

Pointers For Parents

Help Your Kids Swim Through The Learning Slump And Still Have Fun

(NAPSA)—Vacations offer wonderful opportunities for families to refresh themselves and reconnect, but parents know that much learning can be lost when children are away from school for longer than a weekend.

For parents who have not put together a summer lesson plan or don't have the resources to enroll their child in multiple learning camps, hope is not lost. Here are some ideas to help parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles inspire their tweens—ages 7 to 12—to keep learning over extended vacations.

- Take your tweens to the library for a weekly reading experience and help them explore their own areas of interest.

- Take your tweens to sites of interest during vacations, such as historical sites and museums.

- Explore educational Web sites that offer safe, educational games. Find the sites that bridge the gap between education and entertainment—a win-win situation for both parents and kids.

One recently introduced educational site called SmartyCard provides a welcome solution to an increasingly commonplace dilemma: keeping kids learning while assuring they are not robbed of their summer of fun.

The SmartyCard concept works for families that want their kids to experience age-appropriate lessons in subjects like math, reading, social studies and science while they are playing games they enjoy. The SmartyCard.com site lets children learn and earn on their own, or compete with their family in an online experience similar to popular TV shows like "Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?"



Parents can help their tweens through the learning slump and jump-start their online rewards with 2,500 free points on a new gaming experience that associates learning with fun. Enter promo code "summer learning."

Through its deep educational content and major online brand partnerships, the educational site offers a safe and relevant environment in which children can play, explore, learn and get rewarded. Players complete fun and interactive games to earn points that can be "unlocked" and spent on a wide range of parent-approved virtual worlds, DVDs, music, books and popular toys.

Parents fund these activities by buying and depositing points directly into their child's account. Parents also have a "dashboard" to track learning successes and challenges, as well as the convenience of a "one-stop" funding method. The site provides parents with the assurance that their children are learning before earning, whether those rewards mean playing outside or prizes via points earned on SmartyCard.

Friends, family and parents can buy points for a child through virtual cards and the gift cards will be available in stores.

For more information, visit smartycard.com.