



Summer Enrichment Programs:

Summer is Prime Time to Accelerate Fun and Learning for Students

Say the word "summer" to any student, and watch the smile spread across their face. For most students, summer is a break from the school year, where days are filled with play, exploration, and most importantly, fun.



FOR SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS, SUMMER MEANS OPPORTUNITY.

As districts across the country continue to strategize on how best to support students's learning, many are finding summer enrichment programs can be a core part of their strategy. Summer enrichment can expand learning opportunities for students, while providing the fun and engaging experiences that students look forward to all year long.

Table of Contents

THE CURRENT LEARNING LANDSCAPE	3
NAVIGATING THE CHALLENGES	4
HOW SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS CAN HELP	6
SUPPORTING SUMMER PROGRAMS VIA FEDERAL FUNDS	7
SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM COMPONENTS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE	8
HOW RIGHT AT SCHOOL SUPPORTS SUMMER LEARNING	9
SUMMER OFFERS A CRITICAL OPPORTUNITY.....	12



INTRODUCTION

The Current Learning Landscape ✘

Recent national assessments have thrown light on the state of students' learning since 2020. [Federal test results released in September 2022](#) revealed the largest drop in fourth-grade reading scores since 1990 and the first-ever decline in math.

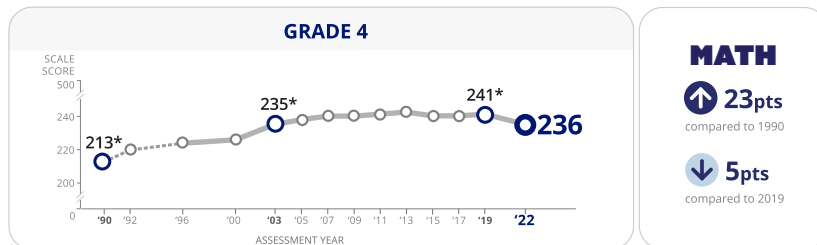
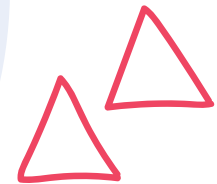
The [2022 Nation's Report Card](#) from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) revealed similar findings: fourth-grade reading scores declined across the country, and eighth-grade reading scores declined in three of four regions. In the NAEP's case, math scores were the scores showing the largest declines since 1990.

National Center for Education Statistics Commissioner Peggy Carr [stated](#):

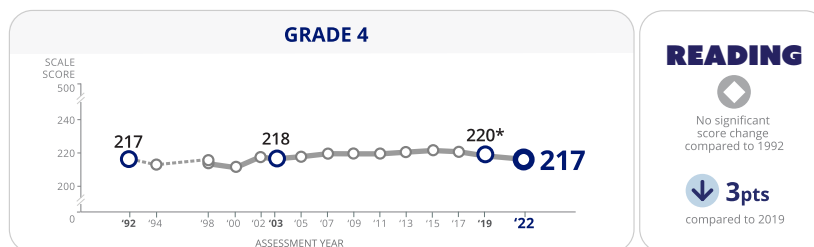
”

“The pandemic and all of the disruptions that it caused really has put a whole generation of students off their kilter for success. ...We have to act, and we have to act decisively to get these students back on track.”

— Peggy Carr, National Center for Education Statistics Commissioner



Trend in fourth-grade mathematics average scores



Trend in fourth-grade reading average scores

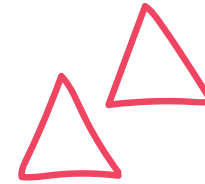
SINCE 1990 LARGEST DECLINE

Largest declines in fourth-grade reading and math scores since 1990.

The **Nation's Report Card**
 National Assessment of Educational Progress



Navigating the Challenges



EDUCATORS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN ACADEMIC RECOVERY INITIATIVES.

Those initiatives consist of not only academic interventions but also addressing the emotional tumult resulting from the life disruptions that students have experienced since 2020.

Tending to students' emotional wellbeing paves the way for learning. Research has found that when students are anxious or overwhelmed, those emotions cause a surge of activity in their amygdala (a region of the brain that primarily deals with emotional processes). Emotions influence cognitive processes such as attention and memory formation, and the amygdala's surge acts as a "[stop sign](#)" for those processes.

