



Summer Reading is Essential to Student Success

By Educator Barnes – April 28, 2019

After spring break is the mad countdown to summer break. Summer is getting closer every single day. My twin sons have less than one month left of second grade. As much as they are ready for some relaxation this summer, I know I must keep their minds engaged too.

Some parents scoff at the suggestion that they should ensure their children are doing more than playing around during summer, but the summer academic set back is real. If you aren't using skills, you can lose them. Trust me; teachers don't want to spend the first months of school reteaching last year's curriculum.

A recent article from Ohio State University explains how there is a million-word gap among children who are read to and children who aren't.

Young children whose parents read them five books a day enter kindergarten having heard about 1.4 million more words than kids who were never read to, a new study found.

This "million word gap" could be one key in explaining differences in vocabulary and reading development, said Jessica Logan, lead author of the study and assistant professor of educational studies at The Ohio State University.

Although this study is focused on how much children are exposed to before kindergarten if they are read to by an adult, it also potentially explains a connection to reading development and acquiring vocabulary. Reading development must continue after kindergarten and during summer breaks.

Reading development is a continual process. Maybe you missed the boat and didn't read to your children, but it is never too late to make reading a priority in your home. Even if you did read to your children when they were little, is reading a priority now especially when school is not in session?

Summer reading does not have to be a cumbersome task. My sons participate in the Indianapolis Public Library reading program each summer. They are also able to earn prizes. My biggest rule is to not tell them what to read because it is summer. We suck the life out of reading when we put too many restrictions.

Even now that they are completing second grade, we still read together, but the tables have turned. Instead of me reading to them, I ask them to read aloud to me. This is one way I know they are reading. It is also a way to assess your child's fluency skills, how well they can read.

Recently, they took turns reading a Minecraft tip book to me. They even had pages bookmarked that they wanted to reread aloud to help me. I'm in Minecraft with them, and I'm on the struggle bus. They wanted me to learn some tips so I wouldn't get hurt or lost again.

If getting out to the library won't work for you, download books to your mobile device, computer, or tablet. Also, ask if there are any books your child can take home during the summer. My sons' school has a summer reading program where they receive a bag of books to read when school ends and during the summer, they can exchange the bag to get more books to read to get through the second half of summer break.

There are many summer reading options available. You just have to find the one that works for your family.