## Summer is a Child’s Opportunity to Learn

For most children, summer is a time to leave classes and homework behind. However, when they return to school in the fall after the long summer break, students can find themselves struggling to catch up.

Skills and knowledge gained throughout the school year fade during the summer months.  The National Center for Summer Learning states, “Most students lose about two months of grade-level equivalency in mathematical computation skills over summer months.”  Therefore, even the best students forget lessons they have learned during the school year.

According to Sylvan, a break from school is great for recharging your children’s batteries, but if they aren’t using the skills and knowledge that were learned in the classroom, they could find themselves lagging behind when school starts up again.

For children who have been struggling at school, summer can be their opportunity to catch-up on key skills and feel more confident when they head back to class. For students who do well, it’s an opportunity to keep their enthusiasm for learning high.

Parents play a key role in reinforcing learning on an ongoing basis. Sylvan Learning has prepared practical tips for integrating continuous learning into fun, family activities all summer long:

**Checklist: Summer Fun That’s Educational, Too**

* **Read with your child** -You can’t start too early. You can’t read too much. Reading to young children nurtures an interest in language, words and communication. For older kids, reading together can be fun and interesting. Parents can even turn Harry Potter mania into a learning opportunity. Read the books together with your children and ask questions about the plot and characters.
* **Search for reading activities on the Internet and create a reading list** - There are an abundance of sites that provide summer reading lists for children. At [www.BookAdventure.com](http://www.BookAdventure.com), children (K-8) create personalized book lists from more than 7,500 recommended titles, take quizzes on the books they’ve read at school or at home, and earn points towards small prizes for understanding the books they’ve read. The program is designed to motivate students to read more often, for longer periods of time and with greater understanding.
* **Plan a field trip** - Plan a trip to an interesting site close to home - a historic site, a museum, the zoo, etc. Research the trip in advance with your child and discuss it afterwards.
* **Find pen pals** - Encourage your child to write notes and letters to family members and friends as a way of practicing writing.
* **Plan a meal together** - Helping mom or dad with the regular grocery shopping and meal preparation creates opportunities to use math skills such as making change, weighing fruits and vegetables, etc.
* **Visit the library** - Libraries can recommend books appropriate for your child’s reading level and interests, and many libraries offer free children’s programs.
* **Keep a journal** - Give your child an empty notebook to keep a summer journal. Regular entries will keep writing skills active.
* **Enroll in a summer enrichment program** - There are a variety of enrichment programs available for children. Sylvan Learning offers engaging programs that keep the interest and fun in learning alive through the summer and into the school year. Visit [www.SylvanLearning.com](http://www.SylvanLearning.com) for more information.

**Checklist: Making Your Home a Year-Round Place for Learning**

* **Work area** - Set up a simple table or desk in a well-lit area. Add a supply of pens, pencils, markers and paper, and you’re set.
* **Reference materials** - Make sure you have a dictionary, atlas and other resource materials available so your child can research information.
* **Your example** - Parents can help encourage learning activities by example. Read with your children. Discuss trips and experiences. Keep your own daily journal.

For more educational resources for children in grades pre-K through 12, please visit the "Parent Resources" area of [www.SylvanLearning.com](http://www.SylvanLearning.com). For additional information, contact Sylvan Learning of Jonesboro at (870) 932-4494.

**About Sylvan Learning**
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