



## 8 Tips to Encourage Summer Learning

As parents of young children, you play a key role in your children's education at all times but especially during the summer months. Try these suggestions to encourage your children to review academic skills and have fun at the same time.

1. Plan ahead. Schedule times for literacy during your week. Block in a time for skill building each day then fill it up with some of the fun activities below.

2. Take advantage of local libraries. They often have summer programs for children and usually have playgrounds close by. Wear kids out at the playground first, then have a restful time in the library. To nurture a love of books, let the kids bring lots of books home even if they don't read them all. Supply a special basket or box for library books near a cozy reading nook so the books don't get lost or damaged.

3. Read aloud to your children. Take turns reading and keep the reading level easy to keep it an enjoyable summer experience. Let your children create a signal, such as wiggling their baby finger, to indicate when they want help. Otherwise be quiet and let the kids figure it out. Do not expect perfection or over correct. Summer reading is about learning to love reading. Read the books your children choose even if they choose the same ones over and over.

Instead of reading quietly to yourself, model reading to get information. Let your children hear you reading everything from TV guides to directional signs at the park. If they ask, let them do the reading. Let your children see you reading quietly too. Schedule reading times when the TV is turned off and all family members are reading books of their choice.

4. Act out stories and make up stories - Reread favorite stories then introduce children to the fun of acting them out. Don't worry about replicating the story exactly. Provide simple props and act it out with them. For picture book ideas go to, [http://www.kindergarten-lessons.com/picture\\_books\\_for\\_children.html](http://www.kindergarten-lessons.com/picture_books_for_children.html).

Have everyone draw a character or thing and then take turns sequencing them to create a new story of your own.

5. Play board games - Playing board games with children is an excellent way for them to learn to share and take turns, to cooperate with each other, to increase

logical thinking skills, and to review and learn basic math concepts, as well as letters, colors and shapes.

Visit this page for ideas for choosing good board games for 4 - 7 year olds

6. Supply drawing materials – Provide a variety of paper, a stapler, and other art material for children to make booklets, newspapers or other published items. Make homemade clipboards with heavy cardboard and attach a pencil with string and tape. Hold paper securely with wide elastic bands. Make lists with your kids as you walk around with the clipboards. 10 favorite bugs, Animals in the garden or things to take camping.

7. Go on an "I wonder walk". Take paper and pencil and go outside and take turns asking and recording five "I wonder why" questions. I wonder where this creek starts; I wonder why this leaf is curled, I wonder why the sea anemones are not on this side of the tide pool. Investigate one question at a time with your kids. Look for books to answer your questions at the library. Make mini answer booklets together.

8. Stop, listen and inquire – Encourage your children to think things through and have discussions. Parents are busy and the lists of errands and chores rarely grow shorter so schedule times to chat with your kids. Plan activities where you work or play side by side and encourage conversation with open-ended questions.

Hold back from explaining everything to your children and overloading them with your wisdom and insights. Instead of asking questions that require one-word answers, try open-ended questions such as...

If you could change 2 things about ..., what would they be? That's an interesting idea, how did you come up with that? What is your understanding of what happened to the...? In what ways do you think we could ....?

If you want to encourage your kids to talk to you, don't correct them, lecture, or get upset with their answers. Try to understand their thinking processes. Repeat back what they tell you and generally they will talk more.