



Reducing the Summer Slide

The “summer slide” refers to the weakening in children’s reading abilities that occurs during the summer months when they are away from the classroom and, therefore, not participating in formal literacy programs. This decline in reading achievement is particularly prevalent for children from low-socioeconomic households (Kim & Quinn, 2013). Reading Is Fundamental (RIF), the nation's oldest and largest children's literacy organization, believes there is no better time than summer to begin helping our children bridge the gap in learning between the end of one school year and the beginning of the next one. Follow these ten tips to keep your child off the summer slide this summer:

Visit the library and/or bookstore

If your child doesn't have a library card, summer is a great time to sign up. In addition to a wide selection of books to borrow, many libraries have fun, child-friendly summer reading programs. In addition, many bookstores have summer reading motivational programs and reading time.

Involve your child in selecting what he/she will read during the summer

Children are more motivated to read when they have choice. At the beginning of the summer, work together to create a list of books that you and your child would like to read during the summer. Include both storybooks and informational books on your list.

Combine books with summertime activities

Summer leaves lots of time for kids to enjoy fun activities, such as going to the park, seeing a movie, or going to the beach. Why not also encourage them to read a book about the activity? If you're going to a baseball game, suggest your child read a book about a favorite player beforehand. In the car or over a hot dog, you'll have lots of time to talk about the book and the game.

Lead by example

Read the newspaper at breakfast, pick up a magazine at the doctor's office, and stuff a paperback in your beach bag. If you are reading from a device, make sure your kids know that you are using the device for reading. If kids see the adults around them reading often, they will understand that reading can be a fun and important part of their summer days.

Talk it up

Talking with your kids about what you have read also lets them know that reading is an important part of your life. Tell them why you liked a book, what you learned from it, or how it helped you -- soon they might start doing the same.

Help kids find time to read

Summer camp, music lessons, baseball games, and videos are all fun things kids like to do



during the summer. However, by the end of the day, children may be too tired to pick up a book. When planning summer activities with children, remember to leave some time in their schedules for reading. Some convenient times may be before bedtime or over breakfast.

Have plenty of reading material around

Storybooks aren't the only thing that kids can read for fun. Be sure to have newspapers, magazines, and informational material on hand that might spark the interest of a young reader.

Read aloud with kids

Take your children to see a local storyteller or be one yourself. The summer months leave extra time for enthusiastic read-alouds with children no matter what their age. Don't forget to improvise different voices or wear a silly hat to make the story that much more interesting.

Bring a book or download one to a device before you travel

If you are traveling by car, plane, or train, don't forget to pack a book or download one to your device for your children! Many libraries rent downloadable books for devices for free. Long rides are a great time for kids to read to themselves, read aloud to a family member, or for a family member to read to them.

Encourage your child to keep a summer journal

In addition to reading over the summer, it is important for children to continue to practice writing. Journaling may include recording daily activities, writing down thoughts, creating stories, drawing pictures, or gluing photographs into a scrapbook. It is essential for children to view themselves as authors. Good readers make good writers.

Source: Kim, J. S., & Quinn, D. M. (2013). The effects of summer reading on low-income children's literacy achievement from kindergarten to grade 8: A meta-analysis of classroom and home interventions. *Review of Educational Research, 83*(3), 386-431.

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