

How to Encourage Learning Recovery and Prevent Summer Slide

YAY! School's out for the summer! That's what every student and teacher roars on the last day of school. Parents are excited at the thought of slower schedules and less homework. Students are excited about later bedtimes, extra screen time, staying outside longer, and not having to worry about tests or homework assignments. But the question remains, why worry about learning during the summer months?

The reality is our children have lost so much instructional time during the past two years with ongoing challenges due to the pandemic and we are now playing catch up. You may be asking; why do I need to worry if it's only 3 months? Those three months are more like two years and three months in the realm of education.

Summer has a large impact on a child's learning or lack thereof. This is what we call the "Summer Slide". The Summer Slide is the breakdown of academic competence when a student returns to school after the summer break. Teachers expect the students to have lost some of what they learned in the prior school year and often plan to spend the first couple of months reviewing materials from the year before. What teachers are finding is that many students are not just needing a refresh of their memories, they need a complete "re-teaching" of many missed concepts and ideas.

Students in elementary school experience the Summer Slide at a much higher rate than those in middle school and high school. This is due to the development of their brains and the ability to retain what they learned during the school year. Math facts, letter recognition, and reading comprehension are all skills that decline without frequent practice. Without intervention from parents, this can accumulate over the years and cause a student to fall grades behind, making it impossible to catch up.

How do you help encourage learning recovery and prevent the summer slide? It is simple; help your child to continue to learn all through the summer. This does not mean you need to turn your home into a classroom, rather, develop ways to provide learning opportunities during the summer months to keep the skills they've learned front and center.

The first step is to ask your child's teacher to give you an overview of where your child stands. Are they falling behind, average in all subjects, or advanced in certain subjects? Second, ask your child's teacher for some areas where your child could practice during the summer. For example, if your child is having some challenges in math, then math should be the area of prime focus for the summer. Third, ask your child's teacher for some references you could use during the summer. Remember, you are your child's best resource and advocate.

Here are some STREAM-related ideas to help your child with learning recovery through the summer.

- Science

- Experiments for the whole family are a great way to have fun while learning how things work together.
- Cook together: children learn by touching, tasting, seeing, feeling, and listening. Look at cooking as science they can eat. They will observe changes in food ingredients. For example, ingredients to make a cake, what is used to make it rise? They will learn about temperature, floating, melting, freezing, and (sometimes) burning.
- Scavenger Hunt: this is a fun way to explore and learn about things in your area.
 - Different flowers, plants, twigs, bugs, etc.
- Reading / Writing
 - Reading
 - Have your child read independently for 20 minutes every day.
 - Explore different kinds of reading materials like magazines, picture books, chapter books, poetry, etc.
 - Listen to an audiobook.
 - Visit the Library.
 - Enroll in Summer Reading Programs at your Public Library.
 - Writing
 - Start a journal – have them write about their favorite part of their day.
 - Write letters to military personnel and/or family and elders.
- Technology / Engineering / Math
 - Practice with flashcards (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division).
 - Make it fun; for every “jump in the pool”, a math fact is shouted out.
 - Have your child count how many items you have in your grocery basket.
 - Camp in your backyard; allow your child to build the tent.
 - Use Playdough, Lego’s, and other manipulatives to build something creative.
- Arts
 - Learn to draw.
 - Make art using only things found in nature.
 - Create interesting pancakes, cut cheese/meats in different shapes, create animals with vegetables.
- History
 - Take a trip to a local museum.
 - Research the history and things of interest in the places you go on vacation. If you’re having a “staycation”, research your local facts.

Just as your child needs exercise to stay healthy, their brain needs exercise to maintain their academic abilities. Summer is a wonderful time to help grow their skills in ways that are playful, fun, and engaging. Using some of the above activities and ideas, you can help your child keep learning while enjoying their summer!

References:

[Proximity Learning \(proxlearn.com\)](http://proxlearn.com)

Waterford.org

[Statistics and Prevention | Scholastic | Parents](#)