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Special Education Newsletter

June 2017

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

THANK YOU FOR A GREAT SCHOOL YEAR!

Dear East Grand Rapids Families,

With the conclusion of the 2016-2017 school year, I wanted to thank you for being an integral part of our students' continued success which reaches far beyond the academic realm. It is the partnership of the East Grand Rapids teaching staff, special education staff, and families that makes our district unique and generates the optimum educational outcomes for all students. We are committed to continuously improve our practices to meet the needs of all students attending East Grand Rapids Public Schools.

With summer vacation at our door step, it is important to spend time with family and friends to enjoy the beautiful weather of Michigan's

summer months. In between our opportunities to enjoy sun and fun, I encourage all of our students to keep their academic skills fresh for their fall classes. Included in this month's installment of the EGR Special Education Newsletter are a variety of activities that can assist in keeping our students engaged in academic activities throughout the summer months. I encourage you to read the articles provided by our EGR special education staff and add a few academic activities to your summer schedule.

Thank you,

Bill Behrendt
Director of Special Education



SUMMER READING TIPS

FROM MRS. HOLLY BROWNLEY - RESOURCE TEACHER AT
LAKESIDE ELEMENTARY

If your child has reading difficulties, he or she may consider summer vacation a time to avoid books and take a break. After a full school year of practice and further interventions... who can blame them? In order to build reading skills, children with learning difficulties require numerous repetitions and reviewing information previously taught. You can fight summer regression by engaging your child in reading activities that are both entertaining and instructional. These activities focus on the whole child and can be adapted for a range of ages and skill levels. Included below are several reading activities or strategies that can assist with avoiding the typical summer slide.

Be careful when planning summer reading activities. Some children with learning difficulties have negative feelings about reading due to the challenges they face during the school year. Too many academic goals during the summer may frustrate your child. It is important to find ways to make learning fun. Allow your child to be a partner when picking the activities. Always incorporate activities your child will enjoy while also stimulating the learning process.



Reading - Quick Tips

- Read aloud together – Every Day: at the beach, park, or patio. Ham it up: share expressions while reading.
- Board Games: Bananagrams, Boggle, Scrabble, and Apples to Apples.
- Make your own audio book - record a favorite book.
- Comprehension: Ask quick questions! What happens next? What if? Make predictions.
- Reading for a purpose – Ask questions before reading the book or chapters. Focus on making predictions or activating prior knowledge of a related subject.
- As you go through the day – cooking, grocery shopping, playing games: utilize this time to pick out words or read sentences.
- Subscribe to magazines like Sports Illustrated for Kids, or National Geographic. Encourage older children to read current event magazines. Ask your child their opinion on the topics read.
- Find what interests your child: Reading does not have to include a traditional novel - Books like graphic novels and magazines can be high interest areas that promotes reading!



SUMMER MATH TIPS

FROM MR. CASEY LONGO - RESOURCE TEACHER AT
EAST GRAND RAPIDS MIDDLE SCHOOL

View road trips as a mobile classroom. Turn “Are we there yet?” into a learning opportunity. Create paper tickets for each trip and share how many tickets long the trip will be. At even intervals, collect one ticket from your child. This fun exercise gives children a tangible and visual way to understand distance and time. Using different colors allows your child to practice patterns and learn early addition problems or fractions.

Use everyday errands as learning opportunities. Laura Burns, an elementary math tutor in Mansfield, Ohio, has her favorite place to teach her own young children math: the grocery store. “We review numbers while we choose groceries, for example, adding the quantity of apples, looking at prices to reinforce decimals and even doing simple number recognition while standing in line.”

Transform routine chores into fun lessons for young children. For preschoolers, the opportunity to be a good helper can be all the motivation they need. Use opportunities in the kitchen to count or measure ingredients for meals. Have your child assist with sorting items like coins or clothing.

Turn children’s collections into math lessons. Children love to collect and gather items, especially at the park, beach, forest or even in the backyard. Encourage children to sort their items by size, color, shape or texture.

Follow your child’s interests to guide learning. No two children are alike, and especially so if you have both a son and a daughter. Girls often thrive with visual examples, so if your daughter likes the backyard garden, Booker suggests allowing her to measure plants’ growth with another object and track its growth for a set amount of time.

Children can work on number recognition with team members’ jerseys, and game scores can be an early way for them to grasp addition. Cheering at and actively watching or participating in a game can help the learning progress, as can a walk to make observations about nature and patterns.

[PBS Parents - Summer Math Tips Article](#)

There are many free computer based programs available for middle or high school students to keep their skills fresh through the summer.

[Khan Academy](#)

[iPracticeMath](#)

[edHelper.com](#)





SUMMER TIPS FOR SPEECH AND LANGUAGE NEEDS

FROM AMANDA WERNER- SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST
EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION AND
WEALTHY ELEMENTARY

To make good use of time during vacation, review the activities listed below to promote language and listening skills. These activities are easily adapted to any age group and can be played with the whole family.

Compare & Contrast

Make connections between anything (the different kinds of cereal you eat for breakfast, this year's vacation vs. last year's). Make it a family challenge. Who can name the most similarities and differences? Have two individuals name an item. Can anyone find a relationship between the two items? How are an elephant and a monkey the same?

Label! Label! Label!

Expand vocabulary by labeling items within a category. For example, see who can name the most fruits, tools, items found in a kitchen, etc. For an added challenge set a time limit.

Expand Auditory Memory

Give a list of numbers or words. How many can your child remember? Who can remember the most? Keep practicing and see if you can improve your memory by the end of the week.

Twenty Questions

Think of an object and have your child try to guess what it is using 20 yes/no questions or less. A great game for practicing use of question forms, memory, and language reasoning.

Auditory Discrimination Activities

Create ending-sound word chains in which each player says a word that starts with the last sound of the previous word (e.g. **hit - top - path- then - name...**)

What am I?

Think of an object and give clues to have others guess what you are. "I am an animal. I like to eat bananas". See how many clues your child can think of to describe one object or see if they can give such good clues that you only need two to be able to guess their item.

While these activities can be a good way to spend time waiting for a flight or while driving to your destination, they can be used any day of the week at dinner, bed time, or on the way to soccer practice!



SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT HANDBOOK WITH PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

We invite you to become acquainted with the programs, people, and organizations available to help you and your child. This handbook was developed for parents of students with disabilities by the Kent Intermediate School District. It serves as one source of information regarding state and federal laws that have been written to protect the rights of special education students. In general, as a parent of a child with a disability, you will receive a copy of procedural safeguards prior to each IEP team meeting. Additional copies of the booklet are available upon request from the EGRPS Special Education Department or the Kent Intermediate School District.

[Procedural Safeguards](#)

Special Education Parent Handbook

with Procedural Safeguards



 **Kent ISD**
We Lead Learning

IMPORTANT LINKS

[EGRPS Special Education Home Page](#)

[EGRPS Community Budget Guide 2016-2017](#)

[Strong Schools, Strong Communities](#)

[Kent ISD - Special Education Home Page](#)

[Parent Advisors for Special Education - PASE](#)

[Michigan Department of Education - Special Education Home Page](#)

[US Department of Education - OSERS](#)