

Tips on Reducing ‘Summer Learning Loss’ in Children with Language/Literacy Disorders

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The end of the school year is almost near. Soon many of our clients with language and literacy difficulties will be going on summer vacation and enjoying their time outside of school. However, summer is not all fun and games. For children with learning needs, this is also a time of “[learning loss](#)”, or the loss of academic skills and knowledge over the course of the summer break. Students diagnosed with language and learning disabilities are at a particularly significant risk of greater learning loss than typically developing students.

However, there are a number of things that parents can do in an attempt to address this problem. Firstly, consistency is important, so is that there is an opportunity for the students to attend an extended school year it should definitely be taken. Similarly, while all students deserve a hard-earned break, taking an extended break (e.g., two months) from private therapies is not recommended. In the absence of an opportunity to attend an extended school year program, attendance at a summer camp with a good educational component may be the next best option (if financially viable for the parents).

However, in the absence of these options, parents can still do a great deal with the children at home in order to promote learning as well as mitigate the effects of summer learning loss. Consider creating a learning schedule for the week. Sit down with your child and determine how many minutes a day s/he would be willing to engage in learning. Rather than doing everything in one day, create a schedule of dates and times when reading, math, as well as science and social studies may be tackled in manageable quantities.

There are a number of fun educational outings for families to embark on in the summer. While attendance of museums, zoos, or fairs, is often paid, there are still many free events accessible to parents out of which one could potentially create wonderful learning opportunities.



Denizens of major cities such as Washington DC or New York have a plethora of free educational events accessible to them. The [Washington Mall offers free admission](#) while numerous [New York museums offer free admission](#) on selected days of the week. However, a quick search also reveals that many US states, offer wonderful free educational attractions. Here’s [a list](#) of major free educational attractions in the state of NJ, which includes an art museum, a living farm, a center for contemporary art, a naval museum, and a 9/11 memorial, just to name a few. All of these locations could be turned into wonderful learning opportunities replete with novel vocabulary words with science and social study themes.

In addition to these outings is strongly recommended that parents encourage their children to read for pleasure. There are [numerous lists of books available by grade level](#) for the purpose of summer reading. Furthermore, it is strongly recommended that [parents read aloud to their kids](#), especially those who are still emergent readers to facilitate vocabulary growth and “[introduce young ears to complex and nuanced syntax](#)”.

But it’s not all books and direct learning. A lot of learning can actually be accomplished indirectly via [educational summer games](#) as well. Games such as **A to Z Jr, Tribond Jr, Fib or Not, etc.**, are terrific for working on word finding, verbal reasoning, problem-solving, storytelling, etc. Furthermore, games such as [Hedbanz](#) are fantastic

for improving executive function skills in the areas of emotional control, self-monitoring, organization, task initiation, etc.

Summer may be a time when learning slows down, but it doesn't have to stop! Children can still accomplish a great deal of learning through read alouds, educational outings, fun language promoting games, and much, much more!

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