

Stop Summer Brain Drain

By Margaret Poe

Help kids stay in the learning mode—even during a long break from school—with these tips.

THE DOG DAYS DECLINE

Lazy summer afternoons at the pool or on the ballfield are a welcome break from the classroom. But the time off also can be a setback for what kids learned when school was in session.



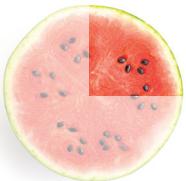
2 months

Average loss in mathematical skills during the summer¹



3 weeks

Time most teachers spend re-teaching lessons at the beginning of a school year²



25-30%

Share of school-year learning lost over the summer for students in grades 2-9²



¹"At a Glance: The Achievement Gap." National Summer Learning Association, 2018

²"Summer Learning Loss: What Is It, and What Can We Do About It?" Sept. 14, 2017, The Brookings Institution



KEEP THEM SHARP

There are plenty of ways kids can avoid the summer slide:

Join a summer reading program

Whether run by a local library, the school or another organization, such programs have been proven to improve kids' test scores².

Pick up a new hobby

Learning something new—whether it's doing magic tricks, sewing a quilt or playing an instrument—is a welcome challenge during the sleepy summer months.

Cook or bake together

While reading the directions and measuring out ingredients, kids will flex their math skills and gain cooking experience they'll use all their lives.

Take online classes

Websites like Khan Academy offer free lessons on subjects ranging from math to computer programming to art history. Classes are designed for students in kindergarten to those preparing for college and beyond.



Get moving

Help kids set a goal for a total number of miles they can walk or run during the summer. Track their progress with a pedometer.

Visit a museum or zoo

An outing to a local zoo, museum or other attraction can keep young minds engaged.

Plant a garden

Between planting the seeds and harvesting fruits and vegetables, the gardening process teaches hands-on science. Plus, it's great exercise.

Volunteer

Kids can help out a local nonprofit or possibly be part of a Thrivent Action Team to meet a community need. Get ideas and inspiration at Livegenerously.com.