



Get a Jump on Summer Program Planning: 6 Ideas To Try!

Daniel W. Hatcher, National Healthy Out-of-School Time Advisor, Alliance for a Healthier Generation
(Daniel.Hatcher@healthiergeneration.org)

Jill R. Turley, MS, RD/LD, SNS, National Nutrition Advisor, Alliance for a Healthier Generation
(Jill.Turley@healthiergeneration.org)

Michelle Owens, National Student & Employee Wellness Advisor, Alliance for a Healthier Generation
(Michelle.Owens@healthiergeneration.org)

Summer is a great time to educate kids about healthy lifestyles, role model the behaviors ourselves and cultivate environments that make it easier for kids to make healthier choices.

An engaging summer is also essential!

- According to the National Summer Learning Association, all young people experience learning losses when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer. Research spanning 100 years shows that students typically score lower on standardized tests at the end of summer vacation than they do on the same tests at the beginning of the summer.
- Children lose more than academic knowledge over the summer. Most children—particularly children at high risk of obesity—gain weight more rapidly when they are out of school during summer break.
- Parents consistently cite summer as the most difficult time to ensure that their children have productive things to do. <http://www.summerlearning.org/>

Here are 6 tips from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation to help you get a jump on summer!

1. Use the [Healthy Out-of-School Time Framework](#) and identify opportunities to create a healthy summer. Gather a couple coworkers and try out the online inventory.
2. Host a [Youth Forum](#) and invite family and community members; let youth voice and youth leadership build your momentum.
3. Serve summer meals; learn how to transition from afterschool meals to summer meals with help from [FRAC](#) and the [No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices](#).
4. Start [planning](#) a community garden.
5. Explore new outdoor activities; what about a nature scavenger hunt? Search the [Resource Database](#) for “outdoor activities.”
6. Stay hydrated with water! Explore lessons on healthy beverages from [Food and Fun](#).