LIBRARIES AT THE CENTER OF SUMMER LEARNING AND FUN

An Online Toolkit to Expand from Summer Reading to Summer Learning

nsla
national summer
learning association

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HELLO LIBRARY EDUCATION LEADERS!

This online toolkit is designed to provide you with the resources, ideas and strategies that can help you continue the expansion of your library's summer reading program into a more diverse summer learning program. Here you'll find links to tools and materials gathered from libraries across North America that are implementing programs designed to engage participants in active skill-building, creative exploration, and critical thinking (in addition to reading) during a time of high risk for learning loss. The included resources can be used to help you reach beyond ready readers and enhance your existing programs to expand opportunities to more children and youth. With the tools from other libraries and key strategies, you will gain concepts that can help you implement activities that help summer learning participants increase their love of learning and discovery and return to school ready to thrive.

All resources and information included in this toolkit are a result of research completed via a strategic partnership between the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) and the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) called *Accelerate Summer*, funded, in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (Grant Number: LG-07-14-0154-14). ULC and NSLA engaged in this strategic partnership to capture the variety of ways libraries are serving youth during the summer and working to address the summer slide. Research involved a scan of library summer programs including a survey completed by 90 libraries, observation site visits with 8 libraries, and interviews with additional libraries during the summer of 2015. The work of *Accelerate Summer* has resulted in a better understanding of the strategies libraries are using to deliver summer learning programs as well as the challenges they still face.

In the following sections, you'll find:

▸ Links to resources for making the case for library summer learning programs

▸ Models of library summer learning with example programs and partnerships and links to useful tools

▸ Five strategies for evolving summer reading into summer learning with links to resources

▸ Additional resources focusing on sharing your summer learning story with key stakeholders, including assessing the effectiveness of your program and tips for communicating key messages

Use these tools and resources to enhance and expand your summer programming and further establish your library as a summer learning leader in your community.

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Active Learning: We play a vital role in the knowledge economy by providing targeted education opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds and walks of life.

I. MAKING THE CASE FOR LIBRARY SUMMER LEARNING

Research on Summer Learning Loss

To gain buy-in and support from multiple stakeholders on your transition to an expanded summer learning approach after previously operating a traditional summer reading program, it is important to make the case with easily-understood research and messages. For example, research shows that many students experience significant setbacks during the summer months—especially those from low-income homes. You can point to a Johns Hopkins University study which found that unequal access to summer learning opportunities in the elementary grades accounts for two-thirds of the 9th grade gap in reading achievement for students from higher and lower income homes. Another study by the Rand Corporation shows that the effects of missing out on learning over the summer are cumulative, meaning that children in lower income homes who don't participate in summer learning programs may be at least two years behind their peers by the time they reach the 5th grade.

▸ This infographic from NSLA summarizes what researchers have learned about summer learning loss and how disadvantaged children have unequal access to learning opportunities when schools are closed. This graphic can be displayed in your library branches, as it is at Chicago Public Library (right) and shared with leadership and decision-makers.

▸ The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading has a useful webpage with compiled important facts on how students—especially those in low-income families—fall behind during the summer with strategies for comprehensive programming that can help address the issue. Share this link with library colleagues to gain buy-in on increased outreach to engage low-income families and intentional partnerships with schools and other community partners.

▸ A short video produced by successful summer learning program, Horizons National, freely available on YouTube, graphically and simply displays the key findings from the Rand Corporation study discussed previously. Use this short video in trainings and presentations to help explain why it is imperative for the library to reach beyond ready readers and engage all children and youth in active learning, especially elementary school students from low-income communities.
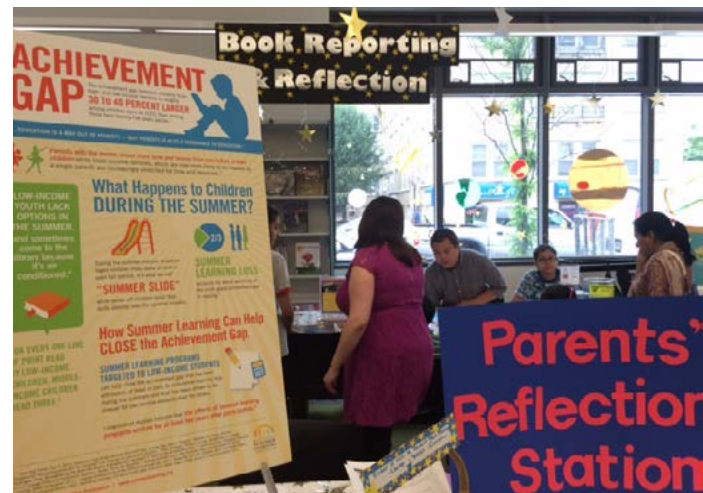
All of these resources are helpful when communicating with library CEOs, policymakers, funders, youth services colleagues, and other decision-makers and stakeholders about the importance of expanding library learning opportunities during the summer.

