Summer Reading Programs
An Initial Conversation

Sponsored by the Faye McBeath Foundation
Facilitated by the Planning Council for Health and Human Services
Thursday, February 28, 2013
11:30—1:30
Summer Reading Programs

1. What do we know about learning loss or the "summer slide"?

2. What do we know about what works to address it?
1. Summer Slide/ Learning Loss

Children who read during the summer gain reading skills, while those who do not often slide backward.

A conservative estimate of lost instructional time is approximately two months or roughly 22 percent of the school year.

Every two or three years, the kids who don't read in the summer fall a year behind the kids who do.

Family income plays a significant role in determining the magnitude of this summer slide.

Students from low-income families...experience an average summer learning loss in reading achievement of over two months despite the fact that their middle-class peers make slight gains.
Summer Slide/ Learning Loss

Most students lose about two months of grade level equivalency in mathematical computation skills over the summer months.

Students who received books for summer reading at home show a significantly higher level of reading achievement.

The amount and quality of student’s access to reading materials is substantively related to the amount of reading they engage in, which in turn is the most important determinant of reading achievement.

Students who read more, read better; they also write better, spell better, have larger vocabularies, and have better control of complex grammatical constructions.

Teachers spend at least a month re-teaching material that students have forgotten over the summer that could have been spent on teaching new information and skills.
Summer Slide/ Learning Loss

• The **number of books** read during the summer is consistently related to academic gains.

• Children in every income group who read **six or more books** over the summer gained more in reading achievement than children who did not.
Major factors determining whether a child reads over the summer

1) use of the public library

2) the child's gender

3) socioeconomic status and

4) the distance from home to a library
Availability of Books

• **Low-income children** have, on average, **four** children's books in their homes.

• **61 percent** of low-income families have **no books** at all in their homes for their children.

• **Public libraries** help close the ‘book gap’ by providing children of all backgrounds access to high-quality reading materials and rich language experiences.
Wallace Foundation Study

Economically disadvantaged youth are more likely to lose ground in reading over the summer.

Both lower and higher income students lose ground in math over the summer.

Academic disparities increase as children grow older, widening the achievement gap.

Summer learning programs are an important strategy for narrowing the gap.

Children and youth who would stand to benefit the most from summer learning programs are the least likely to participate.
II. What Works? Best Practices

Those programs with successful outcomes had:

• the early formation of **collaborative partnerships** with key stakeholders

• **specific goals and objectives**

• **qualified staff** with high quality training
Critical Characteristics of Successful Programs

1. affordable and accessible

2. involve parents

3. involve the community
Nine Research Based Components of High-Quality Summer Reading Programs

1. Include readers from cradle to grave

2. Promote a variety of reading and listening formats as additional ways children and teens can participate

3. Promote a variety of genres and diverse content in reading and listening materials
Nine Research Based Components of High-Quality Summer Reading Programs

4. Engage readers and listeners in **fun activities** that provide the opportunity to discuss the books they are reading and listening to, integrate these books into **real world experiences**

5. Continue **story times** for young children and families

6. Include **English language learners** and children and teens who speak foreign languages
Nine Research Based Components of High-Quality Summer Reading Programs

7. **Partner with teachers** and school librarians at local schools

8. Reach out to and **partner with local agencies and organizations** that already work with low income and disadvantaged youth

9. **Give away free books** for children and teens to keep and/or provide free library cards to children birth through high school graduation
Recommendations for Funders

1. **Expand** successful programs.
2. **Extend** successful programs (a school year component)
3. **Improve** successful programs (Focus more on at risk youth, differentiate school year from summer learning, summer learning from summer camp)
4. **Increase** extended school year programs.
5. **Evaluate** summer learning programs
Your thoughts?