

## **School is Out: Why Your Child Should Continue to Read this Summer**

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School is out, summer is here, and the last thing you should be thinking about is what your child is reading, right? Wrong. Summer reading is the perfect way for your child to pursue his/her individual interests and at the same time maintain and strengthen important reading skills such as vocabulary and comprehension.

Reading is crucial to a child's success in all school subjects and in the world outside of school. According to the National Institute of Health, "when children become good readers in the early grades they are more likely to become better learners throughout their school years and beyond." During school, reading is mandatory, and your child is encouraged to read all of the time. For many children, summer means camp, bike rides, the beach and a long vacation from reading. While children need time to unwind and relax, studies have shown that without any summer reading children's reading skills decline. It has also been demonstrated that children who read over the summer do better in school than children who do not. Therefore, it is imperative that parents look for ways to incorporate reading into their child's summer vacation in a way that is fun and pleasurable.

### **What can I do?**

- Don't rule out comic books, magazines and storybooks. Allow your child the freedom to break up his/her book reading with a shorter, easier "read."
- First and foremost, you need to help your child find a book on a subject that interests him/her. Sit down

with your child and make a list of possible topics. Then visit the local library. The librarian is a wonderful resource and will be able to point out books of interest to your child. While you are there, find out if your library has a summer reading program for kids.

- Make sure that *you* are reading during the summer. Children need to see that reading is a lifelong activity even his/her parents enjoy. Show your children the pleasure you derive from reading by talking about the books you read.
- Get a second copy of your child's book and read along with him/her. This way you can discuss the book together. You might also take turns reading aloud to each other. Practice your storytelling techniques!
- Since reading and writing go hand and hand, encourage your child to keep a reading journal. Help your child think of topics for his/her entries. Your child might write a letter to the author as an entry or retell a book chapter from the perspective of a different character.
- Plan a summer trip around a book your child is reading. Historical fiction lends itself particularly well to this approach and there are plenty of places nearby to visit.
- Most importantly, schedule reading into the day. Set aside at least twenty minutes each day that your child will devote to reading, and do your best to help your child stick to the plan.

Making reading a part of summer vacation does not have to be a chore. With a little planning and patience you can help your child exercise his/her brain and have fun doing it. Yes, summer is the time to sip lemonade, chase fireflies

or head to the beach. However, it is also a great time to keep your child's mind active so that he/she does not lose important academic skills learned during the year. What better way to travel through history or to faraway lands all while swinging on a hammock than with a good book?

Sources: *Reading is Fundamental, Incorporated*  
RI Tutorial & Educational Services