Positive relationships with adults in the learning community boosts the emotional wellbeing of most students. Research conducted by the youth-focused nonprofit, [Search Institute](#), found that 68% of young people who reported experiencing strong relationships in organizations such as schools, support groups, and out-of-school-time (OST) settings reported higher levels of social-emotional competence.

The positive effects included higher "self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relationship skills."

Educational and developmental psychologist Kelly-Ann Allen, Ph.D., compiled research that showed a host of benefits arising from students' sense of belonging at school, including:

Support in the psychosocial adjustment of students who have gone through traumatic experiences



Reduced mental health problems such anxiety and depression



Emotional stability, enjoyable learning experiences, and positive attitudes towards learning



Reduced likelihood of emotional disengagement with schools, absenteeism or misconduct



Positive interactions and reduced school aggression such as bullying



Improved academic performance and self-efficacy



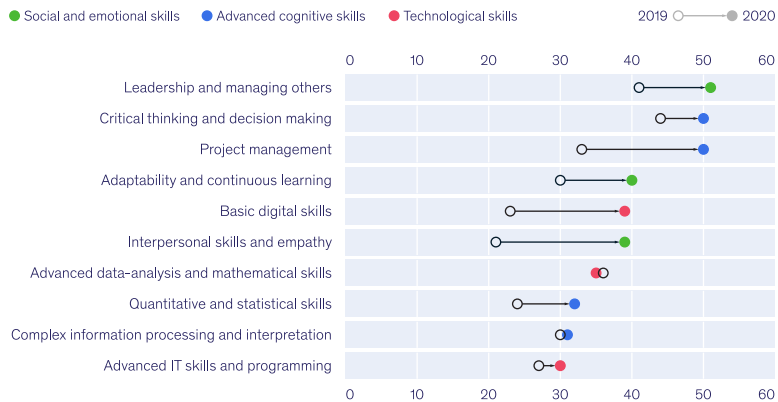


In addition, cultivating relationship-building skills (as well as associated soft skills such as collaboration, empathy, and other interpersonal skills) is vital for preparing students for success in the workforce. A 2021 [survey](#) from McKinsey & Company found that since the pandemic began, employers have become more focused on skills like leadership, empathy, and other interpersonal skills. That means students need as many opportunities as possible to develop and practice these skills.

However, most schools across the country are dealing with [staffing shortages](#), which has impeded their ability to adjust to the new educational landscape. For example, teachers have shouldered extra teaching and non-teaching responsibilities in short-staffed schools. As a result, they have had [no time to take training on a “high-impact” curriculum](#) that would help students get back on track and on grade level.

Most of the skills that companies are increasingly focused on developing are social, emotional, and advanced cognitive.

Skills that companies have prioritized to address through reskilling,¹ % of respondents



¹Out of 25 skills that were offered as answer choices; n = 700.

Since the pandemic began, employers have become more focused on:

- + LEADERSHIP SKILLS**
- + EMPATHY SKILLS**
- + INTERPERSONAL SKILLS**

Efforts to keep schools functioning despite staff vacancies have also resulted in teachers having little time to make plans to integrate relationship building and other soft skills into their lessons. However, even before 2020, curriculum mandates and schedule constraints had made it challenging to create opportunities for soft skill development.

Now, as many teachers deal with larger classes and take on non-instructional roles, planning for such activities during the regular school day is often not feasible.



SOLUTIONS

How Summer Enrichment Programs Can Help

70%

of young people in OST “reported having strong developmental relationships”

Search
INSTITUTE

SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN A DISTRICT’S OVERALL STRATEGY FOR LEARNING ACCELERATION.

In addition to allowing students to practice and reinforce academic skills, these programs provide them with opportunities to build relationships that foster a sense of belonging. The resulting emotions will facilitate their learning and bolster both their academic and social confidence.

The Afterschool Alliance found that students who participated in summer programs academically outperformed their non-participating peers after the first and second summer of participation. As the alliance [reported](#), “Statistically significant differences were found in math achievement after the first summer, and math, language arts, and social and emotional skills after the second summer.”