Library Education Assets

Public libraries are in an ideal position to deliver education programs over the summer because of their strengths as trusted community hubs for learning. As community education leaders, libraries provide a safe atmosphere with the unique ability to engage entire families and provide flexible learning experiences through diverse formats, including

"In almost every community or neighborhood, the public library is a bedrock institution that plays a critical role in keeping kids of all ages safe and productively engaged during the summer months."

- Sarah Pitcock, CEO,
National Summer Learning Association

one-on-one instruction, online learning using technology, active learning through group activities, and much more. As essential education partners, libraries are skilled at working collaboratively and intentionally with other agencies and local government to reach community-wide goals. These distinctive library education assets also help make the case for the transition from summer reading to summer learning by acknowledging that there is so much more than books that the library can offer to a whole community of learners.

▸ This *ULC Leadership Brief: Partners for Education* further speaks to the role of libraries as educational institutions in their communities. It provides examples from across the country of libraries working with schools, businesses, health agencies, higher education institutions, and other partners to broaden and improve education outcomes. Share this brief with your library leadership and stakeholders to highlight the education assets of your library and make the case for an expanded summer learning program.

▸ Another *ULC Leadership Brief: Libraries Expanding Summer Opportunities* highlights the summer learning models and strategies also included in this toolkit. This brief can be shared with library executives and external decision-makers to help them quickly understand the evolving leadership role of libraries in the summer learning space.

▸ **The Young Adult Library Services Association** has also developed a position paper on Adopting A Summer Learning Approach for Increased Impact which details the ways older students are affected by summer learning loss and provides steps libraries can take to design summer learning activities and programs that meet the needs and interests of teens. This is an excellent resource to share with teen services colleagues to gain their buy-in and to reference with community stakeholders to make the case for incorporating diverse summer learning activities at your library.

II. LIBRARY SUMMER LEARNING MODELS THAT EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES

ULC's and NSLA's *Accelerate Summer* research identified three primary models that illustrate how libraries are expanding traditional summer reading programs to include diverse summer learning activities. These models have been called, "Summer Reading PLUS," "Skill-based Drop-in Learning Activities," and "Focused Enrollment Programs." Here we explain these different models and provide simple steps that you can take to try these approaches with examples, tools and materials gathered from libraries across the country.

Summer Reading PLUS adds hands-on and inquiry-based learning activities to incentive based summer reading programs so that summer programs are about doing, as well as reading.

Tips for implementing a Summer Reading PLUS approach:

▸ Award credits and prizes for participation in STEM, connected learning, and other active learning activities that connect to your summer reading theme.

▸ Allow participants to engage in activities at the library or at home and link these experiences with reading material. Activities could include visiting a museum, cooking a meal at home, writing a letter, or working in a library maker space.

▸ Expand your partnerships with other organizations providing summer programs (such as parks & recreation camps) to reach more youth and provide multiple opportunities to participate.

Summer Reading PLUS in Action

Saint Paul Public Library's *Summer Spark!* The library renamed its summer reading program in 2015 to emphasize fun. *Summer Spark!* still has elements of an incentive-based reading program, but participants can also earn credits by completing other hands-on activities at home, such as following a recipe to help make dinner, trying a new fruit or vegetable, measuring the rainfall, or visiting a new playground. *Summer Spark!* is the library's way of responding to Saint Paul's citywide

educational priorities, which are preparing children for kindergarten, helping students be successful in school and life, and helping everyone have essential workforce skills.

▸ Saint Paul Public Library uses this colorful Activity Log to allow children to easily keep up with their participation and work toward their goals.

Ottawa Public Library's *TD Summer Reading Club* aims to inspire a sense of adventure and wonder, nurture children's imaginations, and celebrate their accomplishments. Youth have the opportunity to participate in programming featuring arts and crafts, dance, games, illusions, performing, science, sports, stories, technology, and much more. Co-created and delivered by 2,000 public libraries across Canada, development of this national, bilingual program is led by Toronto Public Library in partnership with Library and Archives Canada. Sponsorship is generously provided by TD Bank Group.

▸ Ottawa Public Library provides participants with the *TD Summer Reading Club's* online and print notebook where they can keep track of books read.

Skill-based, drop-in learning activities include flexible, active learning designed for participants to gain academic or 21st century skills such as experimentation and problem-solving, collaboration and teamwork, etc., while accommodating families' needs for flexible summer opportunities that don't require enrollment in a 5- or 6-week camp.

