

10 Parent Tips to Safeguard Kids from the Summer Slide

When kids don't read or engage in other learning activities during the summer, they can return to school in the fall 2-3 or more months behind where they left in the spring. Add those 2-3 months up over 3-4 years and pretty soon your kids can be nearly a full year behind their peers who keep reading and learning during the summer months.

To help your kids avoid the summer slide consider these ten ideas.

- 1) **Read aloud no matter what age.** Kids language, vocabulary, and comprehension all improve when they listen to reading. Kids of all ages love and benefit from being read to. As kids get older, it can be fun to choose a longer books to read, one chapter at a time together.
- 2) **Set a weekly goal for reading.** 15-20 minutes per day or 110 - 140 minutes per week is recommended. This can be a combination of kids reading independently, reading to others and being read to by others. What's important is regular engagement with reading.
- 3) **Help your kids find books that they enjoy.** Choice matters! Help your kids find books about topics and characters that they really care about. Nothing is more powerful when it comes to motivating readers than access to great books and the freedom to choose.
- 4) **Do whatever it takes to get the the library.** If you don't have library cards yet, it can be an exciting family adventure to get signed up for them. Once you're armed with library cards you can bring home dozens of books, books on tape, and other multimedia materials with every visit. All for free. There's no better deal in town. Make it a ritual.
- 5) **When traveling, fill the car or travel bag with books of all kinds.** Take turns reading aloud or choose a book on CD to listen together.
- 6) **Play word and letter games in the car or at the dinner table.** Invent sentences with words that all start with the same letter or that contain rhymes. Read and recite nursery rhymes with your kids. Play with using new vocabulary words in your conversations.
- 7) **Visit yard sales and thrift stores looking for great books.** Owning some books of their own is important for all readers. You'll be amazed what you can get for a buck!
- 8) **Help your kids find reading partners.** Set up opportunities for your kids to read to or with siblings, cousins, pets or stuffed animals. An audience can be a great motivator.
- 9) **Let your kids see *you* read for a variety of purposes.** Model enjoyment of reading. Show your kids the ways reading makes your life better.
- 10) **Turn off the TV and video games.** Reserve one hour or more per day as screen-free time. Get out the books, newspapers, magazines, puzzles, and games. Your brains will thank you for it.