




## Summer Planning Toolkit



GEORGIA STATEWIDE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK



The Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) is a public-private collaborative that envisions a day when all communities in Georgia have the resources to provide exceptional afterschool and summer programming. Our mission is to advance, connect, and support high quality afterschool and summer learning programs to promote the success of children and youth throughout Georgia.

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# Introduction

There is an unprecedented sense of urgency, calls to action, and investment of resources from multiple levels of government to increase access to, and expand the role and quality of, summer learning programs. This is very good news for students and families in Georgia and this moment represents an opportunity to improve summer learning systems now and into the future.

Summer is a time for fun, exploration, and learning – but in different ways from the traditional school year. And now, more than ever before, our highest priority must be on providing safe spaces with caring adults, and learning opportunities grounded in student interests that can re-spark their engagement, foster their recovery, and prepare them for school in the fall.

This guide does not delve into the “why” of summer learning. Rather, this guide is designed to support local education leaders in jump-starting their summer planning and to offer ideas and resources to help offset the overwhelming sense of urgency felt by us all. **This guide draws upon foundational research and best practices for how to design and implement summer learning programs anchored in lessons learned and adaptations emerging from the pandemic.**

As you dive into the content and plan your summer program, please keep this in mind: Some communities have an existing summer learning infrastructure to build on and some do not. There are unknowns about facilities and staffing and work to be done to build family trust. What is important is that we join forces with our partners and open our minds to all the creative ways we can support students in the summer months with a focus on relationships, resilience, and recovery.

## Acknowledgement

The Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) would like to thank the National Summer Learning Association, the Partnership for Children & Youth, and the Michigan Afterschool Partnership for allowing GSAN to adapt this toolkit from their original toolkits.



For more than 25 years, the **National Summer Learning Association (NSLA)** has operated as a national, non-profit organization whose mission is to combat summer learning loss and close the achievement and opportunity gaps which research shows grows most dramatically between lower and higher income students over the summer months. Our vision is to ensure all young people in America, regardless of background, income, and zip-code, can participate in a high-quality summer learning experience, every year.

[www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)



The **Partnership for Children & Youth (PCY)** is a statewide intermediary that has been working for over 20 years to expand access to high-quality expanded learning and wellness opportunities for children in under-resourced communities across the state of California.

[www.partnerforchildren.org](http://www.partnerforchildren.org)



The **Michigan Afterschool Partnership** champions statewide access to quality and equitable Out-of-School Time (OST) programs to ensure that all children and youth succeed.

[www.miafterschool.org](http://www.miafterschool.org)



# Key Elements of High Quality Summer Programs

Below are key strategies and best practices drawn from the latest research on designing and implementing high-quality summer programs that can serve as a north star for summer programming in 2022 and beyond.



## Elevate Relationships & Enrichment

Positive, supportive relationships and rich, stimulating environments ignite the brain to form connections that promote learning. Developing the conditions for connection and development—including opportunities to play, explore new skills and experiences, and connect with peers and caring adults—can help cultivate relationships and support higher levels of growth. Effective summer programs go well beyond classroom skills remediation and invest in enriching experiences that can be life changing. Supportive learning environments are also key to helping young people shape their voices and sense of purpose.



## Deepen Community Partnerships

Creating a community system for summer learning and growth opens the door to collaboration, reduces duplication of efforts, and results in stronger shared investment and support for student learning and well-being. It's often very helpful to collaborate with local governments, community-based organizations, business and industry leaders, and summer program providers. These partnerships will help your program broaden student participation and achieve stronger learning outcomes.



## Put Youth and Families First

An effective community approach starts with thinking of families and communities as co-designers of summer programs. What do youth and families want and expect from their summer learning opportunities? Doing your market research first and developing your program in response to local need will help ensure not only a higher level of demand for the services you offer, but also ensure a strong sense of investment and ownership on the part of the youth you serve.



## Integrate Well-Rounded Learning & Work that Matters

A well-rounded education moves beyond the courses students take and into essential life skills. It provides the knowledge and skills to live, learn, work, create, and contribute to society. It also ensures that every student is known, heard, and supported. The goal is to establish and actualize a definition of a well-rounded education that focuses on the whole student and their community and the knowledge and skills they learn.



