



Literacy Is a Family Affair



SUMMER LEARNING

Don't let your kids forget all they've learned this year! Discover how to stop the summer brain drain and make learning a fun part of your everyday routine.

I) KEEP THEM READING

◇ Get the Basics in Place

- i) *"Lay down the Law"* The equation is simple: no watering, no tomatoes. It's the same with a reading-reluctant reader. Read books over the summer or else! There is no option. Be the boss about this.
- ii) *"Let Them Read What They Want"* There is no option about reading but a myriad of choices as to what you can read. Student's interests change constantly – be aware. Track that ever-hopping spark of interest and be ready with a book that stokes that flame
- iii) *"Set a Target"* Reading about twenty minutes a day is reasonable for students in grades 3 and older. Picture pages do not count. Gradually increase the amount of reading to thirty minutes a day. This should mean that the target of 4-5 books read over the summer is reasonable.
- iv) *"Balance the Reading List"* Keep a number of high interest books available that can be interchanged with the more challenging titles
- v) *"Gather Resources"* Search the Internet, the library, and neighborhood bookstores for books. Keep your eyes peeled for kid-catching titles at garage sales, consignment shops, secondhand-book fairs, and flea markets
- vi) *"Spread the Books Around"* Put books in your child's favorite places so that s/he stumbles upon them at every turn. Put a few on the kitchen table, in the bathroom, in his bedroom, and in the attic where s/he retreats to get away from little sister. Keep a few books in the car.

◇ Participate

- vii) *"Read Yourself"* There is no way around it, modeling is the best way to let children know the value of reading. *Read your own books, your grandfather's books, and the cheesy romances your aunt sends you in the mail, magazines, newspapers, weekly local bulletins, cookbooks, and computer manuals. Keep your eyes moving across the printed word all summer long, and do it where your child can see you. If you have a reluctant reader in your life, make books on his reading level or on his summer reading list your top priority. Read around kids all the time.*
- viii) *"Read to Your Child"* even if they are in grade 7! *Do not make the mistake of asking him if he wants you to read to him. Do it spontaneously whenever you encounter an amazing, amusing, interesting, weird, wonderful, tragic story, or hilarious dialogue in the newspaper, a magazine, or one of his books piled on the steps leading to the attic. Inserting oral-reading intermissions into each summer day increases his vocabulary and visualization skills, stokes his imagination, and kicks up his comprehension, in spite of himself. So read to him*
- ix) *"Write book reviews"*. *Whenever you read a book that is on your child's reading list or one that is on his reading level, write a one-line book review and stick it under a magnet on the refrigerator door or the bathroom mirror. Note the title and author, and then make short but enticing comments about the characters, plot, author's intention, or writing style. Your review might simply read, "I can't believe the things Danny dreamed up to drive his parents crazy."*



- x) *“Link the book to the movie” Go to the library together and find a good book, and then explore it in different incarnations: watch the movie, listen to a cassette, or attend a children's theater presentation. Don't let your child get away with merely saying he liked the movie better than the book or vice versa. Dive into the details. See the following format:*

What's Better, the Book or the Movie?

Track a story's incarnations using the ASAP format below. Spend 20-30 minutes on this activity.

Add

What did the producer add to the story? A new character? A different setting? A different time period? A happy ending? A new ending?
 Did the producer add a romance where there was none?
 Was the movie told from another perspective?
 Was there a narrator?

Subtract

What did the producer leave out? A character? An important plot element like the death of a character? An important relationship in the past?
 Did the producer omit or skim over a detail about a character that was critical to understanding his or her motivation?

Amplify

Did the producer highlight certain character traits more than the author did? Was the character weaker, braver, dumber, wiser?
 Did the producer play up different plot elements?
 Was there more violence in the movie than there was in the book?

Personalize

How did the setting of the movie compare to the one Robert visualized?
 How did the characters on-screen compare to his imagination?
 Why does he think the producer chose to highlight certain traits in a character over another? Certain plot elements over others?
 What did the author do better than the producer?
 What did the producer do better than the author?
 How would Robert rewrite the script? Rewrite the ending?
 Find a wealth of classic books-turned-movies in films by Walt Disney.

2) SUMMER SCIENCE

GRADE 2-6 Second and third graders really get busy in science - learning to ask questions, make observations, and interact with materials. Scientific exploration continues in the fourth grade, and methodology becomes more important as your child progresses into middle school. Reinforce your child's science skills with these activities

a) **Back Yard Weather Station**

Materials needed:

- ◇ *Thermometer: To record temperature.*
- ◇ *Rain Gauge: To measure rainfall.*
- ◇ *Wind/Weather Vane: To record wind direction.*
- ◇ *Barometer: To measure atmospheric pressure.*
- ◇ *Anemometer: To measure wind speed.*
- ◇ *Psychrometer/Hygrometer: To measure relative humidity.*
- ◇ *Journal: To record your readings and data.*

Ever think of building a backyard weather station with your kids? It's fun, easy, and makes a great family project! Your kids will learn the basics of scientific observation and record-keeping while satisfying their natural curiosity about weather. A weather station is a set of devices for measuring elements like temperature, rainfall, wind speed, and pressure. You can buy these devices in your local hardware store, or you can make them from scratch using common materials found around the house.

A Few Notes on Record-Keeping:

Decide which weather events and data you want to record and how often you want to take measurements (once a day, twice a day, etc.). The more detailed and accurate your measurements, the more specific your picture of the patterns will become. A ruled notebook or ledger is an ideal place to record the measurements. List measurement types down the side (one event per line) and print the dates across the top to create a simple grid sheet.

