



Wee Mentors (6+ years): 3 Science Backed Ways to Avoid the "Summer Slide"

You've probably heard of the summer slide. It's a term expert use to describe the loss of learning that takes place over the summer months among kids who don't participate in educational activities. The summer slide, according to some experts, can begin as early as the summer between kindergarten and first grade. It impacts math skills as well as reading, and it can affect children in all grades, but with time on task (and a little help from you), the summer slide is not inevitable. Kids can still enjoy the lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer while keeping books in their lives and return to school in the fall ready and eager to learn. Try these ideas:

1. Support your kid's choices

Fact: Kids won't read if they're on edge, feel pressured, dislike the material, or are forced to read books you select for them. Welcome their input and let them choose the book.

What the research says: Students who are encouraged to choose at least some of their summer books are more likely to hold ground or make gains. Other studies show there is a rise in fluency, writing, comprehension, and vocabulary, compared with kids who had no choice.

What educators say: Voluntary reading can help boost writing skills, vocabulary, proficiency and comprehension.

What to do next: Rethink summer reading. Support your student's choices and share their excitement. If they want to read graphic novels, e-books, newspapers and magazines, or even listen to a podcast or audio book, that's fine too. Kids who have permission to choose when to read, where to read, and what to read, in what order, and in whatever form they want gain big benefits.

2. Get to know your library

Fact: It's not enough for kids to show up once, grab a book, go home, and read it—barely.

What the research says: Enrolling kids in high-quality, activity-oriented, library-based summer programs can help boost kids' reading scores and encourage interest in reading.

What educators say: Libraries rock because they offer kids carefully curated, hand-picked, immersive engaging, soup-to-nuts opportunities for reading and learning new skills.

What kids gain: Access to a variety of genres, writing styles, and authors; story time with same-age children; spirited discussions; fun contests and prizes; special programs; guest speakers; reading logs, and other motivators.

What to do next: Sign your kid up for a library-based program and encourage regular attendance. Find like-minded kids and families to make carpool time fun.

3. Share your passion for reading

Fact: Your reading behavior matters.

What the research says: Parents' attitudes toward reading (including how early and often they read aloud to their kids) determine how well-prepared kids are to start reading in grade school.

What educators say: Reading is contagious, and kids whose parents read aloud often and who demonstrate a love of reading tend to adopt those behaviors.

What to do next: Let your kids see you reading. Show an interest in their choices. Help make time for your children's assigned and leisure reading. Talk about authors, writing style, plots, descriptive passages, and even new words your child encountered. At dinner, or on a lazy summer evening, check in with your kids. Ask questions, share thoughts, encourage curiosity, and investigate related ideas, stories, and topics together.

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