



Summer Learning Ideas

Here's a nice collection of short articles on all sorts of ways to keep your kids learning and engaged through the summer months. Though these are not all specifically focused on homeschooling, and are meant for a general parenting audience, there are lots of excellent ideas here to help you keep the learning going even while on a traditional "summer break". Glean and enjoy!

- The Erskine Family

HomeschoolFreebieOfTheDay.com

Scheduling Home School in the Summer Months

By [Stephanie Glidden](#)

I have heard many moms say that one of the best things about getting back to school in the fall is getting back to a schedule. Even though the summer months are a time to loosen up our schedule, I have learned that we lose too much momentum if we throw out the schedule completely in the summer! My home runs in a much more orderly, peaceable way and we remain productive if we stick to a schedule during the summer months, even if it is less structured.

I do plan school for the summer months, but it is more in the form of mini family projects. Saving the things that I find too time consuming to incorporate into the regular school year for the summer months works well for us. Another reason I like a summer schedule is that it encourages my children to manage their time well on a consistent basis. I have also found that it is not profitable for my children to have too much free time. It seems that free time evolves into bickering, laziness and the typical "I'm bored!" Keeping a schedule tends to keep these problems in check.

If you have never scheduled summer before, or at all, here are some simple steps to planning and implementing a summer schedule:

1. Seek the Lord

Remember to go to the Lord in all things, even our schedule! Seeking Him in this will help us to gain perspective for our days and keep our priorities in order.

2. Get your husbands input

I encourage you to always seek your husbands input when scheduling. Many times my husband will mention something that he would like us to do that I never would have thought of. I would not have known about this if I didn't ask for his input! He also helps me keep reasonable goals and a reasonable perspective on our days. Since I have a tendency to want to do too much, I appreciate his help immensely with this. This is also a great time to discuss areas of weaknesses in our children that we would like to help them overcome. The summer months allow more time to hone in on things in my children that need some additional training, and also allows us to spend more individual time together to study God's Word and grow spiritually. This is also a great time to review our school year, and I can share my struggles and victories with my husband and he gives me so much wisdom on how to practically solve my problems and encourages me to continue in the good things.

3. Ask yourself "How can I bless my husband with our summer?"

When summer comes, there are often additional chores around our home that need to be done. Don't leave chores for your husband because it is a "man's job", but seek to relieve his workload around the home by helping or even completing these jobs for him. Again, ask your husband what he would like some help with. He may not want his toolbox organized by you, but he may need help with other projects! One example is our garbage. We do not have garbage pick up where we live, so on the weekends or sometimes during the week my husband has to load up the garbage and take it to the dump. One day I thought, why am I leaving this up to him? He really doesn't like taking care of it, especially after it has been sitting for a week! Now I am purposing to take a bag or two to the dump when I leave the house. Since the dump is only a few minutes down the road it is a simple chore that blesses my husband.

4. Brainstorm a list of things that you have been wanting to do with your children, your home and any other areas.

As a homeschooling mom, most of my day is taken up with school. I often don't have time for bigger home projects, and I find that I have to eliminate many things I would like to do so we can stay on track with our studies. The summer months are a great time to tackle those big (and little) projects that always seem to get pushed to the side during the school year. This summer, some of the things I would like to accomplish are:

Clean & organize basement

Set up the sewing room

Scrapbook with children

Rubber stamping and card making with the children

Embroidery projects with the girls

Painting the children's bedrooms

Hold a yard sale

Complete a bird unit study

Gardening and learning about harvest and preservation

I have also asked my children for some ideas for things they would like to do this summer. They have all kinds of things they would love to do with mommy! This allows us to complete fun projects and spend time together in a way that we do not get to do during the school year.

After you have this list, you can easily prioritize what you want to have done, and schedule them into your day. You will be amazed at how much you can accomplish by doing this!

4. What are some routines in your school year you want to keep in the summer?

Keeping a morning routine helps us from getting into the Saturday morning attitude, where we lounge around, eat at no particular time, and the day goes by with nothing completed. While that works well on the Sabbath, it doesn't work well every day of the week! Our schedule will continue to include quiet time for my children to spend with the Lord, our family Bible reading and Scripture memory work. I also have afternoon and evening routines to keep us on track.