Also, the Search Institute found that OST settings (such as summer programs) outperformed schools and student support groups when it came to fostering high-quality relationships. The study found that 70% of young people in OST “reported having strong developmental relationships” with staff compared to 62% in student support programs and 40% in schools.

The efficacy of summer programs is now so recognized that a 2022 *Edweek Market Brief* [reported](#), “Experts and educators point to summer school as a key window of time to address the learning students lost during the pandemic.” In addition, the U.S. Department of Education published a fact sheet citing summer learning as one of the “[top strategies](#)” school districts are using to address missed instruction.”

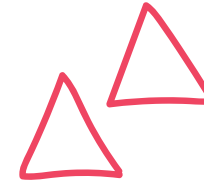
”

“Statistically significant differences were found in math achievement after the first summer, and math, language arts, and social and emotional skills after the second summer.”

— The Afterschool Alliance



Supporting Summer Programs Via **Federal Funds**



For the reasons cited above, educators focused on summer learning in 2022. The Edweek Market Brief found that 90% of surveyed summer school program providers (including school districts) were planning to offer summer school, and a third of them had expanded their programs to serve more children in 2022 than they had in 2021. But the brief also found that **few providers were accessing available federal relief funding; only one in five providers had received those funds.**

As educators prepare for the next round of summer learning, they should access resources such as the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III or ARP ESSER) funds.

THE TERM “ARP” REFERS TO THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT, WHICH PASSED IN 2021.

That legislation made \$8.45 billion available for summer and afterschool programs at the state level as well as \$21.9 billion at the local level. The think tank Future Ed stated “... it’s possible to estimate that spending on summer learning or summer learning and afterschool programming combined could reach \$5.8 billion nationwide under the latest round of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) by the time the federal aid must be fully committed in September 2024.”

Institutions interested in using federal funding for summer and other OST programs can find useful information in the Wallace Foundation’s Building, Sustaining & Improving guide.



a place to
**BE A
KID!**



\$121.9B

**FOR K-12
ECONOMIC SUPPORT**

with set asides for Summer Learning
and OST Programs





Summer Enrichment Program **X** Components that **Make a Difference**

THE RAND CORPORATION'S RESEARCH HAS REVEALED WHAT PROGRAM DESIGN COMPONENTS ADVANCE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PROGRESS:

1 A pre-existing program curriculum aligned to the district's vision & goals.

Having a pre-existing summer curriculum saves busy educators from a possible last-minute rush to put together lessons. It also provides them with time to review the summer curriculum to ensure that it is aligned to standards, appropriate for each grade, and also addresses students' needs, student and staff interests, and relevant school initiatives.

2 Program duration & attendance.

[A report from RAND and the Wallace Foundation](#) found that the most successful summer programs last five weeks or more and that significant benefits accrued to students after 20 days of attendance. As previously stated, the effectiveness of summer programs lies in the extra opportunities they give students to reinforce and enhance the skills and knowledge gained during the school semester. Enrichment activities and incentives are two of the options that RAND and the Wallace Foundation cite for encouraging attendance. Providing transportation or holding the summer program in an area that all students can access also encourages consistent attendance.

3 Inclusion of non-academic activities & experience.

The summer is an excellent opportunity to cultivate students' love of learning. Enrichment providers or intermediaries can help schools provide activities that enable students to develop or find personal interests and build interpersonal skills.

Additionally, effective programs incorporate physical activities to expend children's energy and muscle tension, boosting their ability to focus. Also, overextended periods of academic study can spark [surges in the amygdala](#); effective programs incorporate mental breaks so that students can process what they've learned and recover cognitively.

4 Careful planning for the integration of academics & enrichment.

Researchers for the RAND and the Wallace Foundation report found that the best examples of integration were enrichment activities that had naturally-embedded academic content. Written lesson plans and ensuring that instructors had sufficient guidance or training on how to integrate or reinforce the academic content are also essential.



PARTNERSHIPS

How **Right At School** Supports Summer Learning

a place to
**BE A
KID!**

Right At School Summer Camp provides meaningful, joyful enrichment experiences throughout the summer, keeping students engaged in fun-filled learning, physical fitness, and social emotional development.

