



# The Summer Pivot: How to manage attendance, staffing, and family communication without the usual chaos

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**Bonus: Summer Readiness Checklist + Templates**

## Presented By:



Presenter: Susan Gibbs,  
Childcare Solution Specialist  
iCare Software



Co Presenter: Camille Mortimore  
Chief Learning Officer at Foundry

## What we will cover

- Why summer operations feel harder than the school year
- How to keep part-time families engaged
- Simple ways to track attendance and improve retention
- Parent communication that builds trust and referrals
- How to show value through enrichment and progress
- Bonus resources to support your team this summer

**Designed for  
childcare directors  
and owners, camp  
directors, drop-in services,  
nanny services, and  
tutoring and enrichment  
providers**

Practical, calm, and easy to  
apply.

## Polling Question 1



## What type of program are you running this summer?

Camp

Drop-in program

Nanny service

Child care Center

Tutoring/enrichment

## The June Mindset

Summer is not just the school year with more sunscreen.

- Attendance changes week to week
- Staffing is less stable and more reactive
- Mixed-age groups create more complexity
- Families expect flexibility but still want consistency
- The goal is to move from survival mode to strategic excellence



## The Summer Complexity Gap

### What changes in summer

- Higher staff absences/vacations
- Fluctuating student attendance
- More last-minute schedule shifts
- Wider age ranges in one room

### What leaders need

- Better daily visibility
- Flexible curriculum design
- Clear communication rhythms
- Stronger fallback plans



## Polling Question 2



## What causes the most stress in summer operations?

Staffing

Attendance inconsistency

Parent communication

Mixed-age engagement

Showing program value

## Engagement in a Part-Time World

- Part-time attendance can break continuity fast
- Students should be able to join without feeling behind
- Programs need structure that supports both regulars and occasional attendees

**Best move:  
Build each day  
so it still feels  
complete on its own.**

## Solve the Drop-In Dilemma

### What works

- Create stand-alone daily themes
- Tie each day into a simple weekly arc
- Make it easy for students to jump in at any point

### What to avoid

- Projects that only make sense if a child attends every day
- Overly rigid pacing that leaves part-timers behind
- Activities that require a lot of re-teaching

## Example: The Innovation Lab

### Weekly arc: Flight Miles

#### Monday theme: Aerodynamics Day

- Stand-alone project: build and test “Extreme Paper Stunt Planes”
- Still fits into the larger weekly arc
- Works well for tutoring, STEM camps, and school-age care

**Part-time students  
never feel lost, and  
full-time students still  
feel progress.**

## Use Peer Mentorship to Speed Up Belonging

### Why it helps

- Part-timers integrate faster
- Older students get a leadership role
- You reduce social friction at the start of the day

### Simple approach

- Pair a full-time student with a newer student
- Use short routines, not complicated buddy systems
- Keep the focus on belonging and momentum

## The Stability Engine

- Planned vs. actual attendance shows patterns fast
- Better visibility improves staffing decisions
- Attendance tracking is business intelligence, not just recordkeeping
- Small no-show gaps add up over a full summer



**Track it  
early.  
Act on it  
quickly.**

## The Ghosting Protocol

### When a child does not show up

- T + 15 minutes: check attendance against the roster
- T + 30 minutes: review absence notes and send a quick check text
- End of day: if needed, place a personal wellness call

### Why it matters

- No child falls through the cracks
- Families feel noticed
- Retention gets stronger

## Keep Families Coming Back

### Simple retention moves

- Perfect attendance rewards
- Early-bird re-enrollment perks
- Mid-summer check-ins for at-risk families

### Why it works

- Consistency helps operations
- Families feel more committed
- Small rewards can drive better habits

## Parent Communication: The Referral Bridge

- Move beyond the daily report
- Share weekly wins and visible progress
- Use communication to reinforce value
- Better communication supports both retention and referrals



**Parents cannot  
share what they  
do not see.**

## Create Forwardable Moments

### Easy weekly habit

- Send one strong photo or project moment every Friday
- Add one line of context about what the child learned
- Make it easy for parents to forward or post

### What it drives

- Parent pride
- Better word-of-mouth
- A stronger referral loop

## Proving the Value of Summer

- Families worry about summer learning loss
- Position your program as part of the solution
- Show growth without making summer feel like school
- Keep the experience fun, visible, and low pressure



**Progress  
should feel  
like a win,  
not a grade.**

## Gamified Micro-Assessments

### Good options

- Skill badges
- Level-up challenges
- Mission briefs
- Growth trackers

### Why they work

- They feel playful
- Parents can see progress quickly
- Staff can track growth without formal testing

## Example: The Summer Explorer Passport

### Three pillars

- Discovery Zone
- Creative Colony
- Leadership League

### Friday ritual

- Quick passport review
- Earn a stamp or badge
- Celebrate a visible learning win

### Parent connection

- Photo proof
- Shareable growth moments
- Clear story of summer progress

## Polling Question 3



## Which strategy would help your program most this summer?

Modular curriculum

Parent communication

Zero-prep pivots

No-show follow-up

Gamified assessment

## Take-Home Resource: The Summer Readiness Checklist

Use this as a practical handout for your team.

### Operational stability

- Capacity stress test
- Missing student workflow
- Staffing safety net

### Parent relations & marketing

- Communication calendar
- Referral kit
- Feedback loop

### Program & engagement

- Modular curriculum check
- Rainy day pivot plan
- Supplies audit

### Assessment & growth

- Success story log
- Fall bridge plan

## Toolkit Preview

### Attendance & engagement templates

- Ghosting protocol workflow
- Quick check text
- Wellness call script
- Re-engagement email

### Bonus planning tools

- Forwardable moment guide
- Revenue leak finder worksheet
- Zero-prep pivot ideas

## Closing Reflection

- Summer success starts with stronger systems
- Flexible planning reduces daily stress
- Better visibility improves retention
- Clear communication builds loyalty
- Small changes can create a much stronger summer for families and staff

**Calm systems  
create  
stronger  
programs.**

## Q&A

# What questions do you have?

Drop questions in the chat and we will work through as many as we can.

**We will also share the checklist and templates  
after the session.**

## It All Starts With You



**It All Starts With You. A compassionate guide for after-school leaders who carry big responsibilities and even bigger hearts.**

A Strategic Guide for After-School Program Directors, Owners, and Administrators

<https://a.co/d/01wVgJjl>



# Thank you

Download the Summer Readiness Checklist  
and watch for templates in your follow-up email.

Want to see how iCare supports curriculum, attendance,  
communication, and reporting?

[https://share-na2.hsforms.com/1t5QOtsABTGy\\_jCtT57KiNA2f026](https://share-na2.hsforms.com/1t5QOtsABTGy_jCtT57KiNA2f026)