Just listing five things in order that you want done during these times can help keep your momentum through the day. The reason I do morning, afternoon and evening routines is because I noticed we had a tendency to follow the schedule at full pace in the morning but somewhere around 10 am we would begin lose sight of our day. By having these routines in place, it keeps us on track and provides some accountability to all of us. Also by keeping these routines the same all the time seems to make it easier to get back into the school year and I do not have to retrain the children each new school year.

Our morning routine looks something this:

1. Awake/Eat Breakfast
2. Get dressed
3. Brush Hair and teeth
4. Make bed
5. Clean bedroom

Our afternoon routine looks like this:

1. Wash hands before lunch
2. Help with lunch and eat
3. Clean up after lunch
4. Get ready for story time with mom

Our evening routine looks like this:

1. Family Devotions
2. Pick up anything around the house

that is yours and put away

3. Get pajamas on

4. Brush hair and teeth

5. Mom will tuck you in

Because these things never change, we find our children often do them by habit and without reminders, which was the goal for having these routines in the first place :)

5. Set some goals for you children and yourself

As I mentioned before, my husband and I often discuss areas of strength and weaknesses in our children. We try to take an area to focus on in each child and discuss how we can help them. We will pray over these areas and seek the Lord and the Word on how to help our children overcome this weakness. Depending on the ages of our children we will also include them in discussing this weakness and will set a plan for working on it together. Of course, this is good practice to do all year long, but in the summer we have more time because we do not have our regular school work in our day. It is best to fill that time with the Lord instead of activities that are of no eternal value.

I also find that I have more time to spend with the Lord in the summer. It is a good time for me to refresh spiritually and even work on my own areas of weakness through spending more time with Him.

To me, the summer is a great time to focus on organization in my home as well as reading more. I like to read books on educational methods, research and evaluate what worked and what didn't in the past year, search out curriculum, and find new resources to use in my schooling. For some reason during the school year, books about schooling are the last thing I want to read! But in the summer, I love to read as much as can to encourage and prepare me for the upcoming school year.

The summer can be a blessed time of refreshing and opportunity! I look forward to those warm sunny days, when we can grab our books and read outside, or head to the park for a picnic. A schedule doesn't restrict us from having fun, but rather creates time for more fun because we know each day the important things are still getting done. I can go to sleep at night with a feeling of accomplishment, and my husband can safely trust in us because he knows our days are planned and purposed.

6. Seek ways you can bless others with your time in the summer

Do you have friends or family that you do not get to visit with often? The summer months offer a great time to invite others over for lunch, or even to visit those you may not see often. Be careful that you do not fill your time with busyness outside the home, however, be creative in seeking to find ways that you can be a blessing to others with your extra time in the summer.

One way we have done this in our family is to have a visiting day every other week. We make a list of friends and family and plan a route to visit them. My children often make a card or draw a picture for the person we are visiting. We try to focus on those who are widowed, elderly, or needing encouragement.

Pray about this extra time that you have when school is on break in the summer, and ask the Lord to show you how to use this time wisely so that you can bless others. I am sure He will show you many things that your family can do.

Lastly, have fun and enjoy this short season of warm sunny days with your children! You can have a purposeful and fulfilling summer that will be enjoyable for all and avoid boredom with some time planning ahead.

Stephanie is a homeschooling mother of 3 and owns A High And Noble calling, a blog to encourage and inspire women in their noble callings as homemakers, wives and mothers. You can read articles, find resources, and inspiration for your high and noble calling at <http://www.ahighandnoblecalling.com>

*Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Stephanie_Glidden
<http://EzineArticles.com/?Scheduling-Home-School-in-the-Summer-Months&id=1175358>*

Reading Keeps Summer From Turning Kids' Minds Into Jello

By [John Maellaro](#)

As another long summer away from school approaches, many parents are wondering how to keep their children busy doing something constructive. While certain T.V. shows and video games can be educational, nothing seems to beat good old fashioned reading. Or for very young children, being read to. Summer reading programs are a great way to provide children regular opportunities to read books, play writing games, and listen to stories. While children might be more focused on the fun and prizes involved, educators know that these sorts of programs help little kids get ready to read and help big kids raise scores.

A study conducted by Jimmy Kim at Harvard's Center for Evaluation found that reading four or five books over the summer months had an impact on fall reading achievement comparable to attending summer school. Another study concluded that children who read more than a half an hour per day during the summer had significantly higher reading comprehension gains by the fall compared with children who did not. In addition, the study showed that children whose parents read to them at least twice a week over the summer also improved comprehension skills more than children whose parents did not.

