Summer Learning: Time to Relax without Learning Loss

Summertime is synonymous with the end of school and three months to unwind. As school day academics come to a close, summer programs keep the doors open for the learning to continue. For out-of-school time (OST) professionals around the country, summertime is a continuation of the variety of enrichment opportunities for youth offered in afterschool spaces.

Enrichment is proven to have a positive impact on academic outcomes with research stating: “The breadth, quality, intensity, and duration of expanded learning programs make a difference in both short-term and enduring effects on student academic, social, and behavioral outcomes,” (Mahoney, Vandell, Simpkins, & Zarrett, 2009; Vandell, 2012). These outcomes are especially important during the summer months when students have more time to learn in the unique OST environment.

According to National Summer Learning Association (NSLA), without summer learning opportunities “the cumulative effect is a crisis in the making: by the fifth grade, summer learning loss can leave low-income students two-and-a-half to three years behind their peers.” It is up to OST professionals to create space for youth to grow academically, regardless of the season. National initiatives like Summer Learning Week (July 8-13) empower programs to explore new subjects with the youth they serve.

At CASE for Kids, it is a foundational belief that students should have access to experiences that are as diverse as they are. As we enter the season of summer programming, focus on the types of activities that will nurture students’ natural creativity and openness to new experiences, but above all else have fun!