Tips for implementing a skill-based drop-in learning activities approach:

▸ Emphasize active learning and skill-building in your drop-in activities, classes, and events.

▸ Design programs with clearly articulated learning goals so that participants are sure to gain specific skills from their participation while also having fun.

▸ Find multiple times for programs that will allow families and children to drop-in frequently, when they are available.

Skill-based, Drop-in Summer Learning in Action

Chicago Public Library's *Rahm's Readers Summer Learning Challenge* (named for Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel) teams up with Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry to offer a wide array of science and STEM-focused activities that follow the theme, "Read! Create! Explore!" In addition to earning incentives for reading, "Explore on the Go!" events at branches across the city invite children and families to engage in fun learning activities tied to specific content knowledge. Supporting this effective summer learning program, teens work as interns to help lead program activities for younger children, creating a fun, skill-building experience for both the teens and children. In 2015, Chicago Public Library (CPL) won the first-ever Founder's Award as part of the NSLA's Excellence in Summer Learning awards, for its efforts to accelerate academic achievement and healthy development for low-income children and youth.

▸ For each event held as part of the *Summer Learning Challenge*, library program leaders follow a detailed "Read! Create! Explore! activity plan including a list of books that support the activity, what students will be creating, what they will be learning, interactive websites they can use for more activities, and how to adapt the lessons for different ages.

The Summer Learning Program Quality Assessment (SLPQA), an instrument designed jointly by the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality and NSLA, can provide guidance in implementing programs that include important skill-building opportunities for children and youth including:

▸ Working collaboratively with peers and adults

▸ Developing a sense of belonging

▸ Engaging actively in learning

▸ Directing their own learning

▸ Participating in physical activity and healthy eating

SUMMER LEARNING | Program Quality Intervention

nsla national summer learning association   DAVID P. WEIKART CENTER FOR YOUTH PROGRAM QUALITY

Broward County Library's _Summer Learning Program_ sets summer learning goals for four age groups — preschool, children, teens, and adults — and encourages participants to use an online program to track their progress. Participants can complete challenges such as attending events, downloading learning resources, engaging in family-reading sessions, accessing databases, and completing required back-to-school activities. Via informational flyers and library staff outreach, students and families learn about the program in the schools and in various locations throughout the community. Students who participate in the library's after-school programs can also sign up.

▸ Using a program planning template, leaders of all different types of _Summer Learning Program_ activities can ensure that the activity has a theme and specific learning goals that tie to the library's broad strategic goals.

Fort Worth Library's _Worth Reading_ is a community-wide program aimed at getting children, youth, and adults engaged in reading and learning all year long. During the summer, the program uses activity templates that are aligned with the state curriculum standards in English language arts, reading, and science to plan diverse programs and activities that build related skills for young participants.

▸ Fort Worth Library project leaders use this Summer Activity packet to implement activities that are aligned with the Texas state standards for English/language arts and science for students in grades preK–5. The lesson plans describe the activity, the learning objectives, the materials needed, and the aligned academic standards.

Focused enrollment programs are usually offered on a week-by-week basis, address specific learning outcomes, and are targeted to youth and families who do not have access to other summer learning and educational opportunities.

Tips for implementing a focused enrollment program:

▸ Identify a content area, such as early literacy, grade-level reading, STEM learning, college and career readiness, or another area that aligns the library's expertise and resources with academic support needed most by students in the community.

▸ Determine the best timing to offer the more intensive programming, and identify library team members and community partner staff and volunteers who can be trained to lead programming and manage enrollment.

▸ Collaborate with schools, local government agencies (such as the local housing authority) and community-based early literacy programs to conduct outreach and identify children and youth who would most benefit from focused programming. Collaborate with content experts such as museums and science centers to plan curriculum. Engage all partners in co-leadership of programs as allowable.

Focused Enrollment Summer Learning Programs in Action

New Haven Free Public Library's _READy for the Grade_ is a seven-week summer reading program for rising 1st- through 3rd-graders who are reading below grade level and come from low-income families. Funded by the New Alliance Foundation, the **New Haven Free Public Library's** program includes twice-a-week group tutoring, one-on-one instruction, and weekly family nights. The library worked with principals, literacy coaches, and kindergarten teachers to plan the curriculum and recruit students from many New Haven schools. A bilingual teaching assistant from the New Haven Public Schools, two certified teachers, and one local university education major were hired to support the program. Because these educators already know the students, they are able to design learning goals for each child.

- This *READy for the Grade* program flyer is shared with parents to provide simple information on what the program involves, incentives for participation, and how to register.

