EDUCATION/CAMPS + CLASSES

Make It a Summer of STEM

A sampler of camps to slay the summer slump

BY GEMMA ALEXANDER

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Worried about the ol' summer slump? Fortunately, you can "stem" the tide. Camps and classes geared toward STEM — that's science, technology, engineering and math — can help your kid stay sharp just as much as that summer reading program.

Sure, school-year science classes may bore kids with all that memorization, but a science summer camp? Think hands-on exploration that kids do naturally. Got a kid who hates math? Nothing makes sums more fun than learning alongside fellow campers.

Not only are STEM camps a perfect way to disguise summer learning as summer adventure, but they can also ignite a lifelong passion for inquiry — and may even interest your child in a career field in which jobs are growing at a rate too fast to fill. That's not bad for a summer camp.

To help your family research options, we've

gathered a few new and interesting offerings for summer 2019.

Go Digital

[The Digital Media Academy](#) offers a range of camps as varied as Minecraft game design, 3-D printing, filmmaking and fashion design, allowing kids to try something new each year. Camps meet on the University of Washington campus in Seattle, and children can attend as day campers or stay overnight (ages 12–17) on campus for an additional fee.

Ages: 6–17

Cost: Prices vary by age and camp; check the website for details.

Harry Potter, anyone?

What better way to teach science than to camouflage it in a favorite fantasy world? At [Digivations Camp Demigod Institute](#), a sleepaway camp in Leavenworth, students

choose among the worlds of Percy Jackson and Harry Potter, and multiple-fantasy mash-up themes. With Digivations' NASA award-winning multidisciplinary curriculum, students engage in outdoor quests (which sometimes include robotics and sword fights). They also learn the science behind the magical elements they love — such as the chemistry behind potions or the principles of biomimicry as applied to the monster in their favorite book. New in 2019: a family camp where parents can join in on the fun.

Ages: 8–17

Cost: $995–$1,495 per week; sliding-scale rates and financial aid available. Check website for details.

Time to code

The well-known Girls Who Code Summer Immersion Program is part internship, part summer camp. It's also free. The seven-week

summer camp. It's also free. The seven-week summer program is for rising 11th- and 12th-grade girls. Campers learn about the principles of computer science through real-world projects using Scratch, Python, Arduino C, HTML, CSS and JavaScript, culminating in a final project of their own choosing. Students also hear from guest speakers, participate in workshops, network with female engineers and entrepreneurs, and visit tech companies.

Ages: Grades 11–12

Cost: Free

Let's go LEGO

A Seattle architect started the STEM program Beam Experiences/Bricks 4 Kidz. The camp offers programs in robotics, animation,

game design and Lego-based engineering. New summer 2019 offerings will include "Seed to Plate," a food-based curriculum involving farming and cooking; and "Things That Fly," about construction projects and outdoor tests of mini hot-air balloons, planes and rockets.

Ages: Kindergarten–grade 8

Cost: $175–$400

Bio bonanza

Camp BIOmed is offered courtesy of the Northwest Association for Biomedical Research. Hosted at Seattle Pacific University for high school students, the program gives campers a taste of life in the world of biomedical research. Last year's offerings included "The Molecular Biology of Cancer," "Bioinformatics," "Crime Scene Investigation" and "Genetic Engineering." The curriculum evolves each year, but 2019 elections are likely to follow a similar format.

Ages: Grades 9–12

Cost: $675

Amazon's offering

Coding With Kids (CwK) is a well-established national computer science academy for kids, but few local families know about the academy's partnership with the Amazon Future Engineer pathway program (amazonfutureengineer.com). The partnership provides scholarships for students in financial need to attend CwK summer camps. As of press time, CwK was actively accepting scholarship applications on the basis of financial need for 2019 camps and classes.

Ages: Scholarships available for K–grade 8

Cost: Based on eligibility

Kid scientist

Anyone else seen Kids Science Labs popping

Anyone else seen [Kids Science Labs](#) popping up all over town? This chain of storefront science centers was founded by two dads who wanted to connect kids' natural curiosity with science's problem-solving, critical-thinking and creative-design skills. In addition to school-year programming, Kids Science Labs offers a new batch of inquiry-based, hands-on science and design camps every summer.

Ages: 4–14

Cost: Check the website.

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