## Ensure Mental Health and Well-Being

Building relational trust, care, and connection among families, staff, and students is fundamental to summer programming. Summer programs must attend to students' needs for individuals to reflect, connect, and learn. Students' mental health and well-being must be a primary driver in planning summer learning.



## Communicate Consistently with Your Communities

Effective outreach activities are necessary to boost enrollment and maintain regular attendance. Summer programs are voluntary, and without intentional effort, it can be difficult to interrupt old, outdated images of summer school that may deter attendance and reinforce outdated stereotypes. But even better, community exposure—whether through the media or through creative partnerships—can help build awareness of the need for (and effectiveness) of your program and all it offers.



## Purposeful Planning and Quality Programs

To realize summer's full potential, it is essential to start planning early. Launching a summer program is akin to starting a new school year and ending it within weeks. Quality summer programming requires advanced planning that typically starts the prior school year in September. An early and robust planning process might be one of the most important characteristics of a strong program. Families may make plans for summer by February or March, meaning schools, districts and partners must move quickly to determine summer plans.



### COMPREHENSIVE SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS

Strength-based and enriching

Well-rounded, integrated, project-based, and hands-on

Relationship and student-centered

Accessible to all families

Exciting and fun; young people want engaging and attractive programs to attend

Co-created with students, families, and community partners

Can take place in a variety of settings and locations



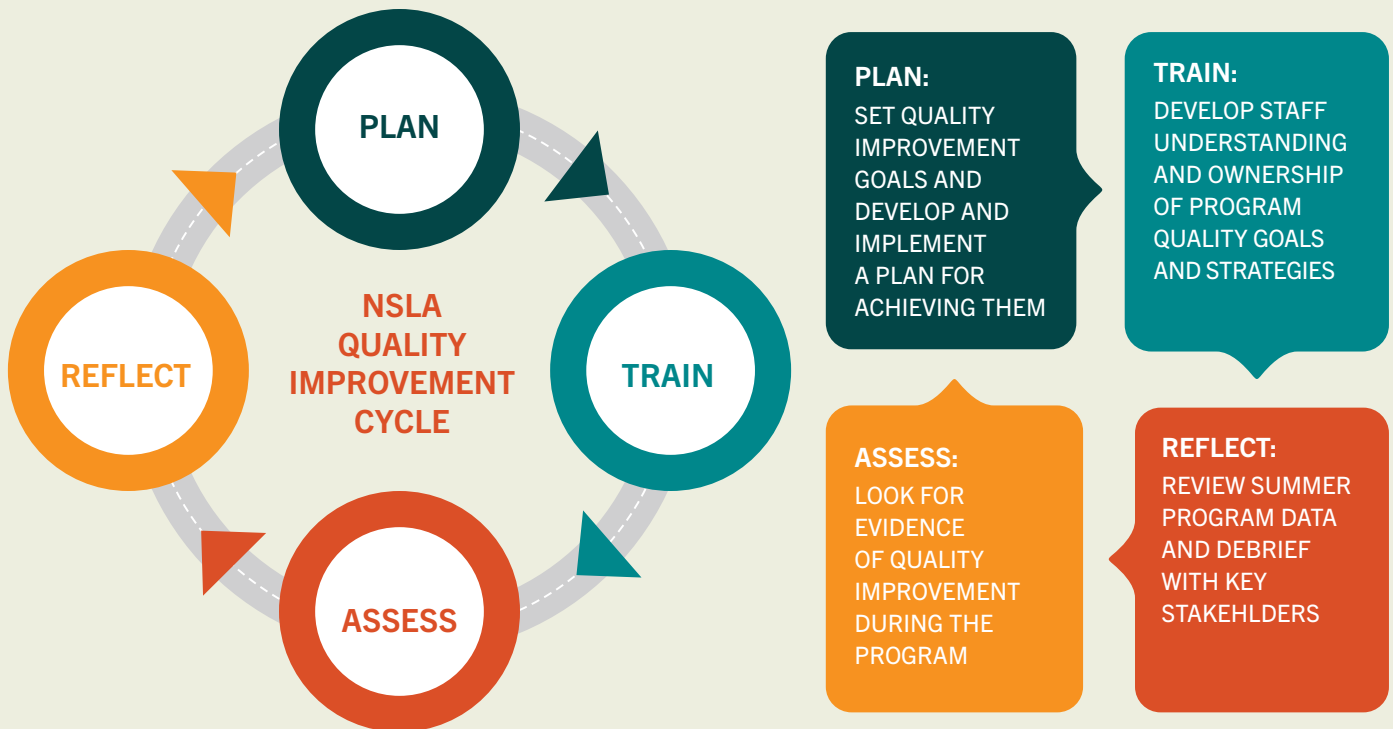
## WHY DO WE SAY SUMMER STARTS IN SEPTEMBER?

