Summer Learning Spotlight

Reading

Early Childhood/ Elementary School Summer 2024

THE PARENT INSTITUTE®

Including fun reading activities in your daily summer routine helps keep your child's literacy skills sharp without feeling like work. Here are some simple ways to ensure an enjoyable summer of strengthening skills that will keep your child interested, learning and building a love of reading.

Make summer reading a pleasure for your child

Variety, choices and appealing, relaxing activities are the key to maintaining your child's interest in reading all summer long. To feed a desire to read:

- **Offer options.** Your child will be more motivated if reading doesn't feel like an assignment.
- **Connect books** with summer activities. Find sports books for a summer league player. Pack outdoor adventure books for a camping trip.
- **Use curiosity as a springboard.** Does your child wonder what causes lightning and thunder? Find answers in books on weather. Is your child fascinated by the waves and sea creatures? Read books about oceans.
- **Start your child on a series** of mystery or thriller books. Suspense keeps kids turning pages.

- **Overcome obstacles.** Is a book too challenging? Let your child choose an easier one. Put away attention-stealing devices.
- **Allow your child** to stay up past bedtime sometimes when a book is too good to put down.
- **Let one great book** lead to another. Look for books by the same author or on the same topic. Encourage your child to reread beloved books, too.

Surround your child with reading

Guarantee that your child has plenty to read while school is out! To find free or low-cost reading material:

- **Visit the library** as a family every week or two. Download free library e-books, too.
- **Collect magazines and catalogs.** Search online for "free magazines for children." Ask friends to save publications for your child.
- **Set up a book swap** with your child's friends.
- **Shop at yard sales,** used-book shops and thrift stores. Plan a family field trip to hunt for books in nearby towns.
- **Look for miniature library** boxes labeled "Little Free Library." Check *littlefreelibrary.org/map/* for boxes near places you go.
- **Create a "treasure chest."** Collect brochures, takeout menus, flyers, ad circulars, etc., and keep them in a special box.

Build 'word ladders'

Here's a simple activity to enjoy anywhere your child goes this summer. Draw a ladder with at least 10 rungs, and write a three-letter word on the bottom rung. Challenge your child to "climb" the ladder by writing a new word on each rung. The catch? Your child may change only one letter per rung. A word ladder for *sip* might look like this: *sip-tip-trip-trim-rim-rid-ride-bride-bide-bid*. What's the tallest ladder your child can make before summer ends?

Have fun with nonfiction

The summer is a no-pressure time to learn just for fun, and reading is the way to do it! Look for how-to books on skills your child wants to learn, like crocheting or baking. Offer your child books of unusual facts or world records. How big is the biggest fish ever caught? Offer biographies of people your child admires, too. Then ask, "What did you learn that was new?"

Copyright © 2024, The Parent Institute®, a division of PaperClip Media, Inc.
May be reproduced only as licensed by *Parents make the difference!*® and *Helping Children Learn*® newsletters

Strengthen your child's skills by reading aloud

Listening to you read helps your child understand ideas and read words that might otherwise be out of reach. Cozy up in a hammock or in a sunny corner and read aloud often. When you read:

- **Set your child up** to understand. Before you begin, tap into your child's existing knowledge. For a book about Independence Day, for example, ask your child why and how people celebrate the holiday. If you read a book over multiple days, start each day by asking "What happened last time?"
- **Define words** your child doesn't know. See if your child can think of words with similar or opposite meanings. Also, challenge your child to figure out a word's meaning by how it's used. Give examples of how the word might be used in other ways. For example, *stand* can be a verb ("Please *stand* up") or a noun ("Let's open a lemonade *stand*").
- **Ask about characters' actions** and feelings. What did the character do, and why? How does the character feel?
- **Invite participation.** Pause periodically and ask your child to read a sentence or two. Help your child sound out new words and then read the sentences again.

Take reading and writing on-the-go

Reading and writing don't have to stop when you leave the house! Listen to audiobooks together when you travel. Let your child carry a notebook and pretend to be a reporter writing about places and events—suggest including the "five Ws" (*who, what, when, where, why*). Carry magnetic letters and a cookie sheet in the car, and give your child words to spell while you drive.

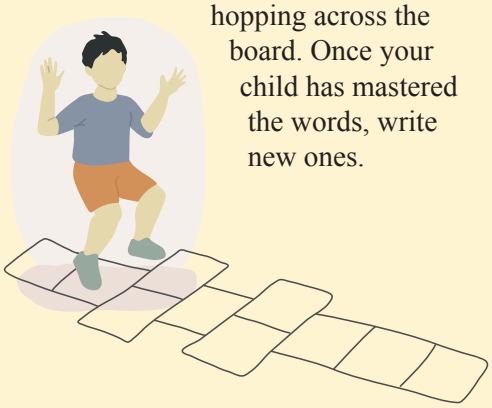
"Reading should not be presented to children as a chore or duty. It should be offered to them as a precious gift."

–Kate DiCamillo

Give classic games a reading twist

Skill-building is fun when you and your child create and play reading versions of these familiar games:

- **Bingo.** Before a road trip, help your child make a bingo board with 25 words you might spot, such as *stop, avenue, sale* and *restaurant*. Can your family find every word before you reach your destination?
- **Concentration.** Make pairs of index cards with "matching" words. You can play with rhyming words (*pan* and *fan*, *jet* and *get*), words with and without a "silent e" (*cub* and *cube*, *hop* and *hope*), or even contractions (*I'm* and *I am*, *we are* and *we're*). Players take turns flipping over two cards and keeping them if they match.
- **Hopscotch.** Write a word in each square. Challenge your child to read the words while hopping across the board. Once your child has mastered the words, write new ones.



Be a reading role model

By watching you, your child learns that the things you do regularly are important. This summer, show your child that reading is one of those things! Sit down with a book or other reading matter every day. Explain why reading is worth your time. Read a tidbit aloud when you run across something your child may find interesting. And when you see your child reading, pick up some reading of your own and sit together.

THE PARENT INSTITUTE®

Copyright © 2024, The Parent Institute®, a division of PaperClip Media, Inc.
May be reproduced only as licensed by *Parents make the difference!*® and *Helping Children Learn*® newsletters