

Parents of Benjamins, Judahs, and Zebulun:

Training up young people to become self-sufficient, hard-working, content, and capable people is about a lot more than academics. And summer is a good time to have children practice skills that will help them in life as well as in the classroom. Working and playing together as a family sets the stage for students to leap forward with skills and self-discipline, which will make the school year flow so much easier (for them and for you) when September rolls around. Here are some areas in which students should be practicing and perfecting skills.

Physical fitness: Play! Run! Jump! Create regular opportunity for students to grow in physical ability and strength. It is natural for kids to want physical play, so encourage them in that direction. Kids who get lots of exercise are more confident and focused. Exercise also gives them opportunity to increase much-needed motor skills, so they can control their bodies.

Responsibility: Make sure kids have work to do around the house. Giving kids regular chores teaches them how to contribute to the family. It also helps create awareness of what needs to be done so kids begin to look for ways to help. Becoming helpful gives kids purpose. Learning the skills associated with chores also increases motor skills and self-discipline. Let them do it!

Self-sufficiency: Kids should be able to do many things to take care of themselves. School age kids need to be able to tuck in their shirts, buckle their belts, tie their shoes securely, comb their hair, manage their own lunch. There are so many skills that could be encouraged and practiced! So have kids practice doing lots of things for themselves this summer. Kids who learn self-sufficiency find pride in doing a good job, which leads to contentment.

Communication: Kids learn how to be better communicators by practicing with adults. They improve vocabulary, thinking skills, listening skills, and speech patterns. Our reliance on media has decreased students' verbal interaction, so summertime is a good time to talk and play to provide students with relationship-building interaction.

Reading: Of course, the perfect summer activity is reading. Create a regular habit and find a cozy spot, either indoors or outdoors. Read as a family, either out loud or silently (or both!). Visit the library; talk about books; create a reading challenge. Help kids to find this activity to be relaxing and enjoyable. And while you're at it, have your kids practice some academic skills to maintain fluency: using vocabulary, common-sense Math (counting money, telling time). There are online fact drills and other games to help students retain what they have learned.

Maybe you're a family that hasn't given your child much responsibility in the past. If so, you're not alone. Our culture has encouraged parents to shelter their kids and do everything for them. But they are ready! And they need your help to learn to be helpful and self-sufficient.

But maybe you're a family that has already done some or all of these things. If so, that's great! Don't stop! Keep pushing them to become all they should be.

Thank you for all you do, parents! Have a great summer, and we will be in touch soon.

Coram Deo Staff