

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Karin Koser, karin@kpkco.com, 404.636.9311

Beth Hawks, beth@kpkco.com, 404.814.1015



Atlanta, GA – May 22, 2006 -- This week, the final bell will ring on the 2005-2006 academic year across the state, sending Georgia children happily running out of schools and into summer break. While parents may be tempted to let their children completely forgo academic pursuits this summer, there are numerous fun activities they can do with their children to reinforce lessons learned this past year and to reiterate the importance of lifelong learning.

The Partnership for Reform in Science and Mathematics (PRISM) wants to help parents, particularly when it comes to the critical success areas of science and math. PRISM's educational specialists and Georgia teachers know that long vacation breaks can cause knowledge retention problems and that kids learn best from hands-on activities, especially in science and math. PRISM offers the following tips to make the Summer of 2006 fun *and* educational; the tips range from simple activities to do at home to some that require a little advance planning and a little money to others that can take advantage of the time families will share while on vacation. Many of the ideas cost nothing other than some creativity and willingness!

Easy Low or No-Cost Activities

Make it a point to engage your children in activities that show them how they fit into the larger world and how science and math factor in, as well. Try:

- Stargazing on a clear night, pointing out constellations that you know or your children know. Check out books on astrology and stargazing at the library to help.
- Letting your kids count the change from your trips to the grocery store.
- Having your children collect different kinds of rocks, leaves and even insects from your yard or a nearby park or stream.
- Visiting public parks near your home with woods and trails to explore.
- Having younger kids keep up with the scores at baseball games, whether it's a relative's game or a minor or major league team game.
- Letting your kids set up a lemonade stand outside your home. Shop together for fresh lemonade ingredients, let them add up the cost of the ingredients, measure and mix to get in more math and science and do the selling and sales. Help them add up the proceeds at the end of the day and deduct the cost of the ingredients as an important economics lesson. A shopping trip for a small reward from their earnings further drives home the messages learned!

- Encouraging appropriate, limited Internet use. On rainy days, the computer in your home or at your local library can provide hours of distraction that the children will barely recognize as educational time. PRISM has compiled a list of hundreds of fun, educational web sites where children can work alone on self-guided, fun activities or where you can find activities that you can direct. To find the list, go to www.mathsciencesuccess.org and select Parents and pick the age-appropriate guide <http://gaprism.org> and select Educators>Mathematics and Science Resources>Parental Information and then choose a subject from the Subject Area drop-down menu. Sites include [Animal Diversity](#) site, with information, photos, and sound recordings of hundreds of animals; the [Children's Butterfly](#) site; the [Future Scientists and Engineers of America](#) site; the [Chem 4 Kids](#) chemistry site; the [MathFROG](#) site which stands for Math Fun, Resources and Online Games; and many, many more!
- Engaging your children in the kitchen. Help little ones make simple things such as popsicles and ice cream while explaining the various states: liquid, solid, frozen, etc.
- Letting older kids follow recipes from start to finish, starting with making a list of needed ingredients, going with you to the store to select the appropriate amount, measuring, cooking and cleaning.

Day Trips and Vacation Tips

Explore the many wonderful, fun day trip ideas that engage a child's senses and intellect and make the most of a planned family vacation. Think about:

- The Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta, which provides plenty of learning opportunities hidden among the wonder of the fascinating animals there. Less than a block away is ImagineIt! The Children's Museum of Atlanta, which offers both regular and rotating exhibits that actively engage the imaginations of children up to age 8. This summer, children can explore breathing and ways to keep the air clean through the exhibit "Take A Deep Breath" at Imagine It! until June 18; following that is "Night Journeys," a cozy exhibit helping children explore the culture and science of sleep. Also in Atlanta, the Fernbank Museum of Natural History is a perennial favorite.
- Georgia's myriad of museums, botanical gardens and science centers, many which offer very affordable admission prices. To find a complete list of these attractions, go to www.masmacon.com/links.htm, but here is a short sampling:
 - Albany: [Flint River Quarium](#)
 - Athens: [State Botanical Garden of Georgia](#)
 - Athens: [University of Georgia Museum of Natural History](#)
 - Atlanta: [Atlanta Botanical Garden](#)
 - Atlanta: [CDC/Global Health Odyssey](#)
 - Atlanta: [Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area](#)
 - Augusta: [National Science Center](#)
 - Cartersville: [Weinman Mineral Museum](#)

