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# I N S I G H T S

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FOR FAMILIES



## Tips to combat summer learning loss



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INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Adapted by Marcia Latta, communications consultant, from an article published by the National Summer Learning Institute.

Learning should not stop just because school is out for summer vacation. Although students may feel they need a well-earned break, they also need to continue learning, so they are ready for the start of a new school year in the fall.

### **Summer learning loss**

Here are some surprising facts compiled by the National Summer Learning Institute ([www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)) about the effects of long, uninterrupted summer downtime, which often leads to summer learning loss:

- All young people experience learning losses when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer. Research spanning 100 years shows that students typically score lower on standardized tests at the end of summer vacation than they do on the same tests at the beginning of the summer.
- Most students lose about two months of grade-level equivalency in math skills over the summer and low-income students also lose more than two months in reading achievement.
- About two-thirds of the ninth-grade achievement gap between lower and higher income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities during the elementary school years.

### **Books are an excellent learning tool for summer vacation**

Reading is one of the best ways to ensure that your child is ready for school. If you are unsure about which books are right for your child, talk to your child's teacher before school is out. You can also look for reading programs in your community. Some school summer food programs include reading activities, and your local library will often host children's reading programs.

The ABCs of Improved Reading by James Kim, assistant professor of education at Harvard University ([www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)) will help your child get the most of summer reading time:

**Access to books.** It's critical that kids can get a wide variety of books over the summer months, but we know that access alone doesn't make a strong impact.

**Books that match readers' ability levels and interests.** For young people's reading skills to improve, they need to read books that align with their own reading levels. Reading books that are too easy or too hard won't help!

**Comprehension,** as monitored and guided by an adult, teacher or parent. The most important piece to making summer reading effective is the help of an adult who can ask questions and guide kids to better understand what they are reading.