We currently have summer programs in more than 40 school districts nationwide, ranging in size from one site with 30 students to districts with multiple sites and 600+ participants.

We operate on a variety of schedules, from half-day camps designed to wrap around district summer schools to camps that stretch as long as 12 hours. Right At School works with our district partners to develop a custom summer camp schedule, including hours per day and total number of weeks, in consultation with the District. Each program is unique, as we tailor the schedule and activities to meet the needs and goals of the district.



”

Right At School works with our district partners to develop a custom summer camp to meet their needs.

SUMMER CAMP

a place to
BE A KID!

Fresh air and fun in the sun with friends meets endless opportunities for hands-on learning, exploration, and personal growth.

Summer Camp with Right At School is the coolest PLACE TO BE A KID!

Embark on a Brand New Adventure!

FEATURES

WHAT DOES SUMMER CAMP WITH RIGHT AT SCHOOL LOOK LIKE?

- ✓ **FULL-DAY OR HALF-DAY CAMPS**
- ✓ **ON-SITE AT YOUR SCHOOLS**
- ✓ **OVER 100 DAILY ACTIVITIES**
- ✓ **FIELD TRIPS & COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS**
- ✓ **FITNESS GAMES & SPORTS**
- ✓ **FUN FOR GRADES K-8**



Make sure students have a cool, safe, enriching, and **FUN** place to spend their **summer days**.

SUMMER CAMP CURRICULUM 100+ STEM-BASED CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

Meaningful, enriching experiences throughout the summer.

Right At School keeps students engaged in fun-filled learning, physical fitness, and SEL development — all while mitigating the summer learning slide!



SAMPLE DAILY CAMP SCHEDULE

Here's a sample day at Right At School Summer Camp:

CAMP KICKOFF

Campers come together and start their day with silly songs, skits, and jokes!

GROUP GAMES

Depending on the weather, these games might be outside or in the gym, but either way they are going to be serious fun with friends!

AM THEMED ACTIVITY

Campers enjoy a different hands-on learning activity every day related to the camp theme.

LUNCH

Campers and staff sit together for a meal filled with conversation and connection.

HALFTIME HUDDLE

A mid-day break to reflect on the morning and get students excited about the afternoon's activities.

ALL-CAMP GAMES

All campers come together to play games focused on teamwork and extra fun!

PM THEMED ACTIVITY

More hands-on learning!

CAMPER CHOICE

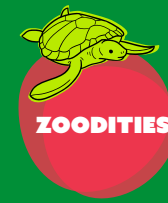
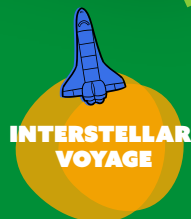
Campers get to choose their own adventure between lots of fun and creative activities.

CRAFTERNOONS!

Ready, set, create! This is a time for all inspired minds to create some works of art.

CLOSING CAMPFIRE CIRCLE

Campers come together to laugh, share stories about their day, and show off art projects or a new song they learned. They will also hear about the fun things coming up tomorrow!



We're ready to go when the sun comes up!



CONCLUSION

Summer Offers a Critical Opportunity

Summer enrichment can have a powerful impact on the pace at which students build their academic knowledge and soft skills, including relationship building. Children will return to their regular classrooms feeling empowered to learn, play, and grow. And that sets them up for success in the coming school year.



Get Started with RAS Summer Camp



1 LETS CHAT

We'll get together — virtually or in person — to discuss your most important needs.

3 FUNDING SETUP

We'll work hand-in-hand with your team to complete any necessary paperwork, plans, and/or applications required to access any funding you plan to use.

2 EQUITY PLAN

Whether you plan to fund Summer Camp as a parent-paid program, through stimulus, grant or title funds, we'll build a plan that gives more students and families a chance to benefit from Right At School.

4 PROGRAM DESIGN & SETUP

As always — our team will do all the heavy lifting to hire, staff, promote/market, enroll, and implement programming — all on-site at your schools!



RAS.NEWS/GET-STARTED



Get Started Today!