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Matters of the Mind (MATM) – Move, Feel, Grow: A Summer of Discovery

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Summer offers a welcome break from the structure of the school year, giving students, families, and communities the freedom to explore, recharge, and reconnect. These long, sun-filled days are the perfect opportunity to stay active and immersed in experiences that awaken all five senses—taste, touch, sound, sight, and smell.

But summer is also a great time to nurture two often-overlooked senses: **proprioception** and the **vestibular sense**. These are essential for body awareness, balance, and coordinated movement—skills that support everything from learning to physical confidence. So, while you're enjoying the fun and freedom of summer, know that play, movement, and sensory-rich experiences are helping young minds and bodies grow in powerful ways.

Engaging in activities that stimulate our senses and heighten body awareness naturally helps build physical strength—an essential foundation for self-esteem and a strong sense of capability. The best part? This growth happens organically, without the need to turn every moment into a lesson or teachable moment.

Activities like hiking, swimming, rock climbing, and biking do more than get teens moving—they help build coordination, endurance, and confidence. These strength-based experiences are powerful tools for navigating both physical and emotional growth, offering a healthy outlet for restless energy. Whether it's a solo workout or a group adventure, movement keeps teens grounded and physically resilient.

Sensory experiences are just as valuable. Think water play, stargazing, hiking, or wandering through a local farmer's market—simple, immersive ways to reconnect with the world beyond screens. These moments ease stress, promote mindfulness, and spark curiosity, even if teens don't call it that. Activities like gardening, cooking, or working with clay also awaken the senses, offering a calming, hands-on way to express creativity and give shape to thoughts and emotions.

This summer, students should unwind while staying connected—to themselves, their peers, and their environment. Let summer be a season where joy, discovery, and personal growth unfold naturally, with plenty of room for spontaneity and fun.