

Parent Like a Pro: Slowing the Summer Slide



Posted by Cynthia O'Brien 6/11/19

Learning doesn't have to fall by the wayside just because school is out. Use these five parent pro tips to keep your child learning and having fun over the summer months.

1.) "Summer"ize your Summer Activities

After completing a fun activity with your child this summer – such as going to the zoo, park, pool, etc. – have your child tell you about it. Ask questions like:

- What happened?
- Who was there?
- Why was this significant?
- What was the most important thing that took place?

The more you engage with your child and allow them to give detailed accounts of activities, the stronger their summarizing and paraphrasing skills will be once they return to school.

2.) Count the Change

Keep your children's math game strong by allowing them to make cash purchases on your behalf. After each cash purchase, give the change to your children and have them count it. As they get more change, and they count that (addition), give them the task of buying something. Ask them if they have roughly enough (estimation). If they do, have them buy the item and calculate the change (subtraction). If they don't have enough, ask them to figure out how much more they will need (subtraction). Don't use cash often? No worries. After each purchase, have your child calculate the change they would get if they rounded the change up to the next dollar.

3.) Seek the Silver Screen

Beat the summer heat by making a day of going to the movies with your child at an air-conditioned theatre. Take your children to see at least two movies. Then, have them compare and contrast the plots, main characters, conflict, and resolution. You can also have them think of alternate endings or movie extensions. In addition to practicing critical thinking through comparison activities, they are also engaging in summarizing, evaluating, and synthesizing ideas – all high-level learning skills that can be constantly built upon – regardless of grade or age.

4.) Creature Feature

Create outdoor learning experiences over the summer with creatures and plants that surround you and your child. Give your student a container to catch an insect or hold a plant or creature. Then, help them research what they caught. Have them write down a few facts about the insect, plant, or creature – what it is, where it's found, how it grows, how to take care of it, etc. Finally, display the container with the written facts. Allow your children to practice the catch, report, and release activity several times

throughout the summer so they can constantly be learning about the environment around them.

5.) If You Build It, They Will Play

Keep your child's mind stimulated by exercising their imagination. A great activity to start with is to pretend that there is no electricity or batteries for electronic games. Using just the materials that can be found in your house, have them engineer their own game. They should create written rules that explain how the game is played and how to win. Next, play with them. This activity requires children to reimagine new ways to solve problems. And who knows, if your electricity does go out, you'll be entertained for hours!

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