- A simple enrollment form completed by a parent provides background information, such as the child's reading level, and enrolls him or her in the program.

- Families join the program for a weekly dinner and complete take-home reading exercises focused on the bilingual book of the week.

District of Columbia Public Library's *Science in the Summer* is part of a regional program developed by the GSK pharmaceutical company. *Science in the Summer* is a free, enrollment-based summer learning program that is offered at several branch locations across Washington, DC. The program is provided in partnership with the American Association for the Advancement of Science and invites rising 2nd- through 6th-graders to "do the work of scientists." Lessons are taught by certified teachers and cover topics such as simple machines, electricity, and magnetism.

- The library shares this *Science in the Summer* informational flyer at local schools, neighborhood apartment buildings, and community centers to recruit participants and provide parents with detailed information about the program and how to register their children.

- Each student is given an activity book with an engaging introductory letter to students that includes activities that can be done at home that correspond with the lessons. Students are also provided with content-related books to read and goggles to wear during simple experiments.

New York Public Library's *Literacy Leaders* program trains high school students in a credit-earning course to be literacy tutors and then employs them to work with struggling 1st- and 2nd-grade readers at four library branches. Teens in the 10th- through 12th-grades apply to take the class during the school year in which they learn how to work on reading skills with students in the primary grades. The teen apprentices earn needed credits toward graduation while gaining college and career readiness skills through their employment as tutors and mentors. First- and 2nd-grade students enroll in either an afterschool program or the summer learning program and gain literacy skills via a variety of materials and approaches used by the Literacy Leaders to improve grade-level reading proficiency. New York Public Library won ULC's 2015 Top Innovator award in the category of Economic and Workforce Development for this pioneering "double bottom-line" program.

- A program logic model shows the components and benefits of the program for both the elementary school and the high school students.

- Teens complete an application form that indicates their interest in literacy and tutoring and in earning work experience.

- To facilitate collaboration with local high schools, the library uses a High School Partner Site Agreement to clarify roles of each partner.

- Lesson plans guide teens in their leadership of activities designed to get 1st- and 2nd-graders back on track with reading.

Free Library of Philadelphia' *Back to School Jumpstart Camp* targets rising kindergarteners through 3rd-graders in an early literacy program that sets specific goals in six areas: reading level, behavior, attitudes toward learning, attendance, "deep" practice with reading, and writing practice. Certified teachers deliver instruction, and site teams bring together staff members with complementary strengths and experience. The team uses multiple methods to determine if children are making progress. In addition to pre- and post-tests in reading and behavior, students self-assess their attitudes toward learning, an attendance log on the wall is used to track participation, and reading logs and student-produced books are used to demonstrate practice in reading and writing.

▸ A performance indicator sheet describes the specific goals for children in the program and helps team members track progress.

▸ A project calendar describes the daily lesson plan, including activities focused on reading, writing, and creating, among others.

III. FIVE STRATEGIES TO EVOLVE SUMMER READING INTO SUMMER LEARNING

Five key strategies can help libraries transform their summer reading programs into programs that meet students' needs for active engagement in learning over the summer. In this section we share the strategies that emerged from the *Accelerate Summer* research and examples and tools from leading libraries that have implemented these strategies.

1. Engage team members across the library. Transitioning from a long-time summer reading program to summer learning requires a cultural shift and new thinking on how the library delivers educational programming. Involving both library leaders and branch staff in planning and implementing summer learning programs can bring in new perspectives and approaches while communicating the value, impact, and expectations of the library's summer learning approach.

Tips for implementing this strategy:

▸ Try an early launch in the spring. Previewing the summer program and exhibits allows librarians a chance to plan activities and gives them ideas for how to decorate their libraries and communicate with families and educators about upcoming events.

"Today's public libraries offer STEM labs, field trips, and tech genius days that go well beyond the summer reading programs of the past. Intent on building literacy and social skills while celebrating the joy of learning, libraries are all about keeping kids safe, having fun, and continuing their education during the summer. And, better ready for the start of a new school year!

-Susan Benton, President & CEO,
Urban Libraries Council

▸ Provide professional development to strengthen librarians' skills and knowledge. Training can cover topics such as developing learning goals, gathering and understanding data — including using software to track participation — and collaborating with partner agencies.

This strategy in action:

▸ To gain buy-in and support from team members for the *Rahm's Readers Summer Learning Challenge*, **Chicago Public Library** leaders used a multi-step process that included a system-wide focus group of librarians who later became "cohort leaders." In this role, leaders gain leadership skills while mentoring and working with smaller groups of librarians to problem-solve and discuss implementation. "Branch manager ambassador" groups made up of managers and clerical staff also were formed to act as liaisons for other staff members.

