



The Clay Center for Young Healthy Minds

Shining light on mental health through education.

Kids work hard during the school year, so it might be tempting to let them off the hook for the summer. After all, kids need time to just be *kids*. However, kids can experience significant learning losses over the summer.

Research has shown that students, at most, lose about two months of grade equivalency in math skills. This means that teachers often spend the first four to eight weeks every fall reviewing concepts their students may have forgotten.

So, what's a parent to do? Here are some tips for parents to help their kids continue learning over the summer:

1. **Grow a garden.** Gardening teaches kids a lot about the world: botany, weather, earth science—all can be taught through growing vegetables and flowers. Vegetables are particularly good, as they also teach children where food comes from.
2. **Do a project together.** Think outside the box. Is there a household project that you've been putting off? Have your child work with you on it. Activities such as building a bookshelf or laying bathroom tile teach math concepts in a way children will remember.
3. **Find places to visit that teach children about something.** Whether you're going far away or staying at home this summer, there are places you can visit that are fun and informative. A visit to an ice cream factory or a glassblowing studio can be a fun and educational way for kids to learn more about how the world works.
4. **Help your child learn about the value of investing.** If you are the type of parent who follows the stock market, give your child or teen some money to invest. It can be as little as \$25.00 to start, but if you'd rather not invest real money, consider starting a virtual investment club.
5. **Have your child plan a family activity day.** Decide how much money you can spend and have your child research an activity you can all do together. This type of activity teaches research and executive function skills such as time management, organization, and budgeting.
6. **Start a book club**—even if it's just the two of you reading the same book at the same time. If you wish to start a book club with a larger group, try asking the parents of your child's friends!
7. **Take your child shopping using cash.** I'm always surprised at how increasingly common it is for teens who work in stores are not able to make change. Give your child \$5.00 and have them buy something at the store—and make sure they know how much change they should get after his purchase.
8. **If you're an active family** use a stopwatch to time yourselves biking, swimming, or running. Try to beat your time and graph your results! And, if you're not an active family, get active! Children not only lose academic knowledge over the summer, but also gain weight more rapidly when they are out of school for the summer months.

Thanks for all you do to support a young person in your life. It really makes a difference.
For more resources on managing relationships, visit us online: mghclaycenter.org/topic/healthy-living