- Columbus: [Coca-Cola Space Science Center](#)
 - Elberton: [Elberton Granite Museum & Exhibit](#)
 - Gainesville: [Elachee Nature Science Center](#)
 - Macon: [Museum of Arts & Sciences](#)
 - Pine Mountain: [Callaway Gardens](#)
 - Savannah: [Oatland Island Education Center](#)
 - Statesboro: [Georgia Southern University Museum](#)
 - Tifton: [Georgia Agrirama: 19th Century Living History Museum](#)
 - Warner Robins: [Museum of Aviation](#)
 - Waycross: [Okefenokee Swamp Park](#)
- Making the most of car trips. While driving in a car to get to a vacation destination, it's easy to pop in a DVD movie or allow the kids a lot of X-Box or iPod time, but it's best to balance that captive time with games and play that can become family traditions.
 - For very young children, choose a car color and have the children count the number of cars they see in that color in a set amount of time.
 - For elementary children from 2nd -5th grades, choose a number, such as 9, and have them add up the numbers on each license plate to come up with the number 9, plus any remainders. This is called the Canceling by 9's Game, but you can pick any favorite number.
 - Before the trip starts, have your children look at a map with you to determine the distance to your destination. Then, have record the number of gallons after you fill up the car with gas in a small notebook or trip journal. When you stop to fill up again, have the children figure out the mileage per gallon. Take it a step further by having them record the total cost of gassing up your car for the entire trip and then talk about how many hours an adult might have to work to accrue that amount of money. For example, a fast food worker making \$7 a hour would have to work 6 or more hours to fill up the average American SUV. An engineer, however, whose salary ranges from \$22-45 per hour, would work a third or less of the time to fill up his or her car.
 - Bring along card games that siblings or a non-driving parent and child can play; guessing games such as taking turns naming professions involving advanced knowledge of math and science and reviews of elemental tables for kids in middle and high school. Find posters you can download listing professions at www.mathsciencesuccess.org under Downloads.

Your Vacation Destination

Ideas are endless for things to do once you arrive at your vacation destination.

- Bring along several decks of cards and games like Uno or Mancala – all of which pack light -- to eliminate rainy day boredom while building math and logic skills.

- At the beach, tried and true sandcastle building presents an opportunity to talk about how tiny grains of sand combine to form entire beaches. Little ones can draw lines in the sand representing how many buckets it takes to build a castle or to cover Mom and Dad or a sibling in sand!
- Discuss the ecosystem of the ocean, from the shells to the sea life at the bottom to the dolphins they may see jumping out if you're lucky! If your trip includes a visit to an attraction such as Sea World, Disney World or the Georgia Aquarium, talk about the people who work there and how math and/or science might play a role in their jobs. Marine biologists, engineers, animal trainers, accountants to track all the money you spend there and the like make great conversations to get your children thinking about what they might want to be when they grow up and the study needed to get there!
- State parks (Georgia has 63), lakes and mountains present equal opportunities for discussion and exploration. Be sure to plan outdoor activities such as hiking, where your kids can point out to you different kinds of trees, plants and flowers they see along the way. For a list of Georgia's parks and kid's activities at each, visit www.gastateparks.org.

About PRISM

The Partnership for Reform in Science and Mathematics (PRISM) is a five-year initiative funded by the National Science Foundation and administered by the University System of Georgia with the primary purpose of improving student achievement in science and mathematics at all levels of education throughout Georgia. PRISM is working actively in four diverse regions of the state with partners at the university and P-12 level in each region. For more information about PRISM, visit www.gaprism.org.

This press release is based on work supported by the National Science Foundation under Cooperative Agreement Number: EHR-0314953. Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.