

## School's Calling

By Barbara Ashcroft B.A.M.ED.

Wow, where did the summer go? School's calling...time to sharpen up your child's mental tools.

Try a few challenging, but fun, educational activities this month. With just one hour a day of incidental reading, writing, discussion and math activities, your child will refresh his basic skills and increase his general knowledge. Learning is a lifelong ongoing process and is certainly not limited to just the school setting. There are many ways to keep your child's mind active during the last days of summer.

- Math websites offer basic skills practice and an assortment of games.
- Crossword puzzle books or online word puzzles sharpen vocabulary and assist with spelling.
- Short daily story writing or reporting and editing on the computer will keep up their written expression fluency and accuracy.
- Current events from daily newscasts or newspapers offer great opportunities for a family discussion of social issues and values. They also provide an opportunity for incidental geography learning.
- Keep short stories or articles pertaining to your child's hobbies and interests on hand. This will keep up her reading skills. Let her tell you what new information she has discovered.
- Family outings and summer trips provide occasions to learn about new surroundings and local history. Encourage your child to become a keen observer and to ask probing questions as you travel to new and different locations. Traveling to new places can be one of the best learning experiences for a child.

- Nature walks, museum and science centre visits all stimulate inquiring minds. It's the "Why" questions that show interest and lead to further research.
- Post an interesting daily research question on the fridge. Help your children sharpen their research skills. They need help refining their key search words.

All of these activities can be done informally and incidentally as your family goes about enjoying the final days of summer. Learning is natural and can be fun when the whole family gets involved.

When children know you are enthusiastic about a topic, they will pick up that interest. Make lifelong learning your family's passion. Keep your children challenged, curious, and motivated.

Some educational and fun sites for kids:

[www.math.com](http://www.math.com)

[www.coolmath.com](http://www.coolmath.com)

[www.kidzone.ws/math/index.htm](http://www.kidzone.ws/math/index.htm)

[www.askforkids.com](http://www.askforkids.com)

[www.cbc.ca/kids](http://www.cbc.ca/kids)

<http://school.discovery.com/students>

[www.funology.com](http://www.funology.com)

[www.kidsclick.org](http://www.kidsclick.org)

[www.pbskids.org/findit/](http://www.pbskids.org/findit/)

[www.sikids.com/](http://www.sikids.com/)

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Barb Ashcroft offers **JOURNEY TO JOY SEMINARS** and **private consultation for parents** to assist them in raising children of character and to support them in enriching their family life. Barb is also a certified Passion Test™ facilitator. She may be booked for professional speaking engagements.

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