We say “SS in S” because the process of planning, delivering and improving summer learning programs is continuous. So just as the summer program ends, planning for the next year should begin!



## NATIONAL SUMMER LEARNING ASSOCIATION (NSLA) QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CYCLE

NSLA supports programs and networks to continuously improve their programs through a four-part annual quality improvement cycle.



## COMPONENTS OF PLANNING EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS



# Standards of Quality

## Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development (ASYD) Quality Standards

What makes a high-quality out-of-school time (OST) program? While the makeup of summer learning programs is as diverse as the communities they serve, we recommend adhering to the Georgia ASYD Quality Standards whenever possible. **The Georgia ASYD Quality Standards are best practice guidelines informed by research in a variety of disciplines to support the development of the whole child.** The standards provide a framework for OST providers, serving youth in grades K–12, to evaluate and continuously improve the quality of their afterschool and summer learning programming. The Georgia ASYD Initiative is a collaborative of the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) and GUIDE, Inc. and is supported and funded in part by five of Georgia’s state agencies, including the Georgia Department of Education.

[Click here](#) to access the Georgia ASYD Quality Standards.

### The Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development 9 Quality Elements



Programming & Youth Development



Staffing & Professional Development



Linkages to the School Day



Organizational Practices



Environment & Climate



Evaluation & Outcomes



Relationships



Family & Community Partnerships



Health & Well-Being

## Quantity and Quality Matter

Quality is well-defined in summer programs – whether in-person or virtual. [The Wallace Foundation](#), in partnership with the [RAND Corporation](#) and others, has published a wealth of evaluations, research, and tools that dive deep into the core elements of impactful summer programs. Over the last decade, they have found the [strongest results from the following practices](#):

- **Offering voluntary, no-cost summer programs** over multiple summers with free transportation and meals
- **Providing at least five, preferably six, weeks of academic and enrichment programming** with three hours of daily high-quality academic instruction
- **Ensuring strong attendance (75%)**, small class sizes, and curricula aligned with the school year to impact the level and longevity of positive student outcomes
- **Implementing summer youth employment programs** that can have a range of positive outcomes



## Hiring Effective Educators and Professional Learning

According to research, teaching quality has the largest impact on student outcomes of any school level factor. Hiring effective summer staff and giving them the support they need are critical steps to maximizing student success ([RAND, 2021](#)).

Recruiting and hiring effective team members will require program leaders to consider school and community staff, partners, and volunteers: educational assistants, high school students on the pre-educator pathway, students in teacher preparation programs, community-based organizations, tribal education programs, mental health professionals, college faculty, and members of business, industry, and trades unions. These individuals can teach enrichment activities, provide career-connected learning, explore content from a different perspective, or supervise enrichment activities.

Classroom teachers can have a wide variety of roles in summer programs:

- Provide full-day small group academics and enrichment
- Provide half-day academic instruction
- Provide targeted one-on-one or small group tutoring
- Develop curriculum and train paraprofessionals and community staff
- Advise and coach small groups of staff and/or prospective teachers to lead instruction
- Serve as a site director; manage operations and/or family communication

Community-based organization staff can play a significant role in school-based summer programs:

- Provide enrichment activities infused with academics
- Provide full-day small group academics and enrichment
- Serve as support teachers or as tutors
- Develop curriculum and activities to engage youth in hands-on activities
- Train staff on best practices in youth development, enrichment, and engagement
- Serve as a liaison between summer programs and communities and families

**Building collaborative relationships between teachers, administrators, and expanded learning staff during the summer can build lasting cohesion at school sites to improve whole child outcomes.** Summer can provide a welcome change of pace while developing future school leaders, providing more planning and collaboration time, and expanding the training ground for staff, teachers, and site administrators to learn how to operate blended staffing models.



