

Building Brighter Futures



This is Summer Learning



Summer Slide: decline in reading ability and academic skills.



GA families pay on average **\$302 per week** for summer programs.



Most kids lose **2 months of math skills**.



GA kids spend **5 hours per day for 5 weeks** in summer programs.



Low-income kids lose **2 - 3 months in reading**.



1 in 7 kids qualifying for free or reduced lunch get summer meals.



Achievement gap can reach up to **2.5 - 3 years** by 5th grade.



89% of GA parents support public funding of summer programs.

SUMMER presents a myriad of experiences for most middle- and high-income students. They have opportunities to gain knowledge through family vacations, museum trips, summer camps, and having access to books and other learning materials. Unfortunately, low-income students often lack opportunities during the summer and suffer the "**Summer Slide**" or summer learning loss. This is a decline in reading ability and academic skills that can take place during the summer months. Most students lose **two months of mathematical skills** every summer, and low-income children typically lose another **two to three months in reading**.¹

What Does This Mean?

Students start the new school year in a worse position than when they finished the previous school year leading to 9 in 10 teachers spending at least three weeks re-teaching lessons at the start of the school year.² This loss of skills is cumulative and will build up over the years and can leave low-income children **2.5 - 3 years behind** their peers by fifth grade.³ In fact, summer learning loss during elementary school accounts for **two-thirds of the achievement gap** in reading between low-income children and their middle-income peers by ninth grade.⁴

Children face other adverse effects during the summer as well. In July 2017, **only 1 in 7 children** who ate a free or reduced-price school lunch during the 2016-2017 school year were reached by the federally-funded Summer Nutrition Programs, which include the Summer Food Services Program and the National School Lunch Program.⁵ This means that **6 out of 7 children are going hungry** during the summer months.

Many families struggle to find high quality, affordable summer programs in Georgia. According to a survey conducted by the Afterschool Alliance, **25% of Georgia families** reported having one child enrolled in a summer program, while **42% of Georgia families** reported that they would like to enroll their children in a program if it were available. Furthermore, the same survey showed that Georgia families pay on average \$302 per week for their child's summer learning program, higher than the national average.⁶

1 Cooper, H., Nye, B., Charlton, K., Lindsay, J., & Greathouse, S. (1996). The effects of summer vacation on achievement test scores: A narrative and meta-analytic review. *Review of Education Research*, 66 (3), 227-268.

2 Surveyed by the National Summer Learning Association.

3 New York Times. (Feb 9, 2012). Education Gap Grows Between Rich and Poor, Studies Say.

4 Alexander, K. L., Entwisle D. R., & Olson L. S. (2007a). Lasting consequences of the summer learning gap. *American Sociological Review*, 72, 167

5 Hunger doesn't take a vacation: Summer nutrition status report 2018. Food Research and Action Center.

6 Afterschool Alliance. (2014) America After 3 PM.



G·san

GEORGIA STATEWIDE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK

What Can We Do?

Quality summer programs play a critical role in inspiring learning, providing enrichment activities, keeping kids safe and healthy, and supporting working families. They can drastically help mitigate adverse effects for low-income youth and are a critical strategy in eliminating the opportunity and achievement gaps that persist across communities in Georgia. For example, elementary school students with high levels of attendance (at least five weeks) in voluntary summer learning programs experience **benefits in math and reading**.⁷

Some examples of quality summer programs include the following:

- **Bricks4Kidz Summer Camp** program offers S.T.E.A.M immersion and education through unique, fun & engaging LEGO camps to children ages 3 - 13. Students embark on complex and innovative LEGO-building projects to build creativity, hands-on problem-solving skills, and confidence while immersing them in math, engineering, and science.
- **CEISMC's Summer P.E.A.K.S.** are hands-on, interactive learning experiences that give participants the chance to learn coding, robotics, app creation, biotechnology, and more at Georgia Tech.
- **Generation Infocus** uses project-based STEAM learning to engage young minds and foster 21st century career champions by providing STEAM Lab workshops, tutorial support in math and reading, STEAM career workforce exposure, social and emotional education.
- **Starbase Robins** strives to pique students' interest with a unique STEM curriculum that includes hands-on activities in Physics, Chemistry, Technological Advances, Engineering, and Mathematical Operations while developing students' skills of teamwork, communication, critical thinking and problem solving.
- **STE(A)M Truck** is a growing fleet of innovation labs that brings tools, technologies, and community expertise directly to youth. It provides participants with hands-on, minds-on experiences aligned with both classroom curriculum and 21st century skill sets and provides coaching and technical assistance to adults to continue programming.

How Do We Do It?

Rand Foundation's "**Getting to Work on Summer Learning**" can equip us with some recommended best practices for summer learning programs:

- Begin planning for the coming summer no later than January.
- Operate the program for five to six weeks with three to four hours of academics each day.
- Establish a firm enrollment deadline and clear attendance policy.
- If purchasing a curriculum, adapt it to fit student needs and time available; if developing a curriculum, work with district experts and start early.
- Hire teachers who have grade-level and subject-matter experience.
- Train enrichment instructors in behavior management.
- Develop a clear, positive message about the goals and culture of the program.

The report also discusses the costs associated with offering a voluntary summer program and provides suggestions for lowering them, such as working with community-based organizations and consolidating program sites into as few buildings as possible.⁸

Creating summer learning opportunities for youth is the best way to enable them to develop critical thinking and leadership skills, use innovation and creativity, and prepare them for success.

Want to Learn More?

Connect with us: 75 Marietta St, Suite 401, Atlanta, GA 30303

www.afterschoolga.org | info@afterschoolga.org

(404) 521-0355

facebook.com/AfterschoolGA | [@afterschoolga](https://twitter.com/afterschoolga)

7 Catherine H. Augustine, Jennifer Sloan McCombs, John F. Pane, Heather L. Schwartz, Jonathan Schweig, Andrew McEachin, and Kyle Siler-Evans. Learning from Summer: Effects of Voluntary Summer Learning Programs on Low-Income Urban Youth. RAND Corporation. (September 2016).

8 Schwartz, Heather L., Jennifer Sloan McCombs, Catherine H. Augustine, and Jennifer T. Leschitz, Getting to Work on Summer Learning: Recommended Practices for Success, 2nd Ed., Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-366-1-WF, 2018. As of June 05, 2019: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR366-1.html