

## Why Summer Reading Programs Matter

### Summer Learning Loss

When young people aren't engaged in educational activities during the summer, they experience learning loss.<sup>1</sup>

Reading just 5 books over the summer can prevent summer learning loss.<sup>2</sup>

In a study of fourth graders, the students who read for fun every day scored the highest on reading assessment tests.<sup>3</sup>

Summer reading loss is cumulative. By the end of 6th grade, children who consistently lose reading skills over the summer will be two years behind their classmates.<sup>4</sup>

Students who participated in a summer reading program had better reading skills at the end of third grade and scored higher on standardized tests than students who did not participate.<sup>5</sup>

### The Achievement Gap

Children who have easy access to books read more books. The more children read, the better their fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.<sup>13</sup>

Children who don't read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to leave high school without a diploma than proficient readers. Summer Reading programs encourage young children and families to read regularly and libraries provide access to reading materials year round.<sup>6</sup>

Rich, engaging and free educational activities like summer reading programs are excellent tools to address the achievement gap. More than half of the achievement gap between lower and higher-income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities.<sup>8</sup>

Ensuring that books are available to any child at any time of the year is a necessary step towards closing the reading achievement gap.<sup>16</sup>

Children living in poverty are more likely to lose reading skills over the summer than children whose families are more affluent. Regular access to public libraries can make the difference between their summer setback and summer success.<sup>6,7</sup>



## Reading for Pleasure and Summer Reading Programs

Students read more when they can choose materials based on their own interests. Self-selection, access to books, and sharing books are essential factors in reading motivation and are key elements of summer reading programs.<sup>9,17</sup>

Students who participated in the public library summer reading program had better reading skills at the end of third grade and scored higher on the standards test than the students who did not participate.<sup>5</sup>

Free, voluntary reading is essential to helping students become better readers, writers, and spellers. Summer reading programs help increase young people's interest in reading.<sup>9,12</sup>

Summer reading programs encourage parents to read with their children and highlight the joys of reading aloud. Reading aloud to children at an early age is the most effective way to help them learn language and to communicate with the written word.<sup>4</sup>

Students who read widely and frequently are higher achievers than students who read rarely and narrowly.<sup>15</sup>

Students who read recreationally out-perform those who do not.<sup>9,11</sup>

Reading empowers critical thinking skills. It can enhance empathy and lead to greater understanding of people who are different from ourselves, and it can help us appreciate other points of view.<sup>14</sup>

Reading for pleasure is one of the building blocks needed for young people to grow into healthy, productive adults.<sup>10</sup>

Public libraries help young people feel safe, cared for, useful, and valued.<sup>9</sup>

For additional research on the importance of summer reading, please visit the [California Library Association's Summer Reading research page](#).

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