Hint: Numerical data can also be entered into a simple spreadsheet-type program and manipulated to create impressive visual charts and graphs to display data. Your kids can also take a crack at creating a wall chart to create a stunning data display. It would make a great science project or extra-credit work in any earth science course.



GRADE JK-I Start your child on the road to scientific understanding with these skill-builders. The focus for children in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade should be on observation and natural curiosity.

b) **Flower and Leaf Press**

Materials needed:

- ◇ Old phone book
- ◇ Collection of colorful leaves, grasses, flowers, herbs
- ◇ Craft glue
- ◇ Plain note cards/postcards/watercolor paper

What to Do:

Step One: Take a nature walk with your kids on a clear, dry day. Collect any attractive flowers, leaves, grasses, and herbs.

Step Two: At home, separate each stalk or blossom. Place each one separately between the pages of the phone book, spacing them well apart from each other.

Step Three: Place the phone book in a cool, dry place for a week to ten days. Your leaves will then be totally dry and ready for use.

Step Four: Carefully apply craft glue, just a dab, to the back of your dried leaf or flower.

Step Five: Center it on a note card for a single design or place several as a collage on a sheet of watercolor paper, which can later be framed.

Step Six: Your leaf press can be used over and over again. Flowers can be stored in them for several months.

Did You Know?

In Victorian times people planted decorative gardens and often preserved their herbs and flowers in a leaf press. Certain flowers were thought to have specific qualities: rosemary for remembrance; roses for undying love; lavender for devotion; oak leaves for strength. A note card that used the fragrant language of flowers conveyed more than words.

3) Summer Math

a) Summer Spending

Teach Your Kids the Value of Money

Summer fun doesn't need to burn through your family's cash. Teach your kids the value of money by making them aware of the price of movie tickets, a day at the amusement park, or that must-have summer outfit. The following tips will get your kids thinking about smart spending -- and saving -- habits.

Create a Budget

For the Younger Child: Your child can create a piggybank by decorating a shoebox with pictures describing all the ways she'd love to spend her money this summer. Pictures cut out of magazines can symbolize that trip to the amusement park or that great new bathing suit she wants to buy. Talk with her about the cost of these outings and purchases and the money she'll have to save to afford them. She can then use her piggybank to start saving.

For the Older Child: Decide together with your child on a movie, ballgame, or amusement park outing. Then talk about how much money you should budget for the outing, including the money you will need for your own ticket and for lunch/dinner if the event will take place during a mealtime.

Before taking the outing, tell your child that it's his choice either to go on the outing, or to spend the same amount of money on something he wants (that cool T-shirt, baseball cap, or CD-ROM).

Saving Incentives

Give your child an extra incentive to save money, either in her shoebox piggybank (younger child) or a real bank account (older child), by offering to match her savings in some proportion. Adding 25 percent, 50 percent or even 100 percent to her savings will make her decision to save an attractive alternative to spending the money -- whether from allowance or earnings -- on those tempting impulse purchases.



4) **SUMMER ART**

a) **Clothes Line Art Show**

Materials needed:

- ◇ Paper, crayons, colored pencils, stickers, etc.
- ◇ A clothesline or rope
- ◇ Clothespins
- ◇ Kid-made art: paintings, drawings, photos, collages, and any lightweight works of art
- ◇ Snacks

Want to air out your kids' creativity? What better way than to host a neighborhood art show? This is a good activity for an afternoon. You want to have enough time for the art to be seen and enjoyed.

The Invitations

Pick a day and time for the show at least a week ahead, so everyone has time to make some art. The invitation should include the names of the hosts, the address, the date, the time, and what it's all about. You can use the same invitation for artists and parents. Just explain that artists are to show up a half hour early to hang their art. Since you are inviting people to an art show, get creative right from the start. Glue ransom note style cutout letters on a paper plate, finger paint on a grocery bag, or circle letters on a page of the newspaper.

When the invitations are ready, deliver them.

The Show

This is the easy part. Just hang the clothesline between two trees or porch posts (have a backup place indoors in case of rain). Get the snacks ready. Hang your artwork with the clothespins. As the other artists show up, have them hang theirs. When the guests arrive, serve the snacks, and bask in the talent of the neighborhood artists!

Optional Art Sale

Decide ahead of time whether the art is for sale and if so, what price you will charge per piece and where the money will go. Should it be divided among the artists? Should it go to a local charity? Or how about a neighborhood collection of art supplies, now that every house has an artist?

b) **Natural Art**

Materials needed:

- ◇ Clean, dry twigs of varying heights, lengths
- ◇ A roll of mural paper or even a roll of unused wallpaper
- ◇ Scissors to cut the mural paper to the desired length
- ◇ Acrylic paints and a brush
- ◇ Pine needles; tiny pinecones; little sticks/twigs to decorate edges
- ◇ White glue
- ◇ Raffia or yarn for the hanger

What to Do:

Step One: Decide how large you want your mural to be. Lay your paper out lengthwise on a long table or the floor; be sure to lay it over newspaper in case of a spill. Then lay out your paints before you go on your walk.

Step Two: Take a walk in a nearby park or woods and begin collecting twigs of varying lengths; acorns, small pinecones, a handful of pine needles, and some small sticks.

Step Three: When you get home after your walk, clean and dry your twigs. Paint one side of a twig and lay it on the mural/wallpaper to leave a "print"; continue with remaining twigs. Stagger the prints into bunches, leaving space between each "set".

Step Four: Glue the smaller twigs, pinecones, and needles lengthwise along the edges to give the mural a "finished" edge.

Step Five: Braid or smooth out the raffia stings or yarn and knot at either end. Staple the string to the back/top of the mural with a stapler to use as a hanger.

Step Six: Display the mural

