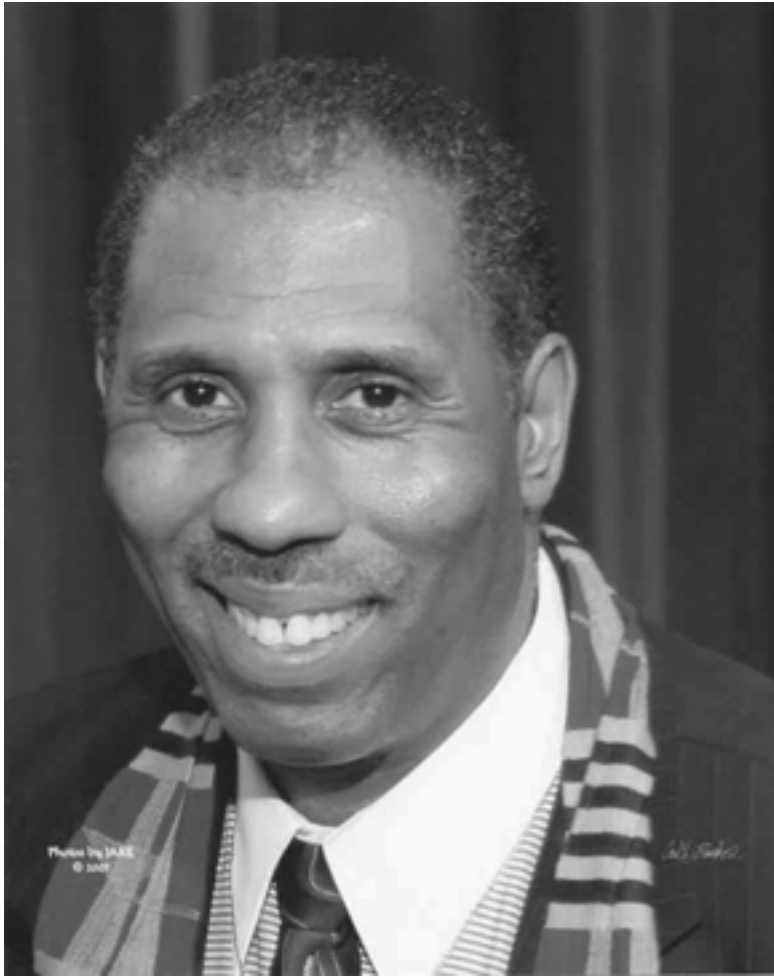


What Black parents must do this summer

Written by Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu
Thursday, 05 July 2012 00:00



There is a 3 year gap between Black and white students. Many people love to believe it's due to income, fatherlessness, educational attainment of the parent and lack of parental involvement. I believe that a major reason for the gap is that we continue to close school for the summer - as if we were an agrarian economy. And I doubt that many Black youth will be farming this summer. If you multiply 3 months by 12 years you will see the 3 year gap. It is my opinion that Black youth would have fewer academic challenges if their schools remained open during the summer and/or their parents kept them academically engaged.

Middle-income parents who value education enroll their children in some type of academic experience during the summer. They also visit libraries, museums, zoos and colleges. Other parents allow their children to sleep longer, play more video games, watch more television and play basketball until they can't see the hoop. These students will have to review the same work they had mastered in May, when the school year begins in September.

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Black parents cannot allow their children to lose 3 months every year. Black parents should not say they cannot afford to take their child to the library. It's free! Most museums have discounted days. A male friend of mine shared his experience with me when he took his family to the museum. He wondered why so many people were staring at him. His wife and children had to tell him he was the only Black man in the building! I am appealing to every father to take his children to the library this summer, and to include a visit to the museum, and the zoo. And I am appealing to every mother to make other arrangements, if the father cannot or will not take the children.

We need for every parent to make sure that their child reads at least one book per week and to write a book report. I am reminded of the formula Sonya Carson used to develop Ben Carson to become the best pediatric neurosurgeon. This low-income single parent, with a third grade education, had enough sense to tell her sons to turn off the television, read a book and write a report that her sister would grade!

I have a theory. I believe that I can go into your house and within 5 minutes tell you the type of student who lives there and predict his/her future. I believe that the items needed in the home of engineers, doctors, lawyers, accountants etc., are very different from the ballplayers, rappers, and criminals. I am very concerned that when I visit a house that has more CDs and downloads than books. My company African American Images has designed a special collection of books for boys. The specific set that I am referencing is titled, Best Books for Boys. We also have one for parents and teachers. We have found the sets to be very resourceful since research indicates that one of the major reasons why boys dislike reading is because of the content.

Let's work together to close the gap. I look forward to your children's teacher asking them how they spent their summer,.....and your children proudly answering by saying that they went to the library, museum, zoo, colleges and other great educational institutions.

Enjoy your summer!

Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu is the author of over 35 books including, There is Nothing Wrong with

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Black Students and Raising Black Boys.