



Bulletin

Massachusetts Parent Information & Resource Center (PIRC)
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Keep Learning Alive Over the Summer

Even though the school doors may be closed for the summer, kids' minds are always open to learning. Summertime is a great time for learning. Parents can not only help their kids keep their learning gains from the past year, but also help them get a jump start on the year ahead.

Now, you're probably hesitating as you just imagine the cries of protest coming from your child, "Aw, but it's summer vacation! I don't want to do school work now!" But wait—summertime learning doesn't necessarily have to be dry and boring. There are many fun and interactive museums and historical sites all around Massachusetts that you can visit with your child. Many of them relate to topics that your child will study in school.



Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks Can Guide Summer Learning

Parents eager to keep learning alive and fun will find a great resource in the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*. They are on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Web site at www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html. There, you will find the general learning standards for PreK–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8, 9–10, and 11–12 for every academic subject. A learning standard is what the student is expected to learn. MCAS tests are based on the learning standards. At the Web site, click on the link to a subject to get a general idea of what your child will be studying in the coming school year. Since the *Frameworks* are general guidelines, contact your child's school for a copy of the specific curriculum—or syllabus—that your child will be learning. You can use this information to guide summer learning experiences.

Fun Learning Destinations for Students of All Ages

In the fall, third or fourth graders will be learning about the Pilgrims in social studies. A day trip to Plymouth, where you visit Plimoth Plantation and the Mayflower, will be a fun and exciting adventure. If you have time afterwards, take a walk along the jetty or the harbor, browse the gift shops, or get an ice cream cone. Your children will have so much fun they won't even realize it's educational! On the way home, review with your child what you have learned.

Are you the parent of a soon-to-be fifth grader? Your child will learn about the American Revolution. You can give your child a head start on social studies lessons by going to Concord and Lexington. There, you can visit the battlefields and walk the path that Paul Revere rode on his horse. Concord is also a great

location for older children who will be studying the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Nathaniel Hawthorne in their English class. Take them on a tour of the Old Manse and Emerson's house, where they can learn about these historical authors and the Transcendentalist movement. Top off the day with a hike around Walden Pond, where Thoreau lived and wrote *Walden*.

Incoming seventh graders can prepare for their Ancient History class by visiting the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman galleries at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. Students of art or art history will also find this Museum fun and helpful.

Will your fourth grader be studying whales in science class, or will your high school junior be reading *Moby Dick* in English? Take them to New Bedford Whaling Museum. Is *The Crucible*, *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, or *The House of The Seven Gables* on your child's reading list? A trip to Salem would be a great

idea. Students who will be studying the solar system in science class will benefit from a visit to the Hayden Planetarium at Boston's Museum of Science.

Summer Learning Closer to Home

If you can't make it to any of these museums this summer, there are still plenty of fun and interesting ways to prepare your child for the upcoming school year. Visit your public library to take out books, audio books, or DVDs on the subjects your children will be studying. Or, go on the Internet for educational Web sites. The American Library Association's Web page at www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/index.cfm has a list of "Great Web Sites for Kids" organized by subject and topic. Ask the librarian to help you find the ones that are related to the subjects your children will be studying in school. These Web sites are a fun and interactive way for students to continue learning over the summer.

Your Library's Summer Resources

Check out your local library for summer resources like these:

- Free or low-cost passes to museums, the zoo, and other places of interest (Call ahead to reserve a pass. There may be a waiting list so call as soon as you can.)
- Free story times and movies
- Summer reading programs or other learning opportunities
- Suggested reading lists for kids of different ages

Call your local library for details

Remember, even though school is out for the summer, you can still make sure your child continues to learn throughout vacation!

Summer Time Is Learning Time

Summer is a perfect time for informal learning at home and at museums, libraries, parks, and historical sites. Parents can get ideas on how to make the most of these resources by tapping into the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*. This **Bulletin** describes how to use the *Frameworks* and gives examples of ways to put the *Frameworks* to work.

Parents play an important role in keeping learning alive over the summer and all year long. Mass PIRC is here to help. For more on how you can support your children's education, or to be added to the Mass PIRC mailing list, please visit our Web site at www.masspirc.org or call us toll-free at 1-877-471-0980.



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