

## Why Summer Reading Pays Off Year-Round

Attention parents: even though summer is almost over, it's not too late to help your child become a better reader before the new school year begins. Summer is an important time for students to keep reading and improve their language skills. If your child hasn't been reading regularly this summer, they may be in danger of the "summer slide"—a decline in their reading ability.

Numerous studies indicate that students who don't read or read infrequently during their summer vacation see their reading abilities stagnate or decline. This effect becomes more pronounced as students get older and advance through the school system. The situation for economically deprived students is especially grim: if students don't read over the summer, they are much more likely to fall behind, widening the "achievement gap."

However, this "summer slide" can be avoided by ensuring that children are as engaged as possible in whatever they choose to read—just as long as they're reading every day.

The best ways to keep your child from becoming a "rusty reader" over the summer are:

- Encourage your children to read books they enjoy for at least 30 minutes per day. Your child will likely be more engrossed in material they choose themselves than material that is forced on them.
- Provide incentives for reluctant readers. For example, if your child enjoys basketball, agree to take them to the local court if they do their "daily reading."
- Make reading a social act. Establish a time during the day when all members of the family gather and read on their own, or take turns reading the same book aloud.
- Connect your reading to family outings. If you take your kids to an aquarium, consider reading a book about fish or the ocean with them later that day. The outing can help place the reading into a broader context.

There's still time for kids to pick up a book this summer. Take your children to your local library or bookstore and let them pick out a book they're going to love today. They will be better readers tomorrow for it.

Excerpts taken from US Dept. of Ed Blog



## 10 Reasons Why You Should Read to Your Kids

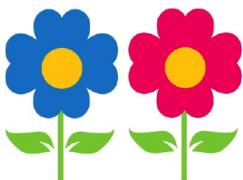
- 1. A stronger relationship with you.** As your child grows older, he'll be on the move—playing, running, and constantly exploring his environment. Snuggling up with a book lets the two of you slow down and recaptures that sweet, cuddly time you enjoyed when he was a baby. Instead of being seen as a chore or a task, reading will become a nurturing activity that will bring the two of you closer together.
- 2. Academic excellence.** One of the primary benefits of reading to toddlers and preschoolers is a higher aptitude for learning in general. Numerous studies have shown that students who are exposed to reading before preschool are more likely to do well in all facets of formal education. After all, if a student struggles to put together words and sentences, how can he be expected to grasp the math, science, and social concepts he'll be presented with when he begins elementary school?
- 3. Basic speech skills.** Throughout toddlerhood and preschool, your child is learning critical language and enunciation skills. By listening to you read [\*One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish\*](#), your child is reinforcing the basic sounds that form language. "Pretend reading"—when a toddler pages through a book with squeals and jabbers of delight—is a very important pre-literacy activity. As a preschooler, your child will likely begin sounding out words on his own.
- 4. The basics of how to read a book.** Children aren't born with an innate knowledge that text is read from left to right, or that the words on a page are separate from the images. Essential pre-reading skills like these are among the major benefits of early reading.
- 5. Better communication skills.** When you spend time reading to toddlers, they'll be much more likely to express themselves and relate to others in a healthy way. By witnessing the interactions between the characters in the books you read, as well as the contact with you during story time, your child is gaining valuable communication skills.
- 6. Mastery of language.** Early reading for toddlers has been linked to a better grasp of the fundamentals of language as they approach school age.
- 7. More logical thinking skills.** Another illustration of the importance of reading to children is their ability to grasp abstract concepts, apply logic in various scenarios, recognize cause and effect, and utilize good judgment. As your toddler or preschooler begins to relate the scenarios in books to what's happening in his own world, he'll become more excited about the stories you share.
- 8. Acclimation to new experiences.** As your child approaches a major developmental milestone or a potentially stressful experience, sharing a relevant story is a great way to help ease the transition. For instance, if your little one is nervous about starting preschool, reading a story dealing with this topic shows her that her anxiety is normal.
- 9. Enhanced concentration and discipline.** Toddlers may initially squirm and become distracted during story time, but eventually they'll learn to stay put for the duration of the book. Along with reading comprehension comes a stronger self-discipline, longer attention span, and better memory retention, all of which will serve your child well when she enters school.
- 10. The knowledge that reading is fun!** Early reading for toddlers helps them view books as an indulgence, not a chore. Kids who are exposed to reading are much more likely to choose books over video games, television, and other forms of entertainment as they grow older.

Excerpts taken from [www.earlymoments.com/promoting-literacy-and-a-love-of-reading/why-reading-to-children-is-important](http://www.earlymoments.com/promoting-literacy-and-a-love-of-reading/why-reading-to-children-is-important)



## **How to use Everyday Activities as Literacy-Learning Opportunities!**

- ⇒ When you're on the go make sure you store your child's favorite books or toys in the car so they can enjoy them during a car ride.
- ⇒ Play songs from a children's CD or sing familiar songs together.
- ⇒ Take your child on a walk. Be sure to name the sights and sounds. "Look at that bird. It says, "Tweet, tweet!"
- ⇒ Blow bubbles with your child, naming the body parts of the body they land on. Try counting the bubbles or using words such as "up," "down," "big," "small," "pop," and "more."
- ⇒ Play games such as "Ring Around the Rosy."
- ⇒ Sing songs and nursery rhymes during daily routines such as diaper change or bath time.
- ⇒ Sing songs or recite rhymes while nursing, bottle feeding, or spoon feeding your infant. Position the baby so he/she can see your face.
- ⇒ Talk to your child during meals, naming the foods you serve and their colors, flavors and textures.
- ⇒ Play soft, soothing music while your child is resting or napping.
- ⇒ Play naming games during bath time with your child, such as "Where are your toes? Mommy is going to wash your toes!"
- ⇒ While outdoors, talk to your child about the weather, things you see, smell or hear.
- ⇒ Sing songs with motions. "Wheels on the Bus," "I'm a Little Teapot," and "Itsy Bitsy Spider" to name a few.
- ⇒ During mealtime, ask your child to describe what he/she is eating. Is it hot or cold?



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# STRAWBERRY BANANA POPSICLES

**Yield:** Depends on your popsicle mold size- around 6 small popsicles

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound strawberries, washed and stems removed
- 1 large ripe banana
- 1/2 cup vanilla yogurt
- 1/2 cup milk
- sugar to taste, optional



**INSTRUCTIONS:** Add the strawberries, banana, milk, and yogurt to the bowl of a food processor or blender and blend until smooth. Taste and add sugar if needed, depending on the ripeness of your fruit and your taste preferences. Pour the liquid into popsicle molds, insert the handles, and freeze until firm, generally overnight. Enjoy frozen the next day!



## Summer Safety for Kids



- **Limit outdoor playtime between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.** Avoid unnecessary exposure when the sun's rays are at their strongest.
- **Apply sunscreen properly.** Generously apply sunscreen 30 minutes before your child goes out in the sun.
- **Keep babies up to 6 months out of the sun.** Their skin is too sensitive for either sun or sunscreen. They need to be in the shade.
- **Cover up.** When possible, long-sleeved shirts and long pants and skirts can provide protection from UV rays. Hats help shade the face, scalp, ears, and neck and are easy to use and give great protection. Wearing sunglasses can protect your child's eyes from UV rays.
- **NEVER leave your child alone in the car...not even for a minute!** Within minutes a young child can begin to suffer the life-threatening symptoms of heat stroke.



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