

Getting Kids to Read



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It's summertime! School is out of session and our children love to sleep in and play outside. It is hot and our children enjoy waterplay and staying up late. But what can we do to avoid the summer slide? As a teacher, I send home 12 donated books for each child to use for summer reading. I instruct them to read each day throughout the summer and write in a journal their reflections about what they read and learned from each book. Then I tell them to bring their journals into class in the fall and share with their teachers their wonderful reading adventures. I also warn my younger readers that if they do not practice reading each day, they may forget how to read at the start of a new school year. They agree that they must practice and are proud when they have completed extended reading homework assignments.

Ten Summer Reading Activities

Below are ten motivating strategies to inspire kids to read each day this summer:

Make it fun. My grandkids asked me to bring some of their favorite books to the swimming pool so they could read to me while eating their snack after a swim lesson. They are excited to show me how well they read.

Be engaged. Although I did not attend back-to-school night, the grandkids made sure I sat with them as they read their stories to me. One granddaughter described how she is in a published book. Another wrote about having a funny grumpy grandpa and nice grandma who helps her.

Incorporate art. Each grandchild keeps a journal at my home. A favorite activity is having a sibling, cousin, or me draw a picture in their journal. Then they draw their version of the illustration and write a story about the picture. Favorite themes have been bloody horror and scary stories. Other themes include how to stories and fantasy adventures.

Take the kids to the library and relax while reading together various books. Our library sells children's books for \$1. I encourage them to purchase books that they would love to keep.

Research your family history by checking out relevant books about the country that your family immigrated from. Study the history of the communities you and your relatives have lived in throughout generations. Encourage your child to write a graphic novel. They love to create talking bubbles with illustrations. They can also develop a book of their favorite characters with a new adventure or storyline.

Explore having your child submit a creative writing story to the Highlights Magazine for kids.

After completing an art project, have your child

research and write a story about how they created their project and what they can do in the future to expand their skills. For example, our granddaughter loves to watch YouTube videos about how to draw specific animals. Then she researches specific books about the animal to understand their behaviors and their habitat

Help your child plan for a summer camp or family vacation by having them research places to visit and the history of specific activities. For example, a granddaughter will be traveling to New York, New York this summer. After reading and researching various activities, she is excited to visit the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, Central Park, and a Broadway play. She will also collect postcards and memorabilia to add to her scrapbook with a story about her travels.

Research the rules about a sport. My grandson is passionate about sailing and spends hours reading and researching all the safety regulations of sailing in the bay. He also must master how to safely prepare for and navigate a sailboat in various weather conditions.

Much success as you and your children incorporate reading into relevant daily life summertime activities.