



EGA Parent Forum - Preventing the summer slide

10 ways to help your child continue to learn during the holiday.

The summer holidays can be either a learning wasteland or a learning paradise. The temptations are great for children to spend hours watching television or playing video games. With a bit of imagination and planning, the summer can be transformed into a time to stretch the mind, explore new hobbies, learn about responsibility and build on skills learned during the school year.

Keep the Learning Going

Research suggests that teachers spend a great deal of time every autumn reviewing and reteaching material that students have forgotten during the long summer break.

That doesn't mean that children should be doing math worksheets and studying and studying lists of facts and definitions to preserve the skills they have learned during the school year. Summer is the perfect time for children to discover that learning is fun and can happen anywhere. Learning is not something that only happens in places called schools and the whole family can enjoy some of the learning experiences.

Summer Learning Activities

Talking with other parents you will be able to add to this list more ways in which you can help your child continue their learning this summer:

- 1. The Summer Reading Challenge** runs each year at almost all UK libraries and is a brilliant and free way to encourage school children to read during the holidays. Children who read six books over the summer get a certificate at the end, with some schools handing these out in assembly at the start of term in September.

If your child is not a fan of fiction, encourage them to read newspapers, magazines or autobiographies.

- 2. EGA Holiday assignments and homework**

Your child's teachers will be giving out holiday homework for the different subjects they take. Set aside a quiet time and space for your child to work for a sustained period of time two or three times a week.

3. Visit a gallery or a museum

Living in London we very are fortunate to have so many galleries and museums on our door step and many of them are completely free. Did you know that even in Brixton we have the Windmill and the Cultural archives? And we are not very far from the places like the Horniman Museum and Dulwich Picture Gallery. When visiting some of the larger museums and galleries like the Tate, you don't need to try and cover all of it in a day. Pick an exhibition that sounds interesting and make a point of going back to see something else another day.

Older students can learn a lot from acting as the visit organiser for the day, sorting out the route on public transport, tickets, lunch and planning activities for the day.

4. Take responsibility

Every parent knows that there are so many ways in which young people can learn to be responsible. At home get them to help out with the shopping, do chores around the house, take over washing the car or start to learn how to do some small DIY jobs. Having a role in looking after younger siblings or older relatives really helps to build character. Older students might want to think about volunteering for local community organisations.

Getting paid for taking on a responsibility is great but remind your child that their real motivation for doing something should be building up the skills and personal qualities that will help them secure their preferred study opportunity or career in the future.

5. Plant a seed

What better way to learn the basics of science and how things grow than to plant your own garden? Even if you don't have a real garden space a balcony or a few pots indoors will do. Your child can start with seeds or small plants which can be bought quite cheaply in some supermarkets and DIY stores. Encourage your child to do their own research about what different plants need to grow. Vegetables are especially fun and educational to plant because your child will learn where food comes from and will also get to eat the end product.

6. Dust off the board games

In a computer age board games might seem a bit old fashioned but board games teach us a lot about working with others, building or leading a team. They are also good for improving communication skills. Many board games involve a bit of maths or can help improve reading, spelling, persuading or explaining. A good board game can also help build resilience in terms of wanting to get to the end of the game.

7. Burn off some energy

Make sure your child gets off the phone, off the couch and away from the computer this summer and burns off some energy. Local parks are great spaces for a game of football, volleyball, frisbee or tennis and swimming pools and lidos are not very expensive. Older children again can develop their sense of responsibility and leadership by organising sporting activities for younger siblings and friends.

8. Keep a diary

We are always asking students in school to be reflective about their learning and about their experiences. With this in mind invest in a notebook for your child or let them create their own. Get them to keep a record of summer 2016. Keeping photos, entry tickets for places that they have visited make a nice addition to a diary. Entries do not have to be long and could be completed two or three times a week. Noting something that they enjoyed about a particular day and something that they learnt or a new experience they had will make for some great memories and help them become more reflective learners.

9. Write or record a film review

If you and your child do end up on the couch at the end of a busy day watching movies writing or recording a film review is a valuable learning activity. A two or three minute clip summarising and saying what they enjoyed or disliked about the film will give them more confidence when expressing opinions. For a greater challenge they can try persuading someone that they should or should not watch the film.

10. Come dine with me!

Teach your child to go beyond boiling an egg, making toast or heating up a pizza. End your summer knowing that your child can use the kitchen safely and treat you to a “come dine with me” experience!