

## Preventing Summer Learning Loss: Keeping Kids Learning Through the Summer Without Sacrificing Fun

Research shows that most children experience a significant summer learning loss, requiring teachers to spend extensive time reviewing in the fall. The loss is greatest among children in low-income families who may have fewer opportunities for summer enrichment activities. But there are many cost-free ways to keep children learning without sacrificing summer fun. Here are Marti's practical tips:

### I. Background: the reality of summer learning loss

- Most children show a significant learning loss over the summer, especially in math computation and spelling, which requires teachers to spend extensive time reviewing in the fall
- Children in low-income families, with fewer opportunities for summer enrichment activities, show the greatest loss (including at least a two-month loss in reading achievement), which contributes to the widening achievement gap in our schools
- There are many cost-free ways parents and other caring adults can prevent summer learning loss, and there are great resources available to help

### II. Tips for effective summer learning

- Follow your child's natural curiosity
  - *Notice and wonder about things together. Make time to answer your child's questions and look things up online. Keep a list of questions and find answers during a weekly trip to the library.*
  - *Go outside and explore what's around you. (Why do we have so many mosquitos this year? Where is the best place to plant some vegetables or herbs? What kind of animal tracks are these?)*
- Build learning into everyday activities
  - *Have your child write out the grocery list, with help sounding out the words as necessary*
  - *At the store, have your child figure out which brand is the best value – or pick out two favorite items that add up to less than a certain price (or other math tasks at your child's level)*
  - *Let your child read a recipe, measure ingredients, calculate how to double the recipe or cut it in half*
  - *Engage your child in figuring out the bus route to an appointment – or, in the car, have your child read a map and give you directions while you drive*
  - *Have your child help you with a sewing or building task that requires measuring*
- Play skill-building games
  - *Scrabble, Monopoly, even Candyland for young kids – or hangman on a napkin while you wait for your food at a restaurant*
  - *“Solve for X” during drive time or waiting time (“If X plus 2 is 5, what is X?”)*
  - *Have a treasure hunt in the house or yard, with written clues leading the way*

- Read every day
  - *Set a family reading time to make it easy for your child to read without distraction*
  - *Go to the library; the librarian can help find books to suit your child's interests*
  - *Ask open-ended questions (what, why, how) about what your child is reading*
  
- Help your child keep a summer journal
  - *A simple spiral notebook is great for writing and drawing about activities, feelings or fantasies – and it can be a great keepsake when your child is older*
  - *Be encouraging and excited about what your child is learning and your child will be too!*

**The bottom line: Learning is an attitude and it starts with us!**

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