

Free activities fight the 'summer slide'

• Rome City Schools officials share tips to prevent the loss of academic progress over vacation.

 From Rome City Schools

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Did you know that children can lose up to three months of academic progress over the summer?

Educators call this the summer slide, which is associated with the absence of learning and engagement over the summer months. Skills students learned throughout the year are sometimes lost and they have to play catch up when returning to school in August.

Ginger Rowston, Rome City Schools' family engagement coordinator, emphasizes how important it is to keep the child's mind engaged over the summer.

Ginger Rowston "Learning and maintaining education is just like playing a sport. Reading and math are skills have to be practiced. When a child spends multiple hours hitting a baseball, swimming or shooting basketball they will progress. But, say the child stops practicing or playing for three months ... will they hit a ball on the first try? No, but if they practice a few times a week, they will be able to regain the previously learned skills a lot faster," Rowston said.

An important technique in preventing the summer slide is to learn locally. There are many fun, inexpensive and free educational activities in Rome and Floyd County. In fact, the local community is full of learning opportunities families have probably never considered.

The Sara Hightower Regional Library System hosts a family reading program every summer where students can participate in free activities throughout the week. Some of the fun and educational things offered are puppet shows, movie days, scavenger hunts, story hours and more.

"Enroll your children in summer camps that incorporate hands-on activities into their curriculum. Rome City Schools is hosting several camps such as cross country camp, girls soccer camp, track and field kids camp and a youth basketball camp. All the information for these athletic camps is posted on the Rome City Schools' Facebook page," said Rowston.

While helping children to learn locally, begin by having them jot down their experiences in a journal about their trips to the zoo, museums or local parks. This is a great way for children to practice their writing skills, without the pressure of school deterring them.

Children can also learn while vacationing by turning the family trip into a social studies activity. Ask students to research the destination's history, food and popular attractions. Parents can turn everyday activities into learning opportunities.

"We assume parents are going home and practicing with their children, but some parents' schedules don't permit doing so. Because of this, we have compiled many ways for families to set aside a small amount of time, or to even combine learning in with their busy schedules, which will benefit students," she said.

"Of course, we want to thank our families for all of their support and their partnerships throughout the school year," said Rowston. "And we want to keep that momentum going over the summer. We want to ensure that our children continue to gain skills, as well as practice their existing skills and be ready for classes in the fall."