



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MAKE SUMMER COUNT

Butte County Children & Families Commission Offers Five Summer Tips for School Readiness

Oroville, CA. – To many, summer means long days at the beach, back-yard barbeques and family vacations. The Butte County Children & Families Commission wants to remind parents that summer is also an important time to help prepare your child for school.

“We know through existing research that the early years of a child’s life are most critical,” said Commission Program Manager Jill Blake. “During this time, children develop the basic knowledge, understanding and interests they need to become successful, lifelong learners. You are your child’s first teacher, and you hold the key to their success!”

The Butte County Children & Families Commission offers Five Tips for making your child’s summer vacation count:

Read to your child every day! Make sure the local library is on your list of summer sights. Research has shown that reading out loud to a child increases his or her understanding of language and vocabulary and teaches the skills needed for reading and writing. Even a few minutes of reading time each day improves a child’s readiness for school. To celebrate summer, libraries in Chico, Gridley, Oroville, and Paradise are offering various weekly events for children, such as “Story Time” and summer reading programs. Check with your local library about programs being offered in your area or visit them at www.buttecounty.net/bclibrary. The Oroville library also offers a reading/writing improvement program where parents are partnered with community volunteers to improve reading skills. For more information, please call (530) 538-7198. These events are free of charge.

Serve healthy snacks and exercise! Include plenty of fruits and vegetables in your backyard barbeque menu and make sure physical activity is part of your child’s summer schedule. Succeeding at school starts with a healthy breakfast and is strengthened with well-rounded meals and snacks throughout the day. Set a good example by including

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your child in your own physical fitness routine! Consider serving fruits and vegetables as snacks to meet the recommended 5-9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Take advantage of the wonderful produce available in our area this time of year by visiting the Chico Certified Farmer's Market, which hosts weekly markets in Chico, Oroville, and Paradise. View their summer schedule at www.northvalley.net/farmersmarket. For more information on nutrition education services for children and their families, please visit OPT for Fit Kids at www.optforfitkids.org or call (530) 345-0678.

Make new friends! Prepare your child for the first day of school by visiting library groups, scheduling play dates, enrolling in summer camps, and taking part in other group activities to introduce your child to new people and different learning environments. Visit www.helpcentral.org for a comprehensive listing of recreational activities and facilities in Butte County. Check with your local Recreation and Parks District about summer activities happening in your area, such as summer camps, swimming lessons, and general interest classes.

Teach while you travel! Make learning fun by teaching while you visit summer tourist destinations. Include places like the zoo and state parks on your travel schedule, and engage your child through activities related to your destination, including reading and art projects. For a list of Butte County summer destinations, visit www.buttecounty.com or www.101thingstodo.net. Try a visit to the Sacramento Zoo and Fairytale Town in Sacramento or the beautiful Turtle Bay Exploration Park in Redding. Closer to home, you can't beat an afternoon picnic in Bidwell Park or a visit to the Barry Kirshner Wildlife Foundation in Durham!

Get immunized! Make sure your child is ready to start the school year by visiting your pediatrician and getting the required vaccinations for school enrollment. Do you know where your child's immunization record is right now? The Immunization Network of Northern California is a free, confidential service that keeps track of immunizations and makes sure that you and your doctor know of any vaccines that are needed. It can provide a replacement record if your child's yellow California Immunization Record is lost. It prevents your child from having to get the same shots over again for daycare entry or school admission. It is a safe way to have proof that your child has all the shots needed for school, child care and college entry in the future, no matter where they were given. For more information, call the Butte County Public Health Immunization Registry Project at 1-888-INNC-411.

The Butte County Children & Families Commission is working to ensure that all children begin school ready to learn. Commission partners currently offer the following summer learning programs:

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- School Readiness, in partnership with Early LEARN, is currently conducting summer “Kinder Camps” at several Oroville and Chico schools. Kinder Camp offers children and their families the chance to learn about kindergarten, become familiar with school, and make new friends! Oakdale Heights Elementary School will host the final Kinder Camp of the season on August 8-17, 2005. For more information about the School Readiness program, please contact Staci Howell at (530) 879-7450.
- Valley Oak Children’s Services offers free information for parents on selecting childcare at www.valleyoakchildren.org. The site includes tips for choosing childcare, a directory of childcare centers in Butte County, helpful child development articles, and much more. You can call (530) 895-3572 or (800) 345-8627 for more information.
- On Sunday, August 21st from 11:00 AM- 3:00 PM, the Oroville Branch Library will hold a celebration to mark “20 Years of Literacy and Libraries in Butte County”. The event is free to the public and will include crafts, family activities, and story time. The Butte County Literacy Van will be open to the public, as well! For more information, please call (530) 538-7525.

The Butte County Children & Families Commission was established following a voter-passed initiative in November 1998 and uses tobacco tax revenue to fund education, health, child abuse prevention, child care and other programs intended to promote early childhood development for expectant parents and children through age 5. For more information about local programs improving the lives of children and families in Butte County, please contact First 5 at: (530) 538-7964 or visit us on the Web at: www.buttecounty.net/bccfc.

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