## Wrap Around Services

Support services must be built into summer programs. Providing students and families with access to critical services, such as nutrition, healthcare, and mental health support, will be more essential than ever. From the beginning, planning processes should include student support services staff from the district, school sites, municipal agencies, and external partners to ensure that students have access to health and wellness supports. Support services are not just for students; access to health and wellness resources must be provided to staff as well.

Summer programs can provide safe places where young people can build relationships with peers and trusted caring adults through hands-on activities and creative engagement. Staff in these programs should be trained to consider the whole child and utilize their youth development skills to build youth confidence, encourage youth to discover their motivating passions, foster problem-solving skills, and aid in development of responsible and caring individuals.

Child hunger is on the rise, and federal summer feeding programs have always been a lifeline for the families that rely on them. Schools should build off their existing school lunch program, including retaining nutrition staff year-round, targeted feeding site locations, and offering flexible hours. To maximize participation, schools can extend the number of hours food pickup is available, allow family members to pick up the food (instead of requiring in person pick-up by students), and provide breakfast and lunch in one pickup so families do not have to schedule multiple trips. These waivers remain in effect through June 30, 2022.

Providing community resources can strengthen the trust and connection of families to the school community and help to maintain direct contact to students, especially those with unstable housing.





# Get the Word Out About Summer

## Outreach Strategies for Strong Attendance

Research shows that students with high attendance in quality summer learning programs gain an advantage in math and reading. But getting kids to sign up for voluntary summer learning programs isn't easy. Download the [Wallace Foundation's Summer Learning Recruitment Guide](#) for tips and insights on how to promote and grow your program for maximum impact. In this guide, you'll learn from five school districts how to launch a summer learning recruitment effort.

FIVE OUTREACH STRATEGIES FOR OBTAINING STRONG ATTENDANCE		
DEVELOP	Develop an outreach message that has compelling and accurate information about the program with enrollment information transportation routes, and program schedule.	1
ESTABLISH	Establish a clear communications plan that includes multiple methods, is personalized to students and families, and is coordinated across the community.	2
ACKNOWLEDGE	Acknowledge the potential no show rate, and plan for it in continued recruitment, incentives and programming.	3
PROVIDE	Provide rich well-rounded learning experiences that are built on caring relationships, academics and other enriching, fun activities that spark joy and matter to students.	4
MONITOR & ASSESS	Survey students and families after week two of programming to: (i) understand the student and family experience, (ii) analyze results, and (iii) share resources that inform future outreach plans.	5
Source: RAND Corporation/The Wallace Foundation: <i>Getting to Work on Summer Learning</i> (2019)		

## Bring Families in Early

As noted previously, having youth and families work with you to develop your program up front helps ensure strong buy-in and support for all you are building. It also gives you a strong set of local champions to help talk up your work in the community and support your recruitment and communication activities through the generation of always-helpful “buzz.”

## Become a Powerful Storyteller

There's nothing like a good story. Understanding your families in a granular way will help your program craft content that speaks to their unique needs and aspirations, and entice them to take action, whether on your website or after reading a direct mail piece.

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# Funding Streams for Summer Learning

## Federal

The Georgia Department of Education administers over \$41 million via the [Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers](#) (21st CCLC) grants, which are awarded through a competitive process to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), charter schools, non-profit agencies, city or county government agencies, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, institutes of higher education, for-profit corporations and Indian tribe or tribal organizations. This grant program provides comprehensive community learning center services during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session, such as before and after school or during summer. 21st CCLC programs offer students a broad array of additional services, programs and activities that are designed to complement the regular academic program such as youth development activities, counseling programs, arts, music, physical fitness and wellness programs, financial literacy programs, environmental literacy programs, career, and technical programs. In 2020, Georgia awarded 21st CCLC funding to 133 grantees operating [239 sites](#).

