



“They [program staff] help them [kids] spark an interest in leadership, expanding their learning by doing various activities. They are learning while having fun.”

- Summer Program Parent

## Summer Matters: *How Summer Learning Strengthens Students' Success*

*How Summer Learning Strengthens Students' Success* is an independent evaluation of three Summer Matters pilot programs. The report measures impact on students' academic achievement – both during the summer months and extending throughout the school year. Analysis of the data concluded high quality summer learning programs in Fresno, Los Angeles and Sacramento have bolstered students' academic success by strengthening their academic skills in general and literacy skills in particular, and increasing the effectiveness of their work habits and confidence in their abilities as learners.

### Key Findings

- Students ended the summer with vocabulary skills much closer to their grade level, **increasing their instructional grade level by over 1/3 of a grade.** (The National Reading Panel identifies vocabulary as one of five core components essential to strong reading skills.)
- **English language learners demonstrated significant increases in their grade-level vocabulary,** a gateway to English language fluency.
- Parents reported that their **kids improved their attitude towards reading (68%) and reading ability (62%).**
- Parents reported programs helped **prepare their kids for the transition from elementary to middle school.**
- **Social emotional learning results were strong as 9 out of 10 parents reported the summer programs helped their kids make a new friend and get along better with other students.**
- Overall, **86% of parents reported the summer programs gave their kids opportunities to develop leadership skills.**
- **98% of parents were satisfied with their kid's summer program.** Parents reported program staff interacted well with them, indicating a commitment to family engagement and to culturally competent practice.
- **Students enhanced their social skills, improved their relationships with educators and fellow students, and strengthened their ability to make new friends and connect with others.**
- Parents and educators emphasized **summer learning programs' critical role in providing students with new experiences and opportunities** – such as field trips and community service projects – that they do not have during the school year.
- Students in Fresno and Los Angeles **summer learning programs reported improved academic work habits and reading efficacy,** both key contributors to academic achievement.



Making Summer Matter for Every Child,  
Because Learning Happens Year-Round

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## Program Descriptions

The programs were taught by after school staff from community based organizations, with training, coaching and lesson planning support from credentialed teachers. This collaboration benefits staff on both sides; teachers take new ideas for motivating and engaging students into their classrooms and after school staff gain lesson planning and teaching skills that they bring back to their after school programs.

Summer Matters pilot programs include the following elements of high quality summer learning:

- Broadens kids' horizons – by exposing them to new adventures, skills and ideas. These could be activities like going on a nature walking, using a new computer program, giving a presentation, visiting a museum or attending a live performance.
- Includes a wide variety of activities – such as reading, writing, math, science, arts and public service projects – in ways that are fun and engaging.
- Helps kids build skills – by helping them improve at doing something they enjoy and care about. This could be anything from creating a neighborhood garden, to writing a healthy snacks cookbook to operating a robot.
- Fosters cooperative learning – by working with their friends on team projects and group activities such as a neighborhood clean-up, group presentation or canned food drive.
- Promotes healthy habits – by providing nutritious food, physical recreation and outdoor activities.
- Lasts at least one month – giving kids enough time to benefit from their summer learning experiences.

## About Summer Matters

Summer Matters is the first-ever statewide campaign focused on creating and expanding access to high quality summer learning opportunities for all California students.

Summer Matters is increasing the number of students served by summer learning programs and generating momentum and support for summer learning among education, elected, business, civic and philanthropic leaders across the state.

The Summer Matters campaign is a diverse statewide coalition of educators, policymakers, advocates, school district leaders, mayors, parents and others working collaboratively to promote summer learning in California. Our summer learning efforts are generously supported by funders including The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, and the Noyce Foundation.

For more information about the Summer Matters campaign and to download the full evaluation, *Summer Matters: How Summer Learning Strengthens Students' Success*, visit the website at [www.summermatters2you.net/resources](http://www.summermatters2you.net/resources).

“My daughter, who is a bear to get out of bed for school, wakes up every morning at 6:30am to go to camp without a fight! She likes to go and she has shared some of what she is learning with me.”

- Summer Program Parent



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