Public libraries across the country offer summer reading programs designed to help parents encourage their children to read. Many of the programs are sponsored by the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP), which is a grassroots consortium of states working together to provide high-quality summer reading program materials for children at the lowest cost possible for their public libraries. The CSLP began in 1987 in the state of Minnesota and has since grown to include libraries from virtually every state in the country.

These wonderful free programs not only promote parent/child involvement, but also give kids an opportunity to have fun while learning valuable skills. Program coordinators often incorporate puppet shows, crafts, skits, and other fun activities to help children interact with the characters they read about and make various subjects come alive for them in a meaningful way. In recent years certain programs have even had the cartoon character Billy Gorilly singing a theme song to get kids into the spirit of things. Information on the summer library reading program in your area is available online or at your local library.

John Maellaro, owner of Flying Kitten Music, is one of the writers and producers of "Billy Gorilly" children's music and educational materials. Because success in school starts at home, the Billy Gorilly series was created to provide early learners everything they need to know, in a way they'll never forget. For more information visit <http://billygorilly.com/>

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=John_Maellaro

Summer Learning - 8 Fun Ways to Keep Your Kids Learning All Summer Long

By [Jamie Jefferson](#)

Most kids look forward to three months of nothing but fun and games, but, as a parent, you know that learning should take place year round.

And while it can be hard to get your child's attention among all the swimming pools, video games and television shows that they'd rather be spending their time on, it's important that you keep the learning going (at least at some level) during the summertime. That way, when they return to school in the fall, they'll be enriched and ready to learn.

Here are eight fun ways to keep your kids learning all summer long, including some educational websites your kids will love.

1. Start your summer learning adventure by heading to your local library. Most libraries offer reading programs each summer that challenge your child to read. They may have flyers to help your child stay on track and reading suggestions divided by age group. Taking a weekly trip to the local library will be a great family activity to look forward to each week.
2. Instead of letting your child sit in front of video games all summer long, why not make the process educational? There are many educational computer games and games for video game systems that allow your child to have fun and can help them keep up to date with their basic skills at the same time. Keep in mind though that too many computer games, educational or not, will reduce your child's activity level, so make sure to use the video games in moderation.
3. Check out some free learning websites for kids. Three to try: Funbrain.com, math.com and abcteach.com (which has printable worksheets). If your kids prefer online communities, try Webkinz.com, which requires the purchase of a webkinz toy; ClubPenguin.com, which is geared for 6 to 14 year olds and is free to play but also has activities that required a paid membership; and WhyVille.net, a free online community for pre-teen and teen boys and girls.
4. Summer is a perfect time to discover, or re-discover, the unique learning opportunities in your neighborhood. If you haven't been to the local museum or other historic location within driving distance of your home, now is the time to do it. Make sure to talk about the history, science or other subject you'll be learning about so your kids can get the most out of the experience. Big metropolitan museums, zoos or landmarks are also great destinations during the summer. Even though gas is expensive, a road trip every now and then may be just what the teacher ordered.

5. Allow each of your children to choose a comprehensive workbook that they can work on a bit each day. Some workbooks cover math, reading, social studies and science. You might want to work out an incentive program to make sure they get their worksheets done each day. For example, each worksheet equals one ticket. Once they reach five tickets, everyone is rewarded with a few hours at the pool or a run through the sprinklers.

6. Play some educational, age-appropriate games, such as Scrabble, Boggle or chess. Purchase some family favorites in travel editions so the kids can play them on car rides and on vacation.

7. Learning during summer vacation can also take a more formal role in your child's life. If there was a subject your kids struggled with during the school year, now is the time to get tutoring or enroll them in a program to help them catch up. Make the experience fun by balancing their study time with some good old-fashioned family fun.

8. Vacation is the perfect time for sharing non-traditional lessons with your child that expose them to concepts they won't find in regular school. If they learned about plants this year in school, help them plant their own garden so they can see the concepts in action. Reinforce their knowledge of fractions and measurements by having daily or weekly cooking lessons with you in your kitchen. Many schools have had to cut back on arts and music, so summer gives you the perfect opportunity to let your child's creative side flourish.

If you tried to pack all of these ideas into one summer, you'd have a tired kid on your hands! Pick a few to try and keep the learning going throughout summer. By making learning fun, your child won't realize they are learning at all.