– A fact sheet for cohort leaders explains their role in implementing the summer learning program.

– A cohort leader "check-in" form provides discussion questions regarding implementation.

▸ The **Broward County Library** has developed tools that library directors and staff members can use to build consensus around summer learning programs with both internal and external stakeholders. This process can help library staff members see how they fit into the overall plan.

– With the "Top Down/Bottom Up Planning Tool," staff members list "actors" and "players," discuss the roles of each, and identify the barriers that exist in building consensus.

– The Learning Continuum planning tool is used to map out partners and partnership requirements; resources, including funding sources; marketing and parent engagement ideas; and indicators of success.

▸ The **Fort Worth Library** used a presentation on the value of written curriculum to train staff members on how to lead learning activities based on written curriculum intended for participants to gain specific learning goals aligned with Texas state standards in English/language arts and science and how to promote the change to library patrons.

2. Connect summer reading with other library services to create an integrated learning program. A summer learning approach can be built around activities that the library already does well, such as offering family reading programs, opening maker spaces, hosting special events and speakers, and creating opportunities for older youth to volunteer or work as program leaders to gain job skills. Libraries are also summer hubs for services that students might not receive when schools are closed, such as free meals.

Tips for implementing this strategy:

▸ Explore whether to become part of the USDA Summer Food Service program and connect meal times to learning opportunities.

▸ Involve families in learning by offering ideas on how parents can extend learning at home and children can gain credit for projects they complete, such as following a recipe or writing a story. Other family activities at the library, such as story times, can also connect to the overall learning goals for K–12 students.

▸ Incorporate maker spaces, media labs, and other technology resources into summer learning, allowing participants to create projects linked to an overall theme and learning goals.

▸ Recruit and train teens to tutor and help implement learning activities for younger children. Libraries with youth advisory boards, for example, can get the teens' input into organizing learning stations or events.

This strategy in action:

▸ In Missouri, the **St. Louis County Library** partners with Operation Food Search to provide free lunch along with fun learning activities, such as crafts, and story times at select branch sites. St. Louis County Library also won ULC's 2015 Top Innovator award in the category of Health, Wellness, and Safety for their progressive delivery of library services to enhance their summer programming and meet the needs of the community.

▸ California libraries, such as the **San Jose Public Library** are part of the *Lunch at the Library* program, which is a partnership between the California Library Association and California Summer Meals Coalition. The website provides guidance on how libraries can become a program site and combine their summer learning with summer meals.

▸ **Chicago Public Library** developed a Parent Tip Sheet to give parents ideas for additional reading and activities to do together with their children, which they can do at home or at "parents' reflection stations" set up at branch locations.

▸ The *Summer Spark!* program at Saint Paul Public Library includes STEM-focused Camps as great options for youth ages 8–12 to gain creativity and experimentation skills while earning credits toward the completion of the overall summer program.

3. Start planning in September. As soon as students head back to school, start planning for the following summer while information, feedback, and new ideas for strengthening the program are fresh. Moving from a reading to a learning focus, building new partnerships, or implementing new software programs to track participation takes time. Early planning and promoting allows staff members to try out new ideas and gives families time to get ready for summer learning.

Tips for implementing this strategy:

▸ Discuss tactics to build quality programs. Use NSLA and the Weikart Center's Summer Learning Program Quality Intervention to align your summer services. Decide which areas are most in need of improvement before next year's program begins and design a plan for making those improvements.

▸ Brainstorm how to reach beyond ready readers. Providing opportunities for children and youth to earn credit and rewards for other learning activities, in addition to reading, can draw interest from a wider variety of students and be a way to expose them to all the library has to offer.

▸ Identify and connect with key contacts at the school district, city or county government agencies, museums, community-based organizations, and other potential partners. A wide variety of organizations are already providing opportunities for students during the summer and can help libraries determine how to focus their learning programs.

▸ Identify summer learning goals in connection to city, county, or community priorities.

▸ Create a summer learning mission statement. This process can help build understanding and shift perspectives toward a summer learning focus while framing the purpose for all stakeholders.

This strategy in action:

▸ At the end of the summer, Virginia Beach Public Library uses a simple survey to collect information from staff about their experience managing the summer learning program and their suggestions to improve the program in the following year.

▸ With early planning and collaboration, the **San Francisco Public Library** established a partnership with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, which allows the library's *Summer Stride* program to reach beyond ready readers to engage learners at all levels in exciting field trips to local parks where children can earn credits and prizes for "listening and learning" and reading.

▸ At the **Free Library of Philadelphia**, the *Back to School Jumpstart Camps* were planned well in advance of their start date as a part of the library-led Read by 4th initiative that involves at least 50 partners from across the city who work together to establish learning goals and benchmarks. The initiative is part of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading's nationwide communities network, connecting the learning goals to broad-based objectives for reading proficiency.

