

Make this Summer the Best Summer!

Before you know it, the last bell of the school year will ring and summer will be upon us! It can sneak up pretty fast—so it's best to take the time available now to begin to think about how this summer can be the summer that makes a difference in your child's education.

Summer is an important part of the school year cycle—it's a break from the regular routine but it is also a chance to catch up, keep up, or get ahead.

A child's brain doesn't stop learning when the school year ends—in fact, the **summer months are a critical time for learning**. Studies from the John's Hopkins Institute for Summer Learning show that students who maintain their learning momentum over the summer break are at an academic advantage over other students when school begins again in the fall.

Maintaining the learning momentum throughout the summer is critical to having a better school year—a little advanced **planning now for the summer months** ahead goes a long way to avoiding the dreaded summer “brain drain.”

One way to think about how your child will have an educational summer is by talking about plans and setting **summer academic goals** as a family. To set a summer goal take a look at your child's current academic standing. Usually there is one area that could use review during the summer. Focus on this area and set a goal to work on it a few hours every week this summer.

When setting a goal, remember the CAM rule. CAM goals are: Clear, Achievable, and Measurable. Here's how to apply the CAM rule to summer planning.

- **Clear.** Make sure that a summer academic goal is clear. It shouldn't be “improve in science this summer”, but “I want to memorize the periodic table of elements and understand mitosis.”
- **Achievable.** It is summer after all; kids don't want to spend hours a day on schoolwork. Keep academic work short and sweet and add a little variety to the work schedule. This will ensure that kids don't get discouraged and that your summer academic goals are actually met, not left to rot beside the swimming pool.
- **Measurable.** By setting a goal that has benchmarks, you can track success. Last week Tim only knew 3 periodic elements; this week he knows 10!



The CAM method for setting goals makes academic resolutions easy to keep. Students won't get discouraged and abandon their resolutions, because they can track their progress, no matter how minor the achievement is.

By challenging your child's mind this summer—even a little bit at a time, you child will not only beat the brain drain, but be ahead of his or her classmates in the fall.