

## Five Free and Easy Tips for Summer Learning: Research Pointers and What You Can Do



Research about how much children lose ground over the summer is well documented. Here are five easy things parents can do to help stem summer learning loss. Research about how much children lose ground over the summer is well documented. Harris Cooper of Duke University notes, "Overall, children experience an average summer learning loss across reading and mathematics of about one month" (1996). The thing is, though, kids don't have to lose over the summer. In fact, you can encourage your child to have a summer of fun *and* learning with these five free and easy things to do. Try them out!

### 1. Read Every Day

#### The Research

At the middle school level, reading four to five books over the summer has a positive impact on fall reading achievement comparable to attending summer school (Kim, 2004).

#### Suggestions

Take your kids to the library often and let them choose which books to check out. Listen to books on tape. Subscribe them to a magazine. Take turns reading to each other. Allow your kids to stay up a half hour later at night as long as they're reading.

### 2. Use Math Every Day

#### The Research

The largest summer learning losses for all children occur in mathematical computation.

#### Suggestions

Practice the multiplication tables by making each point in a basketball game worth 7 points (or 8 or 9). Ask your kids to make change at the drive-thru. Show your child how to go to [www.coolmath.com](http://www.coolmath.com) to play math games. Make up math word problems in the car and at the dinner table.

### **3. Get Outside and Play**

#### **The Research**

Intense physical activity programs have positive effects on academic achievement, including increased concentration; improved mathematics, reading, and writing test scores; and reduced disruptive behavior (Journal of School Health 1997).

#### **Suggestions**

Find ways to ensure your child is active for 60 minutes each day. Have him or her walk the neighbor's dog, go swimming, play badminton or soccer, take walks, or go for family bike rides. Look for safe, fun ways to play outside together year-round.

### **4. Write Every Week**

#### **The Research**

More freshmen entering degree-granting postsecondary institutions take remedial writing courses than take remedial reading courses (NCES 2003).

#### **Suggestions**

Ask your child to write a weekly letter to his or her grandparents, relatives, or friends. Encourage him to keep a summer journal. Have her write the family's grocery list. Organize a secret pal writing project for adults and kids at your church or in your community.

### **5. Summer is Here**

Here are some tips for summer learning:

- Summer is a great time to practice writing. Children can write cards and letters to friends and family about any topic that interests them such as a favorite book, movie or game, or what they are doing over the summer.
- Trips to the library are great opportunities for children to read and explore. Develop a summer reading list for yourself and your child. If your library sponsors a summer reading program, sign your child up.
- Make a list of regular summer responsibilities for your child. Children benefit from having structure. Doing household chores teaches important life skills and responsibility.
- Visit a museum together. It's a fun way to learn about art and culture. Many museums have one day a week when admission is free.
- Do art projects with important themes, e.g., make a poster of summer safety tips with your child.
- Get creative in the kitchen. Plan a meal with your child. This should include writing a grocery list, making a trip to the store, and following the recipe together.
- Plant a garden or, if you don't have much room, plant a couple of flowers in pots.
- Head to the crafts store and find an inexpensive crafts project to do together.
- Get moving. Regular walks and bike rides help children to be happy, healthy and alert.