
Summer Holiday Break

Should My Child Take a Break from Service?

Each Fall, parents ask:

“Why does my child lose skills over the summer that they seemed to know so well in the spring?”

“Why is it that my child needs to spend so much time reviewing everything again every September and October?”

According to recognized cognitive and education researchers, this happens most often to “students who can least afford to lose the academic gains they’ve achieved during the school year and who fall the farthest behind when they return to the classroom after a summer break away from instruction” (Mraz & Rasinski, 2007).

What Is Summer Learning Loss?

Summer learning loss, also known as “summer slide”, typically happens during the summer months when children are not receiving formal, organized instruction. Research has found that reading proficiency levels decline over the summer by up to 2 months’ worth of reading development (Boulay & Fairchild, 2002). In addition, students lose approximately 2.6 months of grade level equivalency in math skills (Peters, R., 2005). This is a significant loss, especially for an already-struggling student! As a result of summer learning loss, teachers may spend up to 6 weeks doing extensive reviewing after the summer. Students with learning challenges may need to spend even more time reviewing. Although the average student generally makes steady academic gains during the school year, s/he may decline slightly in performance during the summer. Reports are different, however, for students who perform below the average – their summer decline is greater. At eXL, we are concerned for the struggling students who can least afford to fall farther behind.

Why Does This Loss Occur?

Research suggests several reasons for skill decline throughout the summer months; no formal instruction, fewer opportunities to practice the reading/math/speech skills, less exposure to materials, lack of awareness on caregiver’s part of how to enhance the skill (this could include babysitters, camp staff, etc.).

What Can be Done to Curb Summer Learning Loss?

Children need the opportunity to participate in language-enriching activities all year round. This includes providing struggling students with exposure to formal instruction by professionals who are skilled at making learning enjoyable. Think of the summer as a chance to fill in some gaps and to help your child begin the next school year with increased confidence. As your child’s skills improve, s/he will be come more motivated and confident heading back to school in the fall.

Sometimes parents report feeling “guilty” having their child attend summer lessons. Experts agree that summer is an ideal time to work on developing, honing, and increasing your child’s academic skills. “Now is the time to take action for keeping the brain stimulated,” says Dr. Ruth Peters, clinical psychologist. “The trick is to balance summer fun with learning, which is a task worth tackling.”



Next Steps

We encourage you to speak to our eXL Educators & Therapists about a summer learning program suited to your child's needs.

A Fantastic Fall starts with Summer Success!

References:

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