

Planning a Vacation?

Each year we are approached by an increasing number of parents who wish to take their child out of school for extended periods of time. Usually this is for reasons associated with family plans or family business. We do not have a procedure for granting students a “leave of absence”. Rather it is assumed that parents will make decisions in the best interests of their own child.



We are respectful of the fact that many of our students have family members far away, and spending time with them is important. Difficulties arise, however, when parents wish to have some sort of reassurance that their child will not be “behind” in their work when they return. The fact is, if your child misses school for extended periods of time, he or she will be “behind” in classroom work. Students may well have other cultural and travel experiences that contribute to their overall development, but the many varied daily classroom activities they will miss cannot be duplicated through worksheets or workbooks.

Generally speaking, we are not in the position to provide assignments for children who have extended absences due to family plans or vacations. It is at each individual Teacher's discretion if materials are able to be prepared ahead of time to accommodate student absences. If not, teachers will do their best to help students get ‘caught up’ by providing instructions upon the students return to class.

Here are some ideas that will help you keep your school skills sharp and still allow you to enjoy your holiday. A trip is a great opportunity to learn about other cultures and then compare them to how we live here!

Daily Journal - Have your child keep a daily journal in which he or she records all activities and thoughts about what they have experienced. The standard amount of writing we would expect depends on the age and ability of the student. There are many ways of structuring this, depending on how much time the parent and child are willing to devote. Include things you did, where you went, how far you travelled. Make comments about what you enjoyed each day, interesting things that happened. Keep track of the weather of each day of your trip. Include temperatures, descriptions, etc. Other journal entries could include:

- Listen to the radio in the place you are at. What is the music like? What is the most popular song(s)?
- Look at the clothes people wear. Describe the clothes and styles of clothing. How is it the same or different from ours?
- Keep track of how much money you (or your family) spend on the trip. How much was the cost per day of your trip?

Reading Books, Magazines and Newspapers - set aside a time each day for reading books. As school textbooks and library books cannot be taken on extended absences, you may wish to acquire several paperback novels or youth magazines suitable for your child's age and reading ability. Read or collect some newspaper articles from the area that you visit. Find some interesting things to share with us when you get back.

Scrapbook - keep a scrapbook of special places or sightseeing. This can include postcards, pamphlets, drawings, etc., with some student writing or labeling. Maps with routes marked on them and short paragraphs about the historical significance of certain landmarks would be useful additions. Collect souvenirs from your place. Include in your scrapbook.

Postcards - Before you leave, get the addresses of your friends at school. When you arrive at your destination, buy some postcards of the places you visit or take pictures of the sights and things you see. Write a few sentences on each picture or postcard and mail them to friends or relatives.

Mapping - keep track of how you traveled there and record distances. If you can get a map, track how you got there and how far you traveled each day.

Grocery Lists - before you leave, make a list of the things you most often buy at home (like groceries: milk, loaf of bread, juice, etc.). Find out the price here at home. When you get to your vacation spot, find out what the prices of those items are there.

Play Grocery Store Math - The supermarket is an ideal place to use math skills, particularly for older children. Point out that yogurt is \$2.59 a six-pack. Ask how much it would cost to buy 3? Your child can round up to \$2.60 or \$3.00 and figure this out. Talk about how he arrived at that number, point out how the estimate differs from the true cost. Or get the latest advertisement announcing sales from the grocery store. Have her look at the specials on fruit and determine how to spend \$10.00. Supply her with paper and pencil, and maybe a calculator, as well, so she can practice using calculators the way adults use them every day.

Money Poster - If the money used there is different from ours, make a display of the kinds of money used.

What's on the Menu? - The next time you go to a restaurant, hang on to the menu while you are waiting for your meal and play some math games with your child. Ask him to find the least expensive item on the menu, then all the items that cost between \$5 and \$10 or three items whose total cost is between \$9 and \$20. This will not only fill the time while you're waiting to eat, it will show your child how math is used every day.

Measure the distance - You don't have to leave home for this game, although it's ideal for vacations. Get out a map that indicates the distance in miles between cities. Measure the distance between Los Angeles and San Francisco, and between Phoenix and San Francisco. Which is greater? How does that compare to the distance between New York City and Chicago?

Change Up - Give your child an assortment of quarters, dimes, nickels and pennies. Put a piece of fruit on the table and tell him it costs 45 cents. Tell him he needs to find five coin combinations that equal 45 cents. Change the item, raise the price and find five more. Keep a tally of all the ways to pay for each item.

Two, Four, Six, Eight, Now It's time to Estimate - Estimation is one way to increase a child's number sense. Before you put a stack of folded towels on a shelf or fill a bowl with peaches, ask your child to estimate how many will fit. Then count afterward to compare the actual number to the estimate. Helping your child learn to make appropriate predictions will help her see how numbers are used in everyday life. Learning to ask, "Is my answer reasonable?" will help her as she tackles math problems in the classroom.

Prepare for your Vacation - Heading off to a new vacation destination? Have your child do some advance research on the area you are heading. What is the area known for? Any special, "must see" stops? Be sure to respect their time and research, and follow through with some of their suggestions!

Prepare a Speech - When you get back, work on being able to give a short (3-5 minute) report of your trip to your classmates.

Workbooks - you may wish to purchase a math workbook (Costco or Walmart has a good selection) that will help your child keep in daily practice with basic math skills.

Online Educational Games

The web sites listed below have been selected for their suitability and range of resources. Some are commercial sites which include advertising or offer other services. Adult supervision is recommended. The webmaster and Rutland Elementary School assume no responsibility for the content of the sites or of secondary links which they contain.

Reading

www.starfall.com
www.eaobics.com/gamegoo
<http://www.tumblebooks.com/>
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/scrapbook/>
<http://www.funbrain.com/brain/ReadingBrain/ReadingBrain.html>

Writing

www.dictionary.com
<http://www.eduplace.com/kids/hmsv/smg/>
www.aaaspell.com
www.gigglepoetry.com
<http://www.kerpoof.com/#/activity/abc>
<http://www.spellingcity.com/>
<http://www.spinandspell.com/>

Math

Practice math online or print worksheets at home.

www.aplusmath.com/Worksheets/index.html

Some fun online games to practice basic math skills.

www.aplusmath.com/games/index.html

Create your own flashcards.

www.aplusmath.com/Flashcards/index.html

Word problems for Intermediate students.

www.stfx.ca/special/mathproblems/welcome.html

Practice timed math drills online.

www.math.com/students/practice/arithmeticpractice.htm

Study basic facts using games and worksheets.

www.dositey.com/addsub/add3dig.htm

Quizzes on all math areas.

www.kidzone.ws/math/quiz.html

A fun baseball game to review addition and multiplication facts.

www.prongo.com/math/index.html

A great site to practice all the basics.

www.oswego.org/ocsd-web/games/mathmagician/maths1.html

Another great addition challenge game.

www.oswego.org/ocsd-web/games/SumSense/sumadd.html

A plethora of math games.

www.gamequarium.com/mixedpractice.html

Weekly math word challenge problem.

www.auntymath.com

A great math site with all elementary levels (even preschool and kindergarten)

www.learningplanet.com/stu/kids0.asp

Academic Skill builders ~ Great for building basic math facts

www.arcademicskillbuilders.com/

Math Activities related to the BC learning outcomes

<http://ca.ixl.com/>

Virtual Math Manipulatives

http://nlvm.usu.edu/en/nav/grade_g_2.html