Jamie Jefferson writes for Momscape.com and Susies-Coupons.com, where she shares [book warehouse coupons](#) and [Limited Too coupons](#).

*Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Jamie_Jefferson
<http://EzineArticles.com/?Summer-Learning---8-Fun-Ways-to-Keep-Your-Kids-Learning-All-Summer-Long&id=1235817>*

Help Your Student Stay Sharp This Summer!

By [Justin Bock](#)

Summer is a time for fun--a time to take a break and slow down. It's also a time when children can lose valuable academic skills that they have built up throughout the school year. Duke University researchers conducted a review of studies that show that students' achievement score do indeed decline between spring and fall, and that this loss of skills is greater for math than it is in reading.

The good news is that there are steps that families can take to limit the loss of skills their children experience over the summer, while still having fun! You can also get help with this through the use of a teacher or tutor. Consider these ideas when thinking about how you'll encourage your child to learn this summer:

- **Find teaching opportunities in everyday life.** Reinforce math concepts by cooking with your child, building a birdhouse, or setting up a lemonade stand. Watch the news or read the newspaper together and discuss current events. Summer is a great time to encourage reading! Allow your child to find reading material that complements his interests: wildlife or sports magazines, mystery novels, comics and graphic novels are all great ways to foster a love of literacy. Develop writing skills by writing letters to family members or encouraging your child to keep a journal.
- **Take educational field trips/vacations.** Trying to plan a fun family get away? Consider adding an educational stop to your itinerary. Museums, aquariums, and zoos can be a fun and often inexpensive addition to a child's summer learning experience.
- **Visit the library.** Public libraries have all kinds of summer programs planned. In addition, many public school libraries are open for limited hours during the summer (check with your child's school).
- **Take time to reinforce skills they've struggled with.** Summer is a great time for reflection. Reflect on the past school year with your child and identify areas for improvement. Use the summer as an opportunity to build up those skills. Find a teacher or tutor in the area who can help you identify best ways to improve these areas over the summer.
- **Take time to get ahead/Use a tutor to reinforce skills needed.** Summer is also a great time to prepare for the upcoming school year. Find out what skills your child will need for the next school year. For instance, if your student is in North Carolina, check out this Parent Resources page for links to NC

Standard Course of Study and objectives for specific subjects by grade level) and work on those skills. The best way to keep specific skills sharp is to find a tutor that you feel can consistently reinforce these skills. Most parents make the mistake of only pursuing a tutor when the student is already struggling during the school year. Finding a highly qualified tutor in *preparation* for the school year will ensure success for the upcoming year and beyond.

- **Keep it fun!** After all, it is summer. Your kids most likely don't want to sit and do worksheets or review flashcards any more than you do. They want to go swimming, ride their bikes, and play baseball--and they should! Physical activity is important for developing well-rounded kids. It contributes to their overall health as well as their ability to focus.

Setting your student up for educational success is a year long activity, not just something reserved for the ten months of the school year. However, learning over the summer does not have to be something that is stressful or laborious. Make learning a part of everyday life and relate it to the most enjoyable aspects of your child's life. Enlist the help of a tutor who can make learning fun in a one-on-one interactive environment. This ensures a consistent educational enrichment and prevents the loss of skills that were hard earned the previous school year.

The author of this article co-founded WakeTutors.com as the first and only tutoring service that allows you to choose from carefully selected, pre-screened, highly qualified tutors AND schedule a tutoring session with them without leaving the comfort of your home.

Founded by Wake County educators, WakeTutors.com was created in recognition of the growing need for quality, convenient, and affordable supplemental education in Raleigh, Cary, Durham, Chapel Hill and the surrounding areas of the Triangle.

Go to <http://www.waketutors.com> for more information on finding a tutor in the Raleigh area.

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Justin_Bock
[http://EzineArticles.com/?Help-Your-Student-Stay-Sharp-This-Summer!
&id=1232699](http://EzineArticles.com/?Help-Your-Student-Stay-Sharp-This-Summer!&id=1232699)

How to Beat Summer Boredom

By [Jessica Anderson](#)

Okay moms and dads it is getting to be that time of year again, Summer time. It won't be long before you hear the dreaded, "I'm bored!" Well I am here to tell you that with a little preparation and this article you can keep your kids busy all summer long.