▸ Providing a foundation for early planning and coordination, **Chicago Public Library's** *Summer Learning Challenge* mission statement clarifies the partners involved, who the program serves, and the overall learning goals.

▸ Also providing important context for early planning, a concise statement on their *Summer of Learning* from the **Denver Public Library** explains why and how its existing summer reading program is transitioning into a summer learning program and how key partners are involved.

4. Initiate and cultivate intentional partnerships with schools, museums, and other partners. Connecting with organizations in the community that are also providing learning and enrichment opportunities can help reach more students, provide expertise in new content areas, and offer a cost-effective way to expand learning opportunities. Building on ideas from the previous section, taking steps to establish shared learning goals strengthens partnerships and provides incentives to exchange achievement data to demonstrate program effectiveness. Partnership agreements help to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly spelled out.

Tips for implementing this strategy:

▸ Develop programs in partnership with subject matter experts such as science museums and aquariums. In addition to informing the content of the program, these partners can also help deliver professional development to staff members and provide access to family visits for further learning.

▸ Collaborate with partners such as school systems to identify students for focused programs and to share data to demonstrate learning gains from library summer program participation.

▸ Establish a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with partners to outline clear roles in program planning and delivery and to establish data-sharing agreements.

▸ Expand where programs are held through partnerships with parks and recreation departments, community centers, schools, and others. This allows libraries to serve more children and is a way to reach families in places that are already familiar to them.

▸ Provide incentives via partnerships with local business such as professional baseball teams and amusement parks to provide tickets as prizes that might attract children and families who otherwise wouldn't participate.

This strategy in action:

▸ **Chicago Public Library's** partnership with the Museum of Science and Industry brings students the best the city has to offer in terms of science and technology resources and experiences. The two partners have an MOU that clearly articulates each organization's contributions to the success of the Summer Learning Challenge.

▸ A letter of support from the New Haven Public Schools Superintendent for the **New Haven Free Public Library's** READy for the Grade grant application to the New Alliance Foundation expresses their commitment to help the library reach and engage students and families from local schools.

▸ With grant funding, the **Virginia Beach Public Library's** annual Title I Partnership with Virginia Beach City Public Schools involves weekly enrichment classes in up to 14 elementary schools as part of its *Summer Reading Challenge* program. Library staff members travel to the school sites to deliver the program, which focuses on literacy skills and includes hands-on activities in science, technology, engineering, art, and math. The library uses a partnership agreement with the Virginia Beach City Public School's Title I office that clarifies the contributions of each participating school and the public library.

5. Plan programming with clear learning goals. To ensure that students are not losing ground during the summer, programs that reinforce content knowledge, build skills, and link to academic standards will have the greatest impact. Strong partnerships with educators and school districts are needed to ensure that summer learning programs support academic standards. Programs can also be designed to help students acquire important 21st-century skills, such as problem solving, leadership, digital literacy, and teamwork.

Tips for implementing this strategy:

▸ Work with school districts to align learning goals with what students are expected to learn at various grade levels.

▸ Set learning goals focused on skill development, such as critical thinking, creativity, and self-directed learning that help prepare youth for future careers and opportunities.

▸ Make use of frameworks, such as the Campaign for Grade Level Reading's solution areas and core strategies, the Framework for 21st Century Learning Skills, and others, to help plan programs that will ensure participants gain skills in a variety of areas.

This strategy in action:

In **Chicago Public Library's** *Summer Learning Challenge*, librarians know what children will be creating and learning. Interactive websites are recommended where students can find more relevant information and activities, and ideas are offered on how to adapt the lessons for different ages. Their detailed activity plan states learning goals, activities, materials, and ways to differentiate lessons.

The **Fort Worth Library's** *Worth Reading* program is organized by an informal 70-member educators' group that includes school district, museum, and university representatives who help define learning goals. Library summer learning programs are also aligned with the state's educational standards for students, and this program planning activity packet describes the activity, the learning objectives, the materials needed, and the academic standards addressed through each activity.

IV. TELLING YOUR STORY: ASSESSING PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS AND DELIVERING KEY MESSAGES

Delivering effective summer learning programs involves building support not only among library staff members and families, but also throughout the community. Assessing the effectiveness of your program in addressing the summer learning slide will help you demonstrate to stakeholders that your participants are making important learning gains. Crafting key messages and sharing success stories with public officials and community leaders can raise awareness of library programming evolving from summer reading to summer learning and lead to additional partnerships and resources.

