



Summertime Activities

Summer Reading

Summer shouldn't mean taking a break from learning, especially reading. Studies show that most students experience a loss of reading skills over the summer months, but children who continue to read actually gain skills!

Efforts should be made during the summer to help children sustain reading skills, practice reading and read for enjoyment. Taking the time to read with children can help you evaluate their reading skills.

Educators consider summer reading very important in developing life-long reading habits, in maintaining literacy skills and in promoting reading for pleasure. Studies have repeatedly shown that children who continue to read during the summer months perform better when school resumes in the fall.

(Based on a feature article for Classroom Connect)

Why Do Summer Reading?

It Increases:

- Reading Level
- Visualization Skills
- Language Skills
- Thinking Skills
- Vocabulary

Some Tips for Summer Reading:

- **Have plenty of books, books on tape, magazines and other reading material around.**
- **Get children their own library card**
- **Help them select books on topics they are interested in and on their reading level**
- **Connect reading with summer activities.** A simple rule of thumb for helping children select books at their reading level is to have them choose a page in the book (not the first page) and read it. If they don't know five or more of the words, then the book is too hard for pleasure reading
- **Connect reading with other summer activities.** For example, read books about places you will go over the summer.
- **Set goals and reward reading.**
- **Make reading together fun and memorable**
- **Read it, then do it.** Does the child want to learn magic tricks? Juggling? Computer games? There's sure to be a book that can help. Have them read the instructions and give it a try!

Learning with Comic Strips

Comic strip characters can help children become a better reader, writer and logical thinker.

Once Upon a Time.....

Beginning readers will enjoy using the comic's easy-to-follow story telling guides. They can tell about what's happening in each panel, building a story as they go from scene to scene.

In selecting a strip for this activity, try to find one where there is plenty of action and the pictures, not the dialogue, carry the story.

Comics also make wonderful read-aloud material. Occasionally, you may want to cover the last panel of a strip and have children guess the conclusion. Encouraging them to anticipate events provides practice in perhaps the most important of all reading skills. To make predictions, children must clearly and logically think through what just happened-and that is the key to reading comprehension.

Puzzles and Riddles.....

To help develop logical skills, cut a comic strip apart into separate panels. While the panes are still in order, number them on the back in sequence. After you mix the order of panels, ask children to reconstruct the original sequence. The number on the back can serve as an answer key, but any order the child presents that makes sense should be considered correct.

Some comic strips use a play-on-words to get laughs. A favorite is the rhyming riddle: What's Garfield called when he's put on too much weight? Answer: Fat Cat. These are fun to solve, but they're even more fun (and worthwhile) to invent. The only rule is that the riddle must be answered with a two-word rhyme. It's easiest to start with the answer (Bear chair) and work back to the definition (What does a grizzly sit on?). Involve the whole classroom!



Reading Bargains

Don't throw away those mail order catalogs; they are great tools for sharpening a child's reading skills. Begin by letting the children browse through the toys, sporting goods or clothing sections-whatever most interests them. Point out how every item is a model of clear, concise writing-with the maximum packed into a minimum amount of space. Have each child cut out one item that most interest them. Challenge them to write their own description based on the picture and their imagination. Another fun activity is to ask critical reading questions, such as:
According to the description, which sweater on page 112 would be easiest and least expensive to clean? On page 36, does electronic game A require batteries to be purchased? How does game A differ from game B? Do you really think item F is worth ten dollars more than item G? What feature does F have that G does not have?

Discovering Science

Young children are natural scientist; fascinated by the world around them and eager to explore its mysteries. Encourage children to do what comes naturally-to wonder and explore. Build a collection of science "tricks" and surprises.

Science Trick:

Mix salt and pepper into a pile. Say that you have to look especially nice for this demonstration (don't be afraid to be dramatic!). Pull out your "magic" comb and pass it through your hair/ then "command" the pepper to leave the pile. As if by magic, much of the pepper will jump to the comb. In fact the comb picks up electrons and becomes negatively charged when you pass it through your hair. The salt and pepper are now attracted to the comb. But since pepper is lighter than salt, it flies out first.

Recipes for Healthy Snacks and Learning

Concocting appealing alternatives to junk food is an ideal educational activity! Creating recipes, measuring out ingredients, writing down instructions so that the recipe can be saved and repeated are all tasks that develop important skills.

Here is a great recipe developed by nutrition expert and author, Sharon Elliot:

Orange Juggle

1 T gelatin
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
 $\frac{3}{4}$ canned crushed pineapple (drained)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pineapple juice from can
 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ cup frozen orange juice concentrate

Add gelatin to water. Heat to dissolve gelatin completely. Stir in other ingredients in order listed.

Refrigerate to set. Stir mixture when it becomes syrupy to distribute pineapple, or leave as is for layered juggle.

Mix imagination with Academic Skills:

When creating your own "jellied juggle", let children know that it's OK to experiment. For example, substitute yogurt, ricotta or cottage cheese for the pineapple juice. Add lemon, cinnamon, chopped nuts or fruit bits.