The [Afterschool Care Program](#) is located within the Georgia Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS), Well-Being Services Section, and provides \$15.5 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding to non-profit organizations and public agencies who serve youth and families during the out-of-school time. The mission of the Afterschool Care Program is to provide resources to youth-serving organizations within the state of Georgia who serve families within low-to-moderate income communities and the foster care system. In 2020, Georgia awarded Afterschool Care Program funding to 38 grantees operating [259 sites](#).

## State

In 2021, the Georgia General Assembly allocated an additional \$4.7 million from state revenue to the FY22 budget to the DFCS Afterschool Care Program to stem learning loss. These funds are currently being administered in a partnership with the United Way of Greater Atlanta.

\$80 million was appropriated to Cooperative Extension Services in the FY22 budget to provide training, educational programs, and outreach to Georgians in agricultural, horticultural, food, and family and consumer sciences, and to manage the 4-H youth program for the state. A portion of these funds support afterschool and summer learning.

## COVID-19 Relief Funds

State and federal COVID relief funds provide broad discretion and flexibility to schools and districts. Investments in summer programs align well to the goals these funds lay out for serving vulnerable student populations.

[The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#) directed \$457 million for an ESSER I fund to the state and local education system. The majority of this funding was directed to coronavirus response activities and supporting online learning. This funding can be spent through September 30, 2022. \$15 million in Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funds was awarded to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Georgia to advance student academic achievement by addressing learning recovery and other critical needs of youth brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

[The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation \(CRRSA\) Act](#) directs over \$1.89 billion to Georgia school districts based on ESEA Title 1, Part A funds and can be used similar to the CARES Act. This funding can be spent through September 30, 2023.



The CRRSA also provided an additional \$47 million dollars in [GEER II](#) funds:

- \$1 million was awarded to Georgia Youth Science & Technology Centers, Inc. to strengthen STEM learning with real-world information from industries in the state. Programming will focus on afterschool enrichment options, family science events, and providing technology to students.
- \$2.2 million was awarded to Rock Eagle 4-H Center, a crucial institution for hands-on learning experiences focused on agricultural and environmental information, leadership, communication skills, food and nutrition, health, energy conservation, and citizenship. These funds will support vitally needed improvements to the facility to increase safety and expand learning experience opportunities.

[The American Rescue Plan \(ARP\) Act](#) directs \$4.25 billion for public education, including nearly \$85 million for afterschool and summer learning in Georgia. ARP funds will be used to address lost learning opportunities, remove barriers to learning, and personalize supports for students, schools, and educators. This also includes \$212 million in minimum reserves at the Georgia Department of Education and \$764 million in minimum reserve at local education agencies set aside to address learning loss. This funding can be spent through September 30, 2024.

The [Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time \(BOOST\) Grants](#) program, funded through the American Rescue Plan Act, will offer \$85 million for afterschool and summer learning in Georgia. This will be in the form of three-year grants, renewed annually, to organizations that operate comprehensive out-of-school time (OST) programming year-round, over the summer months, or after school during the academic year, with the goal of providing evidence-based afterschool and summer enrichment programming for youth most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, Georgia awarded \$27 million in 100 community grants and 4 statewide grants.



## Braiding and Blending Funds

Recommended Strategies for Summer Programming	<u>I A</u> <sup>1</sup>	<u>1003a</u> <sup>2</sup>	<u>I C</u>	<u>I D</u> <sup>2</sup>	<u>II A</u>	<u>III</u> <sup>2</sup>	<u>IV A</u> <sup>2</sup>	<u>21st CCLC</u>	<u>McKinney Vento</u>	<u>REAP/RLIS</u>	<u>ESSER I, II, III</u>	<u>Perkins</u>	<u>IDEA</u> <sup>3</sup>
Fund reengagement specialists whose primary work is connecting with and engaging students; and cultivating belonging and relationship.	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X <sup>3</sup>
Focus on mental health and wellness by hiring school social workers, family liaisons, school psychologists, professional school counselors, licensed mental health counselors, and/or community outreach coordinators.	X			X			X	X	X	X	X		X <sup>3</sup>
Design summer activity and wellness camps to engage students physically around fun team/group activities.	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X <sup>3</sup>
Provide high-dose tutoring for individual students and small groups of students who were most impacted by learning loss.	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X <sup>3</sup>
Support students transitioning between critical grades (K-1, 5-6, 8-9) by designing bridge or boost programs around student leadership, peer mentorship, community service and/or academic acceleration.	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X <sup>3</sup>
Develop and implement project based learning aligned to student interests.	X			X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X <sup>3</sup>
Provide instruction to support students' biliteracy skills.						X		X	X	X	X		X <sup>3</sup>
Create additional opportunities for students to explore hands-on learning and real-world problem solving through CTAE and STEM.	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X <sup>3</sup>
Develop and implement intentional and creative professional learning opportunities for teachers.	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X <sup>3</sup>
Reduce barriers and promote community engagement by: providing transportation; including on-site childcare and parent education; feeding families breakfast and lunch; and designing community gathering spaces that offer resources to support students and families, including but not limited to technology, laundry facilities and clothing closets.	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X <sup>3</sup>

