AVOIDING THE
SUMMER SLIDE
WITH STEM CAMPS

By Nikki Welch

STEM education shouldn't be limited to the classroom alone – especially if your child has a passion for the engineering, technology and sciences that shape our world.

During the months of summer vacation, summer learning loss can cost students up to two months of reading achievement and math equivalency. Research done by the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) shows that students "...score lower on standardized tests at the end of summer vacation than they do on the same tests at the beginning of summer." ▸

While students and teachers agree that summer is a much-needed experience to not only relax, but also focus on personal projects, stress-free socialization and fostering a well-rounded perception of individualism apart from the class-mentality, it's important to remember that three months of constant, mindless Netflix bing-ing isn't the enriching experience intended. "We think summer is a great break from school, but not a great break from learn-ing," says NSLA CEO Gary Huggins.

Registering elementary, middle and high school-aged children in summer learning programs can help avoid the dreaded summer slide and is an ideal way for students to pursue passions that go unexplored in a typical classroom setting. Many science, technology, engineering and math camps are available in the Atlanta area through the summer season.

▲ Students at the 2016 SMART Girls Camp collaborating on video game coding and design.

ATLANTA MONTESSORI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL CAMPS: For Primary and Elementary aged students, there are camp offerings ranging from "I Want to Be…An Engineer" to "Rocket Science: Destination Mars!" http://amischool.com/camp2017/

EMAGINATION: Hosted on the Georgia Tech and Mercer University campuses, this camp offers three different technology programs: Computer Camp, Programming Camp and Game Design Camp. The two-week long camps offer both day and overnight options for students ages 8-17. http://www.computercamps.com/

GEORGIA TECH COLLEGE OF COMPUTING: Week-long camps intended to expose elementary through high school students to the creative side of computing. Classes range in content from Minecraft to creating stop motions movies. http://gtcomputingoutreach.org/summerCamp.html

IMAGINE THAT! AND FUTURE TECH: Camps range in location, length, age range and subject, offering something for every learner. 3D printing and CAD Design; Goo, Gas, Great Balls of Fire; and Extreme Bots and Building are just a few of the interesting and educational opportunities offered while school is shelved. http://www.imaginethatfun.com/

INTERNALDRIVE (ID TECH): STEM camps offering a range of courses in film and video production, video game design, programming, web design, app development, 3D modeling, robotics and engineering available on the Emory University and Georgia Tech campuses. Camps are categorized and divided based on age for any participant 6-18. https://www.idtech.com/

SMART GIRLS: These camps, held at the Atlanta Girls' School, offer half-and full-day sessions. Science, math and coding options are offered, along with several brand-new class offerings including engineering, technology and entrepreneurship. https://atlantagirlsschool.org/camp/

For more Atlanta area camp information, both STEM-related and more, visit giftedatlanta.com, atlantaparent.com or 365atlantafamily.com.