How Should Parents Address the Summer Slide?

By Educator Barnes – February 28, 2021

Tomorrow is the first day of March. My sons will wrap up the school year before May ends, so I am already thinking about summer and what they need. In education, talks of summer typically centers around the summer slide which is a phrase to describe learning loss that takes place during the summer. This is of great concern for many parents and educators because of the coronavirus pandemic. Some students are struggling in the remote learning or hybrid learning environment which is why the summer seems like a perfect opportunity for learning acceleration or an opportunity to close gaps. What should parents do?

As much as I am concerned about my sons' education, I must first acknowledge that we are living through a pandemic. It is a crisis and during a crisis it is okay to not meet normal expectations. It is also okay to try to figure out how to move forward and achieve some academic goals.

I want my sons to learn during the summer, but I also want them to be kids and have some fun. Parents should find one or two areas to address. Typically, I have my sons read during the summer, and they participate in the library reading program. I also plan to have them work on their math skills. This does not have to be worksheet. Having them help me double a recipe is a way to practice these skills or using a program like XtraMath for a short time can help with math facts automaticity.

Some parents may want to send their children to summer school to ensure their children don't fall prey to the summer slide. What is most important is that children have the chance to be children. It is important to access children's mental health in addition to worrying about academics.

I truly believe the kids will be alright. No, we do not want students to fall so far behind that they can't get caught up, but we also don't want to stress out or overwhelm children by consuming their summer with academics. Balance is needed when addressing the summer slide.