Council of Aid for Central Asian Jews

Doing Art Together

East Harlem Tutorial Program

East New York Urban Youth Corps

East Side House, Inc.

Edenwald-Gunhill Neighborhood Center

El Puente

Forest Hills Community House

Goodwill Industries of Greater NY

Graham Windham

Grand Street Settlement

Harlem Children's Zone

Harlem Educational Activities Fund

Harlem R.B.I.

Henry Street Settlement/Boys and Girls  
Republic

Heywood Burns PS/IS 176

Holy Trinity Neighborhood Center

Hudson Guild

Immigrant Social Services

Inwood Community Services, Inc.

Jacob Riis Neighborhood Settlement

Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning, Inc.

Kingsbridge Heights Community Center

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House

Liberty Partnerships Program

MARC After School Program

Morry's Camp

Mill Brook Community Center

Neighborhood Initiatives Development  
Corporation

New York City Mission Society

NYC Outward Bound

Operation Exodus Inner City, Inc

Pathways for Youth

Phipps Community Development Corp.

Pius XII Youth & Family Services

Police Athletic League

Project Reach Youth

Queens Child Guidance Center

Ralph-Lincoln Service Center

Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizens

Council Inc.

SCAN-New York

School News Nationwide

Sound Dale Day Care Center

Southeast Bronx Neighborhood Center, Inc.

South Brooklyn Youth Consortium Inc.

Southern Queens Park Association

St. Aloysius Education Clinic

St. John's Place Family Center

St. Margaret's Episcopal Church

St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation  
Corporation

St. Raymond's Community Outreach

Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center

Staten Island Mental Health Society

Sunshine Neo-Elite Day Camp

Tremont United Methodist Church Summer  
Camp

The Point Community Development  
Corporation

University Settlement

Urban Dove

Wagner College

Walter's Grandmother

YMCA of Greater New York

Young Dancers in Repertory

Youth Empowerment Mission

Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice

YWCA of Greater New York

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