

Prevent Summer Learning Loss

Summer learning loss refers to the decline in math, reading, and writing skills among elementary school students during the summertime. Most community-based and online resources for elementary school students are summer reading programs. I encourage you to explore what exists in your area.

Many think drill and practice apps, packets, and workbooks will help kids keep and refine their skills; these things are a joy-killer. Often, kids slog through summertime skill practice, which can diminish their engagement and desire to learn. Here are some authentic ways to have your child engage with literacy and math during the summer.

- Literacy
 - Allow your child to choose their summer reading books.
 - Encourage your child to join a book club or start a writing club with friends.
 - Create a Goodreads or Storygraph account to allow your child to track their reading and share book reviews.
 - Listen to an audiobook as a family on long drives.
 - Give your child a magazine subscription that reflects their interests.
 - Participate in your local library's summer reading program.
 - Play word games, such as crossword puzzles and daily word guessing games.
 - Select chapter books or graphic novels to read together before bed.
 - Start a parent-child exchange journal where you draw and write, passing it back and forth throughout the summer.
 - Suggest independent writing projects rooted in your child's interests, such as restaurant reviews and sports reporting.
 - Take your child to the store and have them select a writer's notebook. If it has a blank cover, give them materials to personalize it. Encourage them to live like a writer by cultivating a daily writing practice. (We have tips for this on Two Writing Teachers.)
- Math
 - Bake something delicious together while providing opportunities to measure and weigh ingredients.
 - Check and follow the weather online or using a weather app. Track

air quality, wind speeds, sunrise/sunset times, lunar phases, precipitation, etc.

- Go to the farmer's market or grocery store and let your child handle the transactions while working within a budget.
- Make dinner together and focus on time management, measurement, or both!
- Run a lemonade stand.
- Play board and card games that require math skills.
- Read books that deal with mathematical concepts in whimsical ways.
- Turn a sports obsession into something mathematical. You can turn a love of playing baseball into a focus on mathematics by having your child follow their team and track players' stats and the team's standing.

These suggestions, some child-only while others are parent-child, are a starting point. Once you try to prevent learning loss through the lens of joy, you'll find many other ways to infuse literacy and math into your summertime routines and experiences.

Let me take this one step further. Incorporate educational elements into summer vacation activities, too! I'm not only talking about visiting historical landmarks and museums. (Yes, do that!) Instead, I'm focusing on teaching kids how to read restaurant reviews and make a dinner reservation, calling a restaurant or tourist attraction to ask questions rather than looking it up online, and making hotel reservations. When children are ready and eager to take on more responsibility, anything that helps them make decisions, fosters independence, and requires literacy or math skills can bring them joy.