1. Where Title I-A funds are marked, the use of funds is only allowable in Title I-A schools operating schoolwide programs.
2. The specific program requirements must be met for eligible school, teacher and/or student activities.
3. IDEA funds can only be used on costs that are an excess cost of providing special education and related services for students eligible for support under the IDEA. If the program's primary purpose is the education of children experiencing disabilities, IDEA funds may be used even if the program benefits those children not experiencing disabilities.

# Celebrate National Summer Learning Week and Stay in Touch with Families

National Summer Learning Week is a celebration dedicated to advocacy and awareness around elevating the importance of keeping kids learning, safe, and healthy every summer, ensuring they return to school in the fall ready to succeed in the new year. You can join millions across the country in sending a powerful message that summers matter and demonstrating how summers can make a difference in the lives of young people.

[Click here](#) for more information.

## Communication Tips!

- Connect with your afterschool network (GSAN) for Summer Learning Week communication tools.
- Create a communications calendar to stay connected with families over the summer.
- Use tools like Hootsuite or Sprout Social to pre-schedule posts and monitor activity so you too can still enjoy your vacation time.
- Post on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and any other social media channel at least two times per week.
- Use photos and videos as often as possible to tell your story in a compelling way.
- Text parents with summer tips or community activities if possible.
- Include posts about summer goal-setting, resource links, and make sure to tag other organizations in shout-outs.
- Encourage families to sign up to your e-newsletter.
- Encourage user-generated content such as reviews, and social media posts from families that highlight their summer success stories.
- Monitor and engage with your audiences through on-going communications!





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# Essential Planning and Implementation Resources

These resources have been collected from a variety of independent sources. You can choose any number of resources below while planning and implementing your summer programming.

## General Summer Program Management Resources and Tools

[Summer Learning Toolkit](#) by **The Wallace Foundation**: This web-based resource provides summer program leaders with over 50 evidence-based tools and resources, including customizable tools, sample documents from actual summer programs, and tip sheets, as well as guidance documents that provide the connection to research.

[Getting to Work on Summer Learning](#) by **The Wallace Foundation**: In this edition, researchers distill lessons about implementation that they have gleaned from a six-year study of voluntary summer programs in the five urban districts participating in the National Summer Learning Project. Topics include: planning, teacher selection and professional development, sufficient time on task, student recruitment and attendance, academic curriculum and instruction, enrichment activities, positive summer climate, summer cost and funding.

[Summer Starts in September Program Planning Guide](#) by the **National Summer Learning Association**: This comprehensive summer learning program planning guide is full of research-based strategies, program examples, and tools that program leaders can use to develop an intentional and high-impact program.

[SPARK! Building Community Systems for Summer Learning](#) by the **National Summer Learning Association**: This issue of SPARK! focuses on building community systems for summer learning through six key elements: a shared vision, engaged leadership, continuous quality improvement, data management, and marketing and communications.

[Evidence-Based Interventions: Summer Learning or Enrichment and Comprehensive Afterschool Programs](#) by **Dr. Terry K. Peterson and Dr. Deborah Lowe Vandell**: This document highlights some of the evidence base that shows well-designed and well-delivered summer enrichment and comprehensive afterschool can address “learning loss,” accelerate learning, and expand opportunities for student success.

