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## Jennifer Peck

Executive Director, Partnership for Children and Youth

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### Why summer learning matters more than ever

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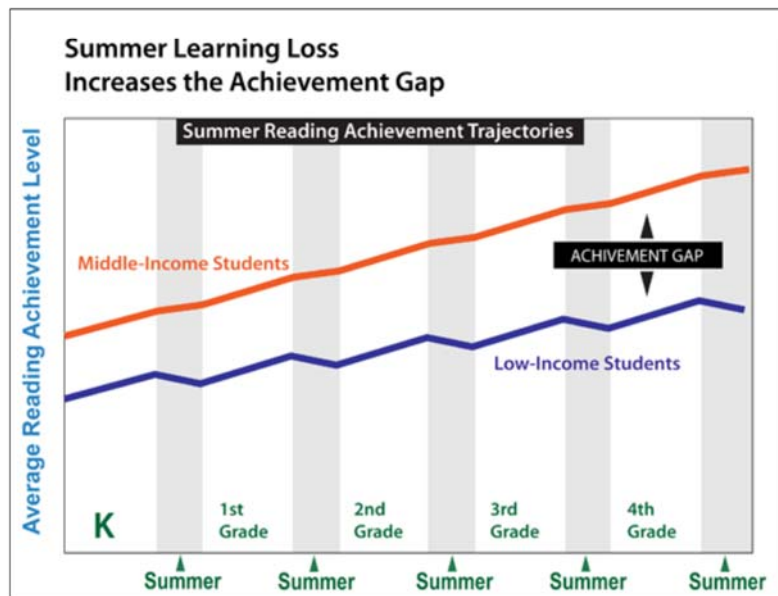
While many Bay Area families are planning summers filled with educationally enriching activities for their kids, the vast majority of low-income children in the Bay Area, and around California, lack access to meaningful summer learning opportunities.

For them, not only can summertime can be lonely and boring, it also puts them at increased risk for weight gain and learning loss. A substantial body of research reinforces the urgent message that for California's youth, **summer learning matters**.

Children who lack access to summer learning programs are less likely to be physically active and more likely to spend their days watching TV and eating junk food, sedentary behaviors that are contributing to **California's ballooning childhood obesity epidemic**.

Just as important, [studies clearly show](#) that a lack of summer learning and enrichment opportunities leads to **"summer learning loss"** -- a loss in students' academic skills and knowledge during the summer months.

Summer learning loss, which is cumulative over time, contributes directly to a widening of the **achievement gap** between low-income and middle-income students. Lack of summer learning opportunities also contributes to increased student **drop-out rates**.



Partnership for Children and Youth, National Summer Learning Association

Summer Learning Loss Increases the Achievement Gap

While there is growing recognition about the critical link between children's summertime learning and academic achievement, thanks in part to cover stories like [TIME Magazine's "The Case Against](#)

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City Brights are prominent local citizens and experts with a unique Bay Area perspective that is often enlightening, sometimes infuriating and always thought-provoking. [All City Brights Authors](#)

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Summer Vacation", California children are still woefully underserved by summer learning programs. For example:

- Only 27% of California children participate in summer learning programs.
- 48% of parents making less than \$35,000 did not enroll their child in any summer program.
- The majority of low-income youth don't attend a summer school or program, and a substantial number are taking care of themselves without adult supervision in the summer while their parents are away at work.
- Latino parents (32%) and African-American parents (31%) are more likely to say that there are no high-quality summer programs available in their neighborhood, compared with 15% of Asian parents and 20% of white parents.

Fortunately, a growing coalition of child advocates, together with the Bay Area-based nonprofit **Partnership for Children and Youth** ([partnerforchildren.org](http://partnerforchildren.org)), are developing and promoting a new vision for summer learning in California.

As a result, schools and community organizations from a diverse range of low-income communities across California -- ranging from LA to Gilroy and Oakland to Whittier -- will provide high quality summer learning programs to local children this summer. In just a few weeks they'll open their doors and engage children in summer learning activities that are as fun as they are educational, and serve as good models for other summer learning programs to replicate.

While it's a terrific start, it's not nearly enough to serve all the children in our state who need summer learning programs the most. But with increased support from the private, public, nonprofit and philanthropic sectors, and anyone who cares about education, California can make summer learning the priority it deserves to be.



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**JENNIFER PECK**

*Executive Director, Partnership for Children and Youth*  
Why summer learning matters more than ever

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Learn more about the New Vision for Summer in California at the [Partnership's website](#).

Posted By: [Jennifer Peck \(Email\)](#) | May 16 2011 at 04:20 PM

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