

Pointers For Parents

Kid Tips: How To Keep Young Minds Active During School Breaks

(NAPSA)—A break from school doesn't have to bring learning to a halt. Combine your creativity with these tips from Dr. Helen Boehm, child psychologist and toy expert, to keep your kids' minds active during playtime and everyday activities.

Learning On The Go

Make learning part of family activities and outings:

- Take a trip to the park or playground and discuss what everyone sees. Kids can learn about plants, insects, animals and colors while also burning off energy.

- Search for fun ways to add learning to your next family trip. Create destination-related trivia questions or have your kids observe their new surroundings and write down three things they don't normally see and why.

Indoor Learning Adventures

Break up the daily routine:

- Several parenting magazines and licensor Web sites, such as www.nick.com or www.disney.com provide a wide range of activities to engage children and keep their minds active. Children can even win great prizes for their hard work. For example, visit www.vtechkids.com to play a family-friendly, interactive scavenger hunt that takes youngsters on a fun geography lesson and, as an



According to Dr. Helen Boehm, child psychologist and toy expert, even TV and the right video games can provide an opportunity for kids to learn.

added bonus, kids and their parents who complete the "V.Smile Across America" quiz will be entered for a chance to win a \$10,000 scholarship.

- Imagination creation: Encourage your children to create family activities or games for rainy or snowy days. For example, your creative preschooler with a knack for knock-knock jokes could be the next big comedian or talk show host. Encourage him to put on a show and bring in the rest of the family to help make a stage and serve as guests and audience. This exercise can enhance creativity and give kids a chance to express themselves while involving the whole family.

Healthy TV Diet

Even the most active kids like to kick back every once in a while. However, that doesn't mean they need to let their minds slack off. TV and the right video games can provide an opportunity to learn:

- Limit TV time to shows that reinforce learning and skill building. Many programs and characters are based on books and there are on-screen subjects—from geography to sports—that can inspire a lifelong interest in reading.

- Video game learning: Choose age-appropriate video games that encourage interaction and challenge critical thinking and look for items designed for kids' appropriate age-range. Though some video game systems may be appropriate for older children, the VTech V.Smile TV Learning System is designed for kids as young as three years old, and the V.Smile Pocket for children ages five and older, uses educational, age-appropriate materials and popular characters such as Dora, SpongeBob SquarePants, The Wiggles, Bob the Builder, Scooby-Doo, Spider-Man, Care Bears, Elmo, Nemo and Cinderella.

For more information and tips from Dr. Boehm, visit www.vtechkids.com.