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## **About Summer Learning Loss**

*\*Statistics from [National Summer Learning Association](#)*

- Summer learning loss is a phenomenon in which children lose vital academic information from the previous school year during an extended break, resulting in them falling behind in the classroom and starting the next school year unprepared.
- **Students can digress two to three months** in their academic skills during vacation, especially in the fields of mathematics, spelling and reading comprehension.
- This can be especially detrimental for young students because it puts them behind in their reading skills.
  - o From kindergarten through third grade, children are generally learning to read. But from fourth grade on, they need to be able to read to learn. Studies show that if students are not at reading level by fourth grade, they are four times more likely to leave high school without their diploma.
  - o Summer learning loss during elementary school accounts for **two-thirds of the achievement gap** in reading between low-income children and their middle-income peers by ninth grade.
- The National Summer Learning Association reports that **9 in 10 teachers spend at least three weeks re-teaching lessons at the start of the school year.**
- **Fifty-one percent of families** not participating in a summer program say they would if one was available to them. Of families who pay for summer programs, the average weekly reported cost is **\$288 per child per week.**

## **How Communities In Schools Fills the Gap**

- At Communities In Schools of Jacksonville, we're embedded WITHIN Duval County schools to help students stay on track both during the school year and summer.
- Right now, we're operating 25 FREE academically enriched summer camps across the city that are giving kids a safe place to grow and learn. The certified teachers on staff engage students with hands-on learning – with a focus on STEM and literacy – to ensure that they not only retain their academic skills but advance in their studies and critical thinking.
- At Communities In Schools of Jacksonville, we focus on addressing the needs of the whole child, whether that's an afterschool meal or literacy tutoring. We are committed to breaking down any barriers a student may have to graduation. **For more information, visit [CISJax.org](#).**



## **Topic 1: Resources for parents looking to engage their children in learning over the summer**

### **- Use Online Resources**

- Duval County Public Schools offers online resources like **iReady** and **Reflex Math** to students year-round. An easy first step in engaging children in summer learning is to continue the habit of spending time working on these platforms.
- There are countless [educational apps](#) and programs that can reinforce learning for kids of all ages – from **ABC Mouse** and **PBS Kids** for younger students to **Ready4SAT** and **Duolingo** for high schoolers.
- You can also research **at-home science experiments** that can take a rainy afternoon to the next level. From building volcanos to exploring the effects of erosion, you can find endless examples of fun and educational activities that you can complete with everyday household items.

### **- Head to the Library**

- It seems simple, but one of the best places to encourage learning is the library. This allows your student to explore their interests and engage in learning on their terms – and at no cost to the parent.
- The [Jacksonville Public Library](#) also hosts many events across its branches over the summer to help combat the summer slide, including a free lunch program.

### **- Turn to a Teacher Supply Store**

- Purchase **workbooks** and **flashcards** on your student's grade level and encourage them to work on a section every day. I recommend incentivizing this type of learning to help motivate your student.
- There are a few stores around town that you can turn to such as **School Aids, Inc.** (off Bonneval Road) and **ABC School Materials & Supplies** (off Edgewood Ave.).



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## **Topic 2: How parents can strike the balance between playtime and learning**

- Some parents may find themselves wanting to schedule every minute of their child’s summer. Others may feel overwhelmed by the idea of planning daily or weekly activities and end up leaving the kids to their own devices – literally.
- It’s important to strike a healthy balance of **playtime** and **academic-based learning** over the summer. Both have an important role in your child’s development, from our youngest students to those who will be heading to college in a few years.
- **PLAYTIME**
  - When we think of “play,” we shouldn’t be thinking of any single type of activity. Play comes in many forms, including social, independent and guided. ([via Harvard](#))
    - In **social play**, children play with one another or with adults: tossing a ball, creating friendly competitions, acting out make-believe sagas, etc.
    - In **independent play**, children play by themselves: telling stories with their action figures or stuffed animals, doing puzzles, building with blocks, etc.
    - In **guided play**, children play within a context that adults have set up. For example, a camp counselor might pose, “We’re going to put on a play using these props. What do you think the play should be about?”
  - For older students, “playtime” is more specific to their hobbies and social circles. It’s important that you allow them the freedom to develop meaningful friendships and hobbies that give them confidence and a sense of individualism.
  - At Communities In Schools, we take students on field trips and have them explore career and college opportunities through the summer camps we operate. This allows them time to engage and open their minds to opportunities they might not have been aware of before.
- **ACADEMIC LEARNING**
  - While playtime is essential for children, summer learning loss mostly concerns the stalling of a child’s academic development. This can put them behind their classmates, which can be especially risky for younger students working on mastering literacy.



- As parents, we can avoid that by integrating academic learning into everyday life and creating more structured opportunities for kids to keep progressing in their studies. For example:
  - **Create a summer reading challenge**

A summer reading challenge can help kids catch up to grade level or work to exceed their expected reading comprehension. This helps keep them in the academic mindset while motivating them to reach a goal that may result in a reward, like choosing a fun family activity or outing.
  - **Incentivize academic activities**

There are other ways to motivate children to learn over the summer, including an incentive program. For example, 15 minutes of journaling or working on handwriting for a younger student may result in 15 minutes of free tablet time. For an older student, 30 minutes of SAT prep per day could mean a night out at the movie theatre courtesy of the teen's parent or guardian each week.
  - **Trick them into learning**

Integrating learning into everyday life is really the key. Take every opportunity to help your child learn, whether it's cooking as a family or through game-like apps on the computer. If you make it fun, you can fit learning into your child's summer without them even realizing it.



### **Topic 3: Ways to integrate learning into everyday life**

- Turning day-to-day activities into lessons is a great way to incorporate learning in a busy household. Here are a few examples of how to integrate learning into everyday life:
  - **Get Cooking**  
Encourage younger children to help you in the kitchen. From reading recipes to measuring out ingredients, cooking is a dynamic activity that incorporates literacy, math and science concepts. Books like [The Science Chef](#) ask and answer questions like: Why does popcorn pop? Why does bread rise? Why does cream turn into butter?
  - **Go Shopping**  
Shopping can be a fun way to help kids practice budgeting, counting, estimating and using simple math operations that also help them understand the value of a dollar. For younger kids, have them choose an item under \$5 at the store or count spare change. For older kids, give them the opportunity to plan a party or shop for clothes within a budget.
  - **Read Every Day**  
From pre-K to 12th grade, reading every day should be a habit throughout the entire year. If your child is struggling with literacy, head to the library and check out books about topics that interest them or create a summer reading challenge with incentives to encourage them in their learning.
  - **Engage Their Natural Interests**  
If your child takes an interest in a certain topic or activity, encourage him or her to explore it in an academically engaging way. For example, if your child is interested in boats, you can conduct an at-home science experiment about buoyance or take them to a science museum.
  - **Travel with Your Kids**  
Make time to travel over the summer, from a week-long vacation out of state to an excursion to the beach on a sunny Saturday. Getting kids out of their everyday routine can open their minds and stimulate their curiosity. For example, a simple trip to the beach can turn into discussions about ocean life and how the moon affects tides. Then a thunderstorm rolls through, which can lead to learning about the water cycle.
  - **Take Advantage of Time in the Car**  
Keep small puzzles or educational toys in your car for your kids to play with when driving out of town to grandma's or just for small trips around town. You can also play word games to increase vocabulary (i.e. rhyming games, spot the license plate, etc.).

