

March 2019

Let's Focus on Families this Summer

A child's learning journey extends far beyond the school day as it takes the efforts of many to raise a reader. The *Kids & Family Reading Report™: Finding Their Story* showed us that frequent readers are far more likely to be surrounded by people who they perceive to enjoy reading (82%), vs. infrequent readers (34%). Educators are an influential part of that reading community, of course, but during the summer kids still need to be enveloped in encouragement to keep reading. This is so critical because on average, students perform one month behind where they left off in the spring,¹ and this learning loss, commonly referred to as the "summer slide," accounts for almost 85% of the reading achievement gap between lower- and higher-income students.²

Studies of two district-wide summer reading initiatives revealed that when families have the resources they need, we see increased reading and confidence among students, overwhelmingly positive sentiments from families, and fewer students experiencing a loss of skills while school is out.³ The same studies showed the incredible impact of reading 14 books over the summer. With family as a child's best resource for learning during a break, let's focus on summer as a time to provide families with the information, resources, and tools they need to support their children and help mitigate the summer slide.

Increase access to books

Access to high-quality, high-interest, authentic text and opportunities for choice over the summer is essential. We must do everything we can to gather books for kids to take home before they break for the summer. Results from the *Kids & Family Reading Report* show that frequent readers have an average of 139 books in their homes vs. 74 in infrequent readers' homes, so making sure that kids have access to more self-selected books while school is out means more time will be spent reading.

In addition, kids can enter summer reading minutes online and in turn, unlock book donations for communities in book deserts as part of our Scholastic Read-a-Palooza Summer Reading Challenge. Pre-registration begins April 8.

[scholastic.com/summer](https://www.scholastic.com/summer)

Bring people together around reading

There is such value in encouraging students and families to make social connections in literacy-rich environments. For instance, the power of reading aloud for all ages. Family literacy nights centered on an engaging read-aloud experience provide families with opportunities to show their kids that reading is important—and fun. Community partners can facilitate read-alouds and educators can be there to support. And when teachers take a different approach to summer learning by celebrating reading through social emotional learning as a group, literacy over the summer can be highly engaging.

Offer professional learning for educators

Extended learning for educators should also be a priority. Carve out time for high quality professional learning around family engagement to ensure that the year ahead begins with welcoming families to continue as partners in their children's learning.

Let's work together to make families a priority this summer so that learning continues year-round for everyone.

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¹Sloan McCombs, J., Augustine C. H., Schwartz, H.L., Bodilly, S.J., McInnis, B., Lichter, D.S. & Brown Cross, A. Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning. RAND Education and The Wallace Foundation. 2011.

²Allington, R., and A. McGill-Franzen. Why summer matters in the rich/poor achievement gap. 2009.

³Scholastic Research & Validation. (2018). *Empowering students and families to address summer reading loss in Greenville, SC and Stoughton, MA 2017* [White Paper]. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.