



Make Sure Your Children Relax and Read This Summer

By Educator Barnes – May 18, 2021

As the school year winds to a close, typically educators begin talking about the summer slide and how to prevent it. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, learning loss has become a prominent focus in schools. If we are being real, too many students were behind before the pandemic hit. Then, the pandemic exacerbated and widened the learning gaps. Even for

students who were on grade level and stayed relatively well academically, part of the summer should be used as a time for learning.

The summer should not be only focused on combating learning loss or preventing the summer slide. It should also include relaxation and fun. The pandemic has taken an emotional toll of students, teachers, and caregivers. Children need a break. Any learning that is happening should be fun and full of choice. Since I have been both an English teacher and literacy coach for part of my career, of course, I am going to focus on reading.

I strongly advocate for summer reading programs. First, these programs give students freedom and choice. Unfortunately, schools can be a place where the love of reading dies. That love typically begins to erode when teachers and librarians put restrictions on what students can read. Students only improve as readers by having opportunities to read. Restrictions, such as banning graphic novels, could cause students to not want to read at all. Summer reading should be full of choice.

Personally, I want students to be intrinsically motivated to read, but the reality is many students enjoy some extrinsic motivation. Most summer reading programs reward children with food incentives, discounts to local places, toys, and even books. These incentives bring fun as students are reading for enjoyment.

If you are looking for a particular summer reading program, first start with your children's school. Most of the time schools have a reading calendar or a program where students can get books throughout the summer.

The next place to look is the public library. The Indianapolis Public Library summer reading program registration is already open. This year's theme is Discover! The program runs from June 7 – July 31. Another bonus is this program even includes adults. Families can go to www.indypl.org/srp.

Another reading program is Camp BOOK IT! I am an 80s baby, so I was all about the BOOK IT! reading program. Who does not want to read, and earn a pizza? Sounds like a win-win situation.

Whether it is a program at your local library, Camp BOOK IT!, or buying books from a bookstore, children should be reading, relaxing, and having fun this summer!