

# Engaging Minds When School is Out

There are many activities parents and child care providers can do to ensure that when the school bells ring, children are ready to start. Besides physical activity, good nutrition and rest, it is essential that children be allowed to “exercise” their minds during time off from school. There are a number of activities that do not require a lot of time or expense, but will help children focus on their academic skills.



## Social/Emotional Development

Social/emotional development is the ability for children of all ages to express their ideas and feelings, express empathy toward others, feel self-confident, and more easily manage their feelings of frustration and disappointment. Some good examples that will assist children in developing skills include:

- Have children play games and practice taking turns.
- When the child is playing with others, remind him/her of the importance of playing nicely and sharing toys.

## Language Development

Activities that will help children’s language development include:

- Provide real-life experiences, such as having your child order his/her own meal in a restaurant.
- Sidewalk chalk – what better way to allow children to express themselves, both with the written word and creatively?
- Blow bubbles – this helps with counting skills. Ask children to distinguish the size of the bubbles they are creating.

## READ, READ, READ!

- Join a reading program at your local library and challenge children to read many books.
- Read the local newspaper.

## Play and More Play

- Grow a vegetable or flower garden to help them learn the life cycle of a plant.
- Talk about the importance of protecting our environment.