I am a mother of 5 easily bored children and have learned many tricks to keep boys and girls of all ages occupied for hours a time during the summer.

Let's start with toddlers and pre-schoolers. Toddlers and pre-schools are easily entertained at first but lose interest fast. You need something simple but fun to keep them occupied and interested, so here is the list of my favorites:

1. **BUBBLES!!** -This is the best activity for kids age 2-5 and sometimes the older kids can really get into this. Diluted dish soap is an inexpensive bubble maker and you can find all sorts of fun things around the house to make bubbles with such as a colander, string, and whisk. There are also several bubble kits that you can buy with different bubble blowing instruments provided. I love the Thames & Kosmos Bubble Builder Set especially because it makes it fun and educational for your older children who may want to get involved.

2. **Sidewalk chalk and paint** - These are favorites at my house. My 4 year old can spend hours drawing on our patio and driveway. Over the last couple of years Crayola has come out with some very fun upgrades to the sidewalk chalk, like sidewalk paint, stencils and sidewalk airbrush sprayers. The best part of sidewalk art is rinsing the kids off with the hose afterwards, they love the cool down and you don't have to deal with chalky handprints on your walls. Please make sure that you lather your kids down with sunscreen before an afternoon of sidewalk chalk.

3. **Sprinklers** - Nothing beats the boredom on a hot day like a run through the sprinklers. Once again you can use what have on hand or you can spend under \$10 to get a fun kids sprinkler that has extra features. Of course you can always just give you child control of the hose and make sure all your windows and doors are shut! (This one is actually good for all ages, but especially fun for the younger children)

4. **Moon Sand** - Last but not least I will mention my new favorite activity Moon Sand. Moon Sand it a great way to bring the outdoors inside, a great activity for when it is raining or just too hot to play outside. Moon sand is moldable and never dries out. It is actually very easy to clean up, not at all like real sand that you can't seem to get cleaned up no matter what, moon sand sweeps and vacuums easily.

Now let's move on to a more challenging age, boys and girls age 7-10. Let's face it kids are prone to sitting in front of the TV, especially when they are bored. So here are some great boredom busters for elementary school kids:

1. Treasure Hunt - This one will take a little time and preparation on your part but is well worth it. Find a wooden chest and put something special in it, like a gift certificate for ice cream or a movie pass or whatever it is that your kids like. Hide it or bury it somewhere in your yard and make a map with clues along the way for them to find, if you spend a little time this activity could take a few hours and they will love every minute of it. The beauty of this is that usually they decide to make their own treasure hunt for their friends or siblings and planning that usually takes up at least 4-5 hours. We have a Melissa and Doug Treasure Chest that we use only for this activity and my kids love it because it is filled with doubloons and a pirate flag that they get to play with for the rest of the day.

2. Car Wash - Okay I admit that I have an ulterior motive with this one, but it really is a great boredom buster. This activity is best if you have more than one child involved, otherwise it just seems like a chore. Set your kids up with some car soap and a few buckets and sponges and a hose and sit back and let them go to town. This is a great way to get your car clean and your kids can get some energy out.

3. Science Kits - Kids love to learn whether they will admit it or not. We have all the Science Kits from Thames & Kosmos; they are great because the kids can learn about anything from weather to cars and motors. They are great for sneaking in some learning while school is out.

4. Make a scrapbook - What a great way to document the previous school year or even their summer, set up a time each week for them to work on their scrapbooks. Even boys enjoy this activity. Allow them to pick out their own books, paper and stickers. You will be amazed at their creativity and how much fun they have.

5. Write and illustrate your own book - This activity will last pretty much all summer and will encourage summer learning as well. Help your kids brainstorm ideas for their book and allow them to use the computer to type up their story for a more "professional" look (and typing practice) You can even take the completed book to the local print shop and have it bound for a finished look. Your kids will love to look back at their stories over the years.

6. Games - Never underestimate the power of the board game. Chess, checkers, dominoes are all favorites at our house. Kids may resist at first when you suggest a game but once they get into it you won't be able to get them to stop. For a fun twist have your kids create their own board game.

7. Set a family record - This one is a surefire winner! Keep your own family book of records and have the kids try to set records for things like most jumping jacks, longest handstand, cleanest room, or anything else

that you can think of. When they start to utter that they are bored give them a record to break and a fun reward if they set a new record.