[HelpKidsRecover.org](#) by the **Afterschool Alliance**: A campaign of the Afterschool Alliance and youth development and out-of-school time experts to help connect education leaders with community partners around the shared goal of supporting students.

[Planning for Impactful Summer Learning](#) by **Jennifer Peck, Chris Smith, Katie Landes (GSAN), and Dr. Terry K. Peterson**: Program elements, focus areas, and engaging designs to consider while planning for impactful summer learning.

[Investing in Summer Learning Opportunities: Recommendations from the Greater Atlanta Summer Learning Council](#) by the **Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network and the Greater Atlanta Summer Learning Council**: This report lays out immediate COVID-19 and long-term systemic change recommendations to strengthen the infrastructure and quality of Greater Atlanta’s summer learning landscape, increase and coordinate funding, and serve the needs of the whole child.

## Curriculum & Quality Improvements

**[Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development Standards](#) by the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network and GUIDE, Inc.:**

This quality assessment tool contains best practice guidelines informed by research in a variety of disciplines to support the development of the whole child. The standards provide a framework for OST providers, serving youth in grades K–12, to evaluate and continuously improve the quality of their programming.

**[Summer Learning Program Quality Intervention](#) by the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality:** This assessment tool was developed by the National Summer Learning Association and the Weikart Center to support summer programs in assessing their program quality based on research of youth development standards. Tools are also available to help management and staff have critical conversations about improving overall program quality.

**[Mizzen](#) by C. S. Mott Foundation:** An application that helps plan and deliver engaging courses, lessons, and activities. This includes hands-on activities that foster well-being and learning in arts, STEM, storytelling, music, yoga and youth voice. Download it [here](#).

**[Summer Activity Guide](#) by the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network and the 50 State Afterschool Network:** This is a suite of fun and engaging activities and challenges based in skill building & social emotional learning, organized by four different age groups, that can be used for in-person, virtual, or hybrid instruction.

## Programming during the COVID-19 Pandemic

**[Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention](#) by the Centers for Disease Control:** This includes strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and maintain safe operations in schools, child care programs, and institutions of higher education.

**[Field Guide for Camps on Implementation of CDC Guidance](#) by the American Camp Association:** This field guide provides camp leaders with recommendations to reduce risks related to COVID-19. The American Camp Association is regularly updating this document to respond to changes and developments throughout the pandemic. This guide was designed to support various types of camps, including day, overnight, and outdoor programs.

**[Restart Recovery: Virtual Summer School State Guidance for District and School Leadership](#) by the Council of Chief State School Officers:** This guide was developed prior to the summer of 2020 to assist state and local educational agencies in planning and executing virtual summer programming. It includes key strategies for curriculum, teaching SEL, attendance, professional learning, and family engagement.

**[Summer Learning: A Bridge to Student Success and America's Recovery, a COVID-19 Playbook](#) by the National Summer Learning Association:** This playbook provides a framework for school and community leaders to plan, collaborate, and execute evidence-based practices and partnerships to create high-quality summer programs. Key resources are included throughout to help programs navigate the reality and ever-changing environment of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**[Return to Play: COVID 19 Risk Assessment Tool](#) by the Aspen Institute:** This online resource provides guidance on COVID-19 risks related to individual youth sports and recreational activities. Program leaders can use this tool to develop strategies to mitigate risks during sports or recreational activities during summer programs.

## Teacher Professional Development

[The Promise of Summer as a Time for Teacher Professional Learning](#) by the **RAND Corporation**: This report provides highlights and findings from the first national representative survey of teachers focused on summer professional learning experiences. The purpose of the study was to better understand professional learning opportunities teachers participate in during the summer months and how those may improve their instructional practices during the school year. Recommendations from the study include utilizing the low-pressure summer environment to support teachers' professional development and growth.

[A High-Impact Training Ground for Teachers](#) by the **Summer Matters Campaign**: This report looks at how education leaders in pilot communities in California used summer programs to provide powerful professional learning opportunities to support Common Core implementation and social-emotional learning goals.

