

How to Beat the Summer Slide

For children, summer vacation is a time full of carefree fun. At [Reading Partners](#), however, we look at summer as a continuation of the learning and building upon the skills we've been working on all school year. [Conclusive Research](#) has proven the existence of what many educators refer to as "Summer Slide", or the unfortunate decline in a student's abilities after two-and-a-half months summer learning hiatus.



June is routinely seen as the 'end' of the school year and August as the 'start' of another. Such jargon sets families up to view summer as an educational pause. Unfortunately, in 'pausing' a child's education, regular practice of newly learned skills is often neglected, and as a result, students can return to school in August as much as 3-months behind where they left off in June.

Engaging kids in fun summer learning activities motivates them to continue their growth in reading and learning throughout the summer, and even helps students become excited about returning to school and starting the year off strong.

Here are 7 tips for making reading part of the fun:

- 1. Take your child on regular trips to the library.** Taking a trip to the library is a fun reading centered activity that children love. Make regular visits to the library and let your child spend as much or as little time as they want picking out books to take home.
- 2. Make reading part of the summer routine.** Now, this can be a hard sell next to television, video games, and other modern distractions. If you're having trouble, do what my mom did: thirty minutes of reading earned me one ticket, which I could then trade in for thirty minutes of "screen time."
- 3. Lead by example.** Make reading a part of your own summer routine. One of the biggest factors that determine if a student will be a lifelong reader is seeing someone in their family set that example. Keep lots of reading material around the house and focus on reading more than other distractions.
- 4. When reading, ask your child lots of questions.** Reading lots of different books, silently or aloud, with someone else helps children build phonic skills and read fluently. But, talking about books, answering questions, and re-telling stories helps a child develop their ability to understand language.
- 5. Make a "Summer Fun Journal."** Combine your child's favorite summer activities with writing prompts. Have your child pick out or craft a summer fun journal, and when you take them to their favorite restaurant, or on a trip to Grandma's, they can write a short entry in their journal afterwards.

6. Prompt your child to use academic-concepts when talking about the things they love. If your son or daughter is dying to tell you about the level s/he just beat in his game, ask him to “explain” the level, and “describe” the “main character,” or ask him/her to “retell” the story of a movie or favorite show

7. Read everything, everywhere. Have your child read billboards, signs, and pamphlets. If you go on a trip to a theme park, have your child be responsible for the map and have them read the rules and names of rides.

The key to success with summer reading is to help make the reading part of the fun; Making the Library a fun destination, turning the act of reading into a game, and combining literacy skills with the things your children already love. It's possible to keep kids academically practiced while also letting them enjoy the lightness of their youth.

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