8. Learn magic tricks - Get your kids a magic set and let them put on a magic show for you or the kids in the neighborhood. This one is always a hit and it is something that they can do at school or family functions to really impress people. I recommend the Melissa and Doug Magic Set because the quality is fantastic and the tricks are great.

Hopefully these ideas will get you and your kids through the summer without the words "I'm bored". We have been using these tricks for the past 10 years and have successfully avoided summer boredom every year. I hope you can too. Have a great summer!

Written by-

Jessica Anderson, Mother of 5

Jessica works part time at [Busy Bee Toys](#) in Suwanee, GA and enjoys movies, bowling and vacations with her family.

*Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Jessica_Anderson
<http://EzineArticles.com/?How-to-Beat-Summer-Boredom&id=1106686>*

Help Your Kids Learn All Summer

By [Sheryl Wood](#)

School may be out for summer, but the learning doesn't have to stop there. In fact, the real challenge of summer is to let your kids relax, enjoy their leisure time with friends and family and still keep their minds sharp and their curiosity piqued. How can a parent help make that happen? Read the tips below and find all kinds of activities, some that the entire family can enjoy, that will keep your child learning all summer.

1. Encourage daily reading. Kids don't have to read textbooks or the classics to maintain reading skills over the summer. Summer is for fun. Take them to the library or the bookstore and let them choose anything that interests them. If you are going to the beach or to visit relatives for vacation, somewhere you know they won't have the distractions of home, they might even welcome reading. Give them a fun novel about kids their own age. Young girls still love the Nancy Drew Mystery series. It builds curiosity, problem-solving and strategy skills. If comic books are all they will read, indulge them.
2. Summer is the perfect time to visit a museum with your kids. Have your family decide together on a place you would like to visit. Look up information about the area. Map out the route together. If you need to be more subtle, stop by a museum spontaneously on the road to somewhere else! If your young child is enraptured by dinosaurs, scour the web for special showings that you could make a trip to. In preparation for the trip, have your child explain to you all about his or her favorite dinosaur. Discuss with your child what they might see, learn and get to do at the museum.
3. Help your child to learn about their surroundings. Do you pass a historical marker on the road every day, but have never stopped? Stop and read it with your family. Go home and look up more about it. Is there a famous homestead near you; maybe a president's birthplace. Take the tour and learn more about it.
4. Plan a trip to an artist's studio, a jewelry maker or local factory. Feed their curiosity in how things are made and how they run. If your child has a special interest, check the web and yellow pages and see if they can stop by for a tour or a work shadow day.
5. Choose day or overnight camps with learning in mind. Camps that teach about nature, wildlife and conservation do double duty. Many state fish and wildlife departments run summer camps and there are many others. Again, your web is the best place to look. You may have missed out for this summer, but plant the seeds of interest in your child for next year. Make it a goal for next year. Plan, read and discuss what the experience will be like.
6. Catch fireflies and look up with your child what makes them light up.

When your child catches a snake or other creature from nature, have them research how to care for it. Build a fort and teach your kids about angles and construction. Create the habit of using reference materials to learn more about everything around them.

7. Encourage activities that broaden your child's perspective of the world. Ask them to volunteer to help an elderly neighbor with their lawn or garden. Set an example and sign everyone up to volunteer at a community dinner or charitable event like a bike-a-thon. For each new toy your kids get, ask them donate one to charity. Caring about others and spending time in service to others is one of the best lessons your child will ever learn.

8. If your kids spend hours with video games, barter with them. And the younger they are when you start this, the better. Provide them with educational software and require that some of their computer time is spent using any of the learning software that's now available. Not all educational software is going to put your kids through the rigors of learning algebra, although if they need the extra help, that is certainly an easy source. There are numerous computer learning games out there that teach problem-solving, critical thinking and strategy building that are disguised as fun, adventure games. Surf the web for educational software with your kids and let them tell you what interests them. They will be learning without even realizing it. There are even clever educational software games that use cartoon characters like Spongebob to teach kids to type.

It is by exposing your child to sights, sounds and smells that they don't get in school that their horizons and interests are broadened. Creating and feeding a healthy curiosity in your child will give them a thirst they will never outgrow.

*Sheryl Wood is co-owner of All Educational Software, an online store with a wide selection of software for learners of all ages. Find software the entire family can use to learn to type, learn a language, help with homework and more at [All Educational Software](http://www.alleducationalsoftware.com)
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