

# Summer Learning Philosophy

## Why is summer work important?

You may have heard that your mind is like a muscle. Like our muscles, our minds can retain recent learning by practicing for short periods of time several times a week. Your children have been working hard both at school and at home to gain new knowledge, concepts, and skills. This hard work can be lost when the information is not used for 6-8 weeks (less, even!). It is our desire for kids' minds to be actively engaged during the summer to avoid losing those newly learned skills. When summer regression is limited, students feel more confident returning to school in the fall.

## MATH

The best way to learn and review basic math skills is to use them naturally, in games or using math in day to day living. The younger the child the easier it is, but there are many fun ways to practice reading and math skills with older children too!

Use **driving time** to do mental math for the whole family. "What's 20 + 5 minus 10?" Adjust up or down so kids are getting about 85% correct. Make them harder as they get used to them. Have kids estimate time, distance, miles, etc. See who can predict what time it will be when we get home or to the ice cream store. Have kids figure out tips when eating out or predict the bill at the end. Let little ones put change together to buy things. Any time you use math, try to give them a chance as well.

ALWAYS use **shopping**, budgets, sale percentages, tips, tax, etc. as math lessons for older kids. Just give them a budget, like \$20, at a park, event, or store and then when they ask you to buy them something say "Yes, if you can afford it!". They will complain that they have to use their own money but they will be far more discriminating and will do a lot of practical math figuring out what to buy. If kids want to go on a day trip, ask them to calculate the cost of the day for your family. Include meals, admissions, gas, etc. If they can calculate the trip within a certain dollar amount, there could even be a reward!

Practice **telling time with an analog clock** whenever you can! You can ask your student the current time and ask them what time it will be in 20 minutes, 40 minutes, etc. This is still a necessary life skill, but even older students need help mastering it!

**Cooking** is perfect for fractions and practice with elapsed time. Take the time to allow your child to figure out how much flour to put in when you double the recipe. What time will the bake be done?

Once you get used to using cooking, travel, and regular home time for math review, it gets easier and easier to do.

## READING

Reading and writing can be practiced in fun ways, especially with young children. Create letters with a paintbrush and water, or (my kids' favorite) with shaving cream on a table. They can also be practiced by looking at signs. Look for all the letters of the alphabet or read license plates to determine who can spot the most states.

Practice makes perfect is certainly true for reading! There is also great value in being read to, listening to audio books, and even reading below one's grade level. Ask for students' help writing lists, reading lists to you, finding specific foods in the grocery story, reading directions for recipes, researching a day trip, etc.

Beware! All reading material is not created equal. It is the best and worst of times for kids' literature. To feel completely confident about your kids' choices, choose anything from Make Way for Books. Our friend and brain friendly reading specialist, Dr. Kevin Washburn and his wife Julia, have been running this company for years and they have personally read and reviewed each selection. They are exceptional educators and dynamic Christians. I feel confident assigning books from their selection to our students. The books are grouped by age and genre and there is a nice review. <https://www.mwfbooks.com/>

**Summer reading isn't just for chapter books though.** Visit your local library to see if there are other areas of interest your student would like to explore. Students who love to learn how to do new things, create new things, or investigate new topics in science or history can find all this and more in children's books. The possibilities for engaging the mind and keeping this 'muscle' in shape are endless!

Have a wonderfully happy and safe summer!