

An L.A. Private School Kid's Very Unproductive Summer

Description



What's your kid doing this summer?
Photo: NASA

Not sure about you, but it's mid-July and I think I have to chalk this summer up to failure. My poor L.A. private school son is becoming totally uneducated as the days race unproductively by.

I talk to his classmate's mothers and I know I've failed. His friends are in "coding" camp, or studying programming at UCLA. Or they are working out their artistic muscles doing theatre, studying music or painting. Others still are being tutored twice a week in preparation for fifth grade.

Those who aren't so systematically being educated, seem to be on various educational trips, seeing Washington DC, or other important geographical locations in Europe or India.

In contrast, my kid is getting a lot of TV watching in, becoming more proficient at Googling inappropriate things and improving his Play Station 3 skills. He's also learned Twitter. I'm so proud.

In my defense, I'd like to say he does read with his father and plays a lot of baseball. He has pretty much summarily rejected all camp as cruel and unusual punishment. Even the baseball camps are too much for him any more. He wants to be "FREE!"

A few choice quotes from my poetic son: "I work all year, this is my time now!" "Parents send their kids to camps because they don't like their kids! Don't you like me?" "No more learning! I learned all year long. Enough!"

He's hard to argue with. But the \$26K a year we spend on a private school education in L.A. is also apparently not enough. All the other parents seem to have gotten the memo early that more summer education would be required in order to succeed. In truth, I got the memo but ignored it. Now here it is mid-July and I'm scared. What if this summer of idle behavior and lazy days gets him so off course that we never recover? What if 5th grade is the end of him, because he's the kid who forgets how to do math or spell his name?

I'm prone to hyperbole and am known to be a little dramatic, but the underlying fear is real. Everyone has it. None of those kids begged to go to "coding camp" or to brush up on their pre algebra. It's just another lap in the rat race that we willingly enter when we sign up for a private school education.

I know what I should have done. I've done some of those kind of camps before. We all know the list! Those places and offerings that will enlighten and educate our kids. This year I just boldly ignored it.

Mother of three, Alice attended east coast private schools as a child and has been in the private school world as a parent for nearly twenty years. Her kids attended Mirman for elementary, then Harvard-Westlake and Brentwood for high school, with one still to go. She is a writer working in film, TV and for various magazines such as Family Fun, Wondertime, Glamour and Brides.

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Date Created

July 20, 2015

Author

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