

# Motivating Children to Read, Think and Learn Over the Summer Months

Every September, educators see a learning loss from over the summer. It is easy for teachers to see who has not been 'thinking or learning' over the summer months. The first few weeks of school every year are spent on review.

School provides a routine in children's lives to learn, study and think. Summer vacation interrupts this routine. So it is important for families to establish routines where the children not only read, but think, over the summer.

The most important message that parents can give children is that they value reading and that they choose to read themselves. A good education is key to success in life and reading is the foundation for all learning – so it is important that children develop strong reading skills. Being able to read well allows people to participate fully in society – as workers, as parents, as students, as citizens. Being fully literate allows for more opportunities and more choice in life.

Parents and caregivers can provide their children with opportunities, resources and encouragement to read over the summer. For example:

- Most importantly, provide access to books for your children. Think about what interests your children (start with their hobbies and interests). Don't just have books in your home. Have other reading materials, newspapers, magazines on hand as well.
- Visit the library. Ask the librarian for suggestions.

- See the movie, read the book!
- Post a map on the fridge and see what learning and discussion evolves.
- Read the newspaper. Read about news events (sports, world, local) and discuss them with your child.
- Continue your bedtime routine of reading together or allow your children to read past their normal bedtime.
- Read what they are reading – talk about it, think about it, discuss it!
- Encourage older children to read to younger children. Both develop their reading skills through this experience.
- Play word games.
- Read aloud to your child – even if s/he can read independently. It is important for children to hear fluent readers read.
- Extend your child’s reading experiences – read about dinosaurs, visit the museum.
- Always have a book with you – when you are out and about – books can help ease the boredom between activities.

Help your kids find the time to read. Help them figure out when it works best for them. And relax. It is not important that they read a certain number of pages every day or read for a certain length of time. Your message should be one of encouragement and good role modeling. Lead by example. Reading is fun and enjoyable and something that you do, not because you have to, but because you choose to.