



It is especially important for students to read over the summer months when they are not reading textbooks and other work for school. Reading just four books over the summer can prevent what is called the “summer slide,” where students lose educational ground because they may not be as stimulated as they are during the school year.

According to the children’s literacy organization Reading is Fundamental (RIF), experts have found that “children who read during the summer gain reading skills, while those who do not often slide backward.”

According to the authors of a November 2002 report from Johns Hopkins Center for Summer Learning: “A conservative estimate of lost instructional time is approximately two months or roughly 22 percent of the school year.... It's common for teachers to spend at least a month re-teaching material that students have forgotten over the summer. That month of re-teaching eliminates a month that could have been spent on teaching new information and skills.”

**The Statistics Are In:**

Students can lose up to 25 percent of their reading level over the summer.

- Students can lose up to three months of their education over the summer.
- This loss is cumulative – so by the time a student enters high school or middle school, he or she could be years behind grade-level standards.

This can be prevented – by reading! Reading just four books over the summer can prevent the summer slide, and can actually increase a student’s reading level.

**Tips for Families:**

**Combine activities with books.**

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 his or her 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.

**Visit the library.**

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.

**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 kids see the adults around them reading often, they will understand that literature 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.

**Relax the rules for summer.**

During the school year, children have busy schedules and often have required reading for classes. Summer is a time when children can read what, when, and how they please. Don't set daily minute requirements or determine the number of pages they should read. Instead, make sure they pick up books for fun and help find ways for them to choose to read on their own. You may even want to make bedtime a little bit later if you find that your child can't put down a book.

**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.

**Use books to break the boredom.**

Without the regular school regimen, adults and kids need more activities to fill the hours. Books that teach kids how to make or do something are a great way to get kids reading and keep them occupied. Don't forget to take your kids' favorite reading series along on long road trips.

**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!

**Summer Reading Tips for Kids:** <http://www.rif.org/kids/readingplanet/6938.htm>