## Whole Child Supports in Summer Programs

[Early Lessons from Schools and Out-of-School-Time Programs](#) by **The Wallace Foundation**: This report provides highlights from a two-year study focused on teaching social skills to youth. Specifically, it shares key lessons learned from six communities that have worked to support youth development through partnerships between the school and out-of-school-time programs.

[Teaching Kids How to Be Successful Learners](#) by the **Summer Matters Campaign**: This report describes some of the ways these programs are intentionally structured to support youth development. It draws from program evaluations, survey data, and in-person observations that all provide evidence of the differences this experience can make for children and youth, including the likelihood that their beliefs and attitudes will carry over into the regular school year.

## Recruitment and Retention in Summer Programs

[Summer Learning Recruitment Guide](#) by **The Wallace Foundation**: This report reviews key lessons learned from recruitment and retention by summer programs included in the National Summer Learning Project. It proposes and reviews eight key strategies for successful summer program recruitment: engage directly with students, understand your audience, create engaging messaging, create a written plan, make your outreach consistent and assertive, use trusted messengers, build a relationship with parents and students, and make registration as easy as possible.

[What Keeps Kids Engaged in Summer Learning](#) by the **National Summer Learning Association**: This research brief highlights a study conducted by Neil Maftzger from the American Institutes of Research. Specifically, his research documented key program strategies that led to higher levels of youth engagement, including: relevance statements, opportunities for youth to experience a sense of agency, and quality programming.

[Staff Recruitment Toolkit](#) by the **Afterschool Alliance**: This toolkit includes a collection of materials to help summer program providers recruit and hire new staff. Includes ideas for securing funds to increase wages, outreach strategies, messages, and easy-to-tailor flyers and graphics.



## Key Strategies

[The Effects of Summer Reading on Low-Income Children’s Literacy Achievement from Kindergarten to Grade 8: A Meta-Analysis of Classroom and Home Interventions](#) by James Kim and David Quinn: This meta-analysis published in the Review of Educational Research synthesizes 41 classroom- and home-based summer reading interventions. Interventions occurred both in the United States and Canada from 1998 to 2011. Findings from the meta-analysis indicate that low-income children benefit significantly from summer reading interventions.

[Engineering Strong Summer STEM](#) by the Summer Matters Campaign: The brief documents why and how STEM education can be successfully integrated into summer learning programs, and the significant positive impacts it can have on students and staff. The Summer STEM brief collects the data from this groundbreaking three-year, multi-district pilot program and offers best practices, lessons learned, and resources to help districts implement STEM learning in their summer programs.

[Supporting Successful High School Transitions](#) by Hanover Research: This brief provides key strategies for supporting youth during critical transitions before, during, and after high school. Of interest to summer program leaders is a focus on key strategies for summer bridge programs.

[Ninth Grade Counts: Using Summer Bridge Programs to Strengthen the High School Transition](#) by Great Schools Partnership: This is an extensive three-part guide directly tailored toward districts and schools interested in developing or implementing a bridge program for incoming ninth graders. The guide features a self-assessment protocol, three brief profiles of districts with bridge programs, and planning “road maps.”

[Connecting Older Youth to Success through Afterschool](#) by After School Matters: This short article is taken from the book, *Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success*. It reviews key strategies employed to engage older youth in programming, including active learning, community involvement, linking school day and use of school personnel, and youth input.

## Impact of Summer Programs

[Every Summer Counts](#) by The Wallace Foundation: This report highlights the findings from the National Summer Learning Project (NSLP). The NSLP study collected and analyzed academic outcome data from five school districts implementing voluntary summer programs. Key findings include the importance of attendance at summer programs and the amount and quality of instruction (five weeks of at least three hours per day).

[The Summer Slide: What We Know and Can Do about Summer Learning Loss](#) by Karl Alexander, Sarah Pitcock, and Matthew Boulay: This book provides a comprehensive review of summer learning loss. Contributions to the book are made by scholars and practitioners leading the field of summer learning. These contributors provide up-to-date research about summer learning loss, best practices in summer programming, and program evaluations.

[Expanding Minds and Opportunities: The Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success](#) by The Expanded Learning & Afterschool Project: This book, edited by Dr. Terry Peterson, is a compendium of articles and research evidence supporting the need for afterschool and summer learning. It includes nearly 70 articles that can be accessed for free.



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