

Summertime Cool: Ideas to Enrich and Teach

“What did you do on your summer vacation?” This was a familiar writing assignment for many people when they were growing up. I remember, don’t you? The end of school is around the corner and summertime fun will be here before we know it. Let’s support students and their families in their building of great summer vacation memories with new ideas that inspire, as well as teach.

Inspiration comes from the Described Captioned Media Program (www.dcmp.org), a curricular resource for teachers, families, and orientation and mobility instructors. DCMP has numerous free-loan media items that support all nine areas of the [Expanded Core Curriculum \(ECC\)](#) for kids who are blind, have low vision, or are deaf-blind.

The ECC component of the [National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youths with Visual Impairments, Including Those with Multiple Disabilities](#) is seen by many school districts and agencies as a key area for building effective teaching practices for these children. It is a set of skills that are intended to assist the students, birth to 22 years of age, in becoming an independent, confident, capable member of his or her community. It goes beyond the regular core curriculum (such as math, reading, and science) and focuses on skills that are disability-specific (Pugh & Erin, 1999).

The nine areas of the ECC include: Assistive Technology/Technology, Career Education, Compensatory or Access skills, Independent Living, Orientation and Mobility, Recreation & Leisure, Sensory Efficiency (auditory, tactual & visual), Self-Determination, and Social Interaction, (Hatlen, 1996; Lohmeir, Blankenship, & Hatlen, 2009).

As you plan for additional activities to keep your students’ skills at their highest level, look to the DCMP resources and “[Summertime Cool Lesson Calendar](#)” for ideas. When your students return to school in August, 2011, prepare to read and hear enthusiastic tales of cool fun.



Resources

Hatlen, P. (1996). The core curriculum for blind and visually impaired students, including those with additional disabilities. *RE:view*, 28, 25-32.

Lohmeier, K., Blankenship, K., & Hatlen, P., (2009). Expanded core curriculum: 12 years later. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 103(2) 103-112. New York.

Pugh, G.S., & Erin, J. (1999). *Blind and Visually Impaired Students; Educational Service Guidelines*. Watertown, MA: Perkins School for the Blind.

About the Author



Mary Ann Siller, M.Ed., is first and foremost an educator of children who are blind or visually impaired, ages birth through twenty-one. Siller has vast experience developing and leading national education initiatives and advocating for access to instruction and information. She is most at home when she is working with families to inspire their young children to dream big and find their special path to adulthood. She continues to address the most critical issues impacting the field of blindness and works as an advocate and curriculum designer. In previous career positions, she oversaw educational programming, curriculum development, and professional training at a state and national level for the Texas Education Agency and American Foundation for the Blind. Additional experience includes teaching/consulting for students with visual impairments and liaison with school districts to implement Federal and State laws. Mary Ann resides in Dallas, Texas.

