



Go out, go out I beg of you, And taste the beauty of the wild.  
Behold the miracle of the earth, With all the wonder of a child.

~ Edna Jaques, Canadian author and poet (1891-1978)

According to polls that rank the popularity of the seasons, spring consistently tops summer. And despite debating if it's Happy Holidays or Merry Christmas, when asked to pick a favorite time of year, most people name winter's signature holiday, followed closely by Thanksgiving. But what about summer? What about summer vacation? Who doesn't love the long, sunny days of summer when the weather beckons you to come outside and play?

Last month we talked about guarding against the Summer Slide by continuing to read while away from the classroom. But don't settle for being in educational defense mode. Nature brings our senses alive. Summer is the perfect season to accelerate learning. Modern research shows that an hour of interacting with nature, improves memory and attention spans by up to 20%. Spending time outdoors nurtures our neurons and awakens our natural creativity. Breathing fresh air and being among trees and moving water, is good for you and for your brain. Studies in Sweden documented that people who exercised in a natural green setting were more restored and less anxious, angry, or depressed than people who did their exercise in a built urban setting. And communing with nature is therapeutic when dealing with mild depression, obesity, and ADHD. Educators are paying attention too. Schools that are environment-based boast improved standardized test scores and grade point averages, as well as, enhanced problem solving skills, heightened critical thinking, and better decision making among their students.

This shouldn't surprise us. We're part of the natural world, vitally connected to the trees, the grass, and all the other life around us. This year, when summer calls, go outside and play... guilt-free. It's good for you! Let's all just finally admit how much we love summer. Let its perceived popularity climb. It's certainly a deserving season.