



Promote Summer Learning

How can children maintain their literacy skills over the summer?

The end of school in June shouldn't mean the end of learning for your child. Parental support plays a vital role during the summer.

Here are some of the important reasons to continue reading and writing with your child during the summer holidays:

- Your child's literacy skills will be maintained over the holiday while you spend enjoyable and worthwhile time together.
- Your child will continue to learn and exercise their mind.
- Children who continue to read and write over the summer require less review and are ready to learn new skills and concepts in the fall.

“Readers are lucky. They will never be bored or lonely.”

– Natalie Babbitt

Successful students don't take a break from learning over the summer!

Think of summer as an opportunity to build a bridge of learning from one grade to the next!

Consider some of the following ideas to help maintain and foster learning for your child this summer.

1. VISIT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Summer is the perfect time to visit your public library on a regular basis.

Many libraries offer a fun reading program for all ages each summer. Children are encouraged to participate through goals and events.

While you and your child are at the library looking for good books to read, make sure you also check out the DVDs and CDs. Don't forget many public libraries also offer free access to computers and the Internet for card holders!

2. LIMIT SCREEN TIME

Not many children are able to regulate the amount of time they spend looking at screens such as watching TV or on an electronic device. However, when parents take charge and find alternative activities for their children, summertime can turn into an opportunity for building brain cells, as well as a chance to have lots of active fun.

If your child has a show they really enjoy watching, such as sports or science fiction, or has a favourite video or online game, go to the library and find books on the same topic or theme. Don't be afraid to ask the librarian to help you. Librarians have a wealth of information and can provide lots of helpful ideas!

Summertime doesn't have to mean no screen time at all—just help your child find a healthy balance. Let them earn an hour of screen time by spending two hours reading, writing, actively playing with a friend out in the fresh air or any combination of

these. Encourage them to continue exercising and building those brain cells.

3. **CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WRITING**

Children will enjoy writing during the summer if they see it as fun and worthwhile. Consider some of the following ideas:

- **Create a summer journal or diary**
Take an unused scribbler from school and supply your child with pens, pencil crayons, paint, etc. to create a special cover for their journal. Encourage them to write about a highlight each day.
- **Write to a summer friend**
If you go away on a holiday, encourage your child to write postcards or letters to friends, relatives and teachers. If you stay at home, encourage writing to friends or relatives out of the city. Make your own postcards out of heavy paper and personalize them.
- **Extend a favourite story**
Encourage your child to put their ideas on paper by writing a sequel to their favourite book or creating their own story. Younger children can dictate their stories to parents and then go back and illustrate. Be creative!
- **Create a summer ABC book**
Find out what your child is really interested in during the summer and have them create an ABC book based on their interest. If your child loves horses, for example, an ABC book about horses might be really appealing. Try using the pattern *A is for Appaloosa. An appaloosa is a horse with black spots.* This works for any interest!

4. **FIND FUN IN LEARNING**

There are lots of ways for your child to have fun while they continue to learn and practice their literacy skills during the summer. Here are some examples:

- Tell stories around a campfire, build a fort in the house or put up a tent in the backyard.
- Create different spaces for them to read, write and play in, and supply lots of books, paper, pencils and crayons.
- Go for walks.
- Find a big shady tree to sit under and read.
- Create silly stories together and sing songs.

Make plans, write down ideas and create lists of things to do.

- Take lots of photos, put the photos in an album and get your child to write a sentence about each picture.
- Eat ice cream and describe the taste.
- Imagine the craziest ice cream flavour that you can, write down the ingredients and think of a name for it.
- Explore and have fun together.

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