Opportunities for Assessment

▸ ULC's resource, *Public Libraries and Effective Summer Learning: Opportunities for Assessment,* includes successful and replicable assessment practices modeled by libraries included in this toolkit and others and common library summer learning goals.

▸ The *Executive Summary* provides a brief overview of the paper's seven action steps that libraries can take to initiate assessment of their summer learning programs, including, for example, piloting existing measurement tools and practices so you don't need to "reinvent the wheel." Several existing assessment tools that could potentially be used to assess the effectiveness of library summer learning programs are included in the full paper, such as:

  – The Public Library Association's Project Outcome

  – The California Library Association's Outcomes-Based Summer Reading

  – STAR Assessment

  – DIBELs – Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

  – Devereux Student Strengths Assessment

  – DRA – Developmental Reading Assessment Second Edition PLUS

Crafting Key Messages about Your Summer Learning

▸ As previously discussed, developing a mission statement for your summer learning program and partnership helps to articulate the purpose and goals of the program for both internal and external stakeholders.

  – This Mission-Building Template can be used with team members to help craft a mission statement that defines the contributions of key partners.

– Use a variety of strategies to communicate the value of summer learning to local leaders with messages such as "Libraries play an important role in the continuum of summer learning programs," "Libraries offer a unique summer experience," "Libraries are offering high-quality summer learning programming," and "Libraries are a place of equity in the summer landscape."

Tips for getting your messages out:

▸ Hold a community event or open house. Directors can invite city or county leaders to see what children will be learning.

▸ Collaborate with grocery stores or other locations frequented by families to distribute flyers or hang up posters.

▸ Prepare press releases from the library or in conjunction with other organizations working as partners in the summer learning program, or hold a media day. (Tip: Newspapers and media outlets have reporters assigned to cover school districts. This person would be a good contact for coverage of summer learning.)

▸ Work with parks and recreation departments to publicize summer learning programs, especially in sites where library branches are connected to city or county parks. The Saint Paul Public Library has had a lot of success with this kind of partnership.

Check out these tips from Broward County and San Francisco Public Libraries on the best messages to deliver and the "secret sauce" for generating awareness and support.

View these additional resources from the National Summer Learning Association to develop a vision for summer learning in the library. These resources also include examples of practices that systems across the country are using to ensure that children are experiencing quality learning opportunities when schools are closed.

▸ State of Summer Learning: 2015 State Policy Snapshot

▸ 2016 Funding Resource Guide

▸ 2016 Action Toolkit: Expanding Summer Learning, Meals and Jobs for America's Young People

V. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Contact Information

Leading Partners

▸ Urban Libraries Council

   – Emily Samose, Director, Education and
     Learning Initiatives
     esamose@urbanlibraries.org

▸ National Summer Learning Association

   – Leslie Gabay-Swanston, Director of Community
     System Building
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Libraries Featured in this Toolkit, in Order of Appearance

▸ Saint Paul Public Library

   – Karen Kolb Peterson, Youth and Public
     Services Director
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▸ Ottawa Public Library

   – Elizabeth Thornley, Manager, Program Development
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▸ Chicago Public Library

   – Elizabeth McChesney, System Wide Children's
     Services Director
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▸ Broward County Library

   – Lisa McClure, Community Engagement Manager
     lmcclure@broward.org

▸ Fort Worth Library

   – Michelle Lee, Public Education Specialist –
     Early Learning
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▸ New Haven Free Public Library

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▸ San Francisco Public Library

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Appendix B: Compiled List of Tools and Resources

Introduction

▸ Urban Libraries Council (ULC) homepage
  http://www.urbanlibraries.org/

▸ National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) homepage
  http://www.summerlearning.org/

▸ Accelerate Summer website http://www.urbanlibraries.
  org/accelerate-summer-initial-findings-pages-450.php

▸ Institute of Museum and Library Services homepage
  https://www.imls.gov/

I. Making the Case for Library Summer Learning

▸ Johns Hopkins University Study: Alexander, Karl L.,
  Doris R. Entwisle, and Linda Steffel Olson. "Lasting
  consequences of the summer learning gap." American
  Sociological Review 72, no. 2 (2007): 167–180.
  doi:10.1177/000312240707200202

▸ Study by the Rand Corporation: McCombs, Jennifer S.,
  Catherine H. Augustine, Heather L. Schwartz, Susan J.
  Bodilly, Brian McInnis, Dahlia S. Lichter, and Amanda B.
  Cross, Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs
  Can Boost Children's Learning (Santa Monica, CA: RAND
  Corporation, 2011).

