

Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

Who among us can believe that the summer vacation is behind us and another school year is before us? Every year, those precious months seems to go by too fast.

While it's good to relax and take a break, summer learning for students is critical to success in the coming year.

The ESC is proud to fill a part of that need through a speech clinic we've offered at Head Start through a partnership with Hands for the Disabled and the four county school districts.

Three speech pathologists — Sara Christ, Kristen Davis and Jen Sorrel — ran the clinic this summer, working with up to 70 children during the month-long program.

The clinic is designed primarily for preschoolers through first-graders, but students can be as old as 13.

Jen said the clinic sessions provide high-interest activities to encourage the students to request more of the activities, which promotes communication.

"When they get back to school, they'll remember what they did in the summer and hopefully, they think, 'Oh, this is a lot easier than it was last year,'" Jen said.

That realization can help students and teachers in the fall.

Leslie Gabay-Swanston, director of Program and Systems Quality at the National Summer Learning Association, said nearly two-thirds of teachers report spending three to four weeks reviewing or re-teaching material from the previous spring in the fall.

"Without intervention, all students lose math and literacy skills over the summer," she said. "The cumulative effect is that by the fifth grade, summer learning loss can leave low-income students 2½ to three years behind their peers."

As all educators know, helping kids learn — regardless of the season — is easier if it's fun.



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Sara Christ, second from left, and Kristen Davis work with Izzy, 6, and Clay, 5, during the speech clinic this summer at Head Start.

Common Sense Media recommends 10 Web sites that it encourages all kids use. Check them out at <https://tinyurl.com/yd26wpxt>.

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National Summer Learning Association's Leslie Gabay-Swanston said another factor that affects learning, especially among children in high-poverty environments, is struggling to have access to food.

This spring and summer, the Pickaway County Family YMCA, thanks to the Ohio Department of Agriculture and the Walmart Foundation, provided about 5,000 free lunches and snacks Mondays through Saturdays for children and youth ages 1 to 18.

The program started in April and the Y will continue to provide free lunches on Saturdays, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. year-round, said Jeff Phillips, the Y's executive director.

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