▸ NSLA Summer Slide Infographic

▸ Photo – infographic posted at Chicago Public Library

▸ Campaign for Grade-Level Reading homepage:
  http://gradelevelreading.net/ and Summer Learning
  Loss webpage

▸ Horizons National Summer Learning video and
  homepage: https://www.horizonsnational.org/

▸ Urban Libraries Council. Leadership Brief: Partners
  for Education.

▸ Urban Libraries Council. Leadership Brief: Libraries
  Expanding Summer Opportunities.

▸ Young Adult Library Association homepage and position
  paper: Adopting A Summer Learning Approach for
  Increased Impact.

II. Library Summer Learning Models that Expand Opportunities

▸ Summer Reading PLUS and Saint Paul Public Library

    – Summer Spark! webpage:
      http://www.sppl.org/summer

    – Summer Spark! Activity Log

▸ Ottawa Public Library

    – TD Summer Reading Club Tracking Notebook

Skills-based, drop-in learning activities

▸ National Summer Learning Association & the David
  P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality Summer
  Learning Program Quality Assessment

▸ Chicago Public Library

    – **Note:** In the coming months, ALA Editions will
      publish a book focused on CPL's award-winning
      program that will include a comprehensive set of
      program planning and implementation tools.
      **Tools that will be available in the forthcoming book
      are highlighted in orange throughout this toolkit and
      in this appendix.**

▸ Broward County Library

    – BCL Big Win! Summer Learning Program Flyer

    – BCL Program Planning Template

▸ Fort Worth Library

    – FWL Summer Activity Packet Aligned with TX
      State Standards

▸ Focused Enrollment Programs and New Haven
  Free Public Library

    – READy for the Grade program flyer

    – READy for the Grade enrollment form

    – READy for the Grade take-home reading exercises

▸ District of Columbia Public Library

    – Science in the Summer informational flyer

    – Science in the Summer introductory letter
      to students

Appendix B: Compiled List of Tools and Resources (Continued)

▸ New York Public Library

  – [NYPL Literacy Leaders Logic Model](#)

  – [NYPL Literacy Leaders teen application form](#)

  – [NYPL Literacy Leaders High School Partner Site Agreement](#)

  – [NYPL Literacy Leaders Lesson Plan](#)

▸ Free Library of Philadelphia

  – [Jumpstart Camp performance indicators](#)

  – [Jumpstart Camp project calendar](#)

III. Five Strategies to Evolve Summer Reading into Summer Learning

▸ Engage team members across the Chicago Public Library

  – Fact sheet for Summer Learning Challenge cohort leaders

  – Summer Learning Challenge cohort leader check-in form

▸ Broward county Library

  – [BCL Top-down/Bottom-up Planning tool](#)

  – [BCL Learning Continuum planning tool](#)

▸ Fort Worth Library

  – [FWL Staff Training Presentation: Value of Written Curriculum](#)

Connect summer reading with other library services to create an integrated learning program

▸ St. Louis County Library

  – [Free Lunch at SLCL](#)

▸ San Jose Public Library

  – [Free Summer Food Program](#)

  – [CA Library Association Lunch at the Library](#)

▸ Chicago Public Library

  – Parent Tip Sheet

▸ Start Planning in September, Virginia Beach Public Library

  – [Staff Debrief Survey](#)

▸ San Francisco Public Library

  – [Summer Stride](#) program

▸ Free Library of Philadelphia

  – [Read by 4th Philadelphia](#)

▸ Chicago Public Library

  – Summer Learning Challenge Mission Statement

▸ Denver Public Library

  – [DPL Summer of Learning Mission Statement](#)

Initiate and cultivate intentional partnerships with schools, museums, and other partners

▸ Chicago Public Library

  – CPL MOU with the Museum of Science and Industry

▸ New Haven Free Public Library

  – [New Haven Public Schools Letter of Support](#)

▸ Virginia Beach Public Library

  – [Title I Schools Partnership Agreement](#)

Plan programming with clear learning goals

▸ Chicago Public Library

  –Read! Create! Explore! Activity plan

▸ Fort Worth Library

  – [FWL Summer Activity Packet Aligned with TX State Standards](#)

IV. Telling Your Story: Assessing Program Effectiveness and Delivering Key Messages

▸ Urban Libraries Council

  – [Public Libraries and Effective Summer Learning: Opportunities for Assessment](#)

  – [Summer Learning Partnership Mission-Building Tool](#)

▸ Broward County Library and San Francisco Public Library

  – [Tips for Messaging Your Summer Learning Program](#)

▸ National Summer Learning Association

  – [State of Summer Learning: 2015 State Policy Snapshot](#)

  – [2016 Funding Resource Guide](#)

  – [2016 Action Toolkit: Expanding Summer Learning, Meals and Jobs for America's Young People](#)