



Literacy Tips for Families

ISLAND CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Supporting Students at Home
with Reading



Summer Reading Fun

Keep the learning faucet on!

By taking steps to keep your child's mind active over the summer, you can help them stay ahead academically and avoid the summer slide. Here are some ideas to try:

Read with your child every day, and make sure that your child has access to books at home.

Visit the library often, and take advantage of any programs they offer. Libraries are now doing much more than story time hour — they also offer movie nights, reading contests, scavenger hunts, maker labs, and more.

Give kids a chance to exercise different writing muscles — from poetry to persuasive writing. Browse these ideas from our sister project, Start with a Book: [Writing Ideas for Kids](#) ([opens in a new window](#)).

Set aside some time each day for **educational activities**, such as puzzles and word or prediction games.

Connect what kids are reading to hands-on activities — such as paper crafts, model-making, simple science experiments, cooking, map-making, or collection boxes. Our sister project, [Start with a Book \(opens in a new window\)](#), has lots of kid-friendly topics to explore.

If you are able, **enroll your child** in a community summer camp or program that mixes fun with academic enrichment.

Encourage family reading time, where everyone gathers together to read independently (or for pre-readers, look at picture books silently). When your child sees you reading, it shows that you enjoy reading!

Talk to your child about books. Ask about the books they are reading, and share your own thoughts and ideas about books. This can help to spark conversations about books and encourage your child to think critically about what they are reading.

Consider starting a kid's book club. Book clubs can strengthen the social-emotional aspect of reading — sharing favorite books and authors, or talking about characters that reflect your own life or help you understand someone else's. The key is to keep the club as kid-centered as possible. These tips from NEA's Read Across America can help: [Book Club Basics](#).

Explore local places to visit that reinforce what your child is reading about. If it's bugs and birds, take a trip to your local nature center. If it's stars and planets, find out where the closest planetarium is and sit in on a show. If it's music, look for a free outdoor summer concert series nearby.

Make reading fun! Create a reading nook or tent, listen to audiobooks, or read while doing other activities such as drawing or playing games.

Adapted from [Readingrockets.org](https://www.readingrockets.org)

English Language Learner Corner

Why Reading to Your Kids in Your Home Language Will Help Them Become Better Readers

As a parent, you may be wondering whether you should be reading to your children in Spanish or English. You may be afraid that reading to them in Spanish will confuse them as they try to learn English, and that it will make it harder for them to read in English. You may also be concerned that you shouldn't read to them in English if you don't feel comfortable with your own English skills.

While it is important to encourage and support your child's efforts to learn English, research shows that children who are read to in their native language (such as Spanish) will have an easier time learning to read in their second language (such as English). The benefits are even greater for children who learn to read first in their native language. This means that by developing your child's literacy skills in Spanish, you will be making it easier for them to learn to speak, read, and write English in the future. This article provides information about the research done on this topic, and suggestions of ways that you can help your child develop his or her literacy skills in your family's native language.

Use Summer Fun to Build Background Knowledge

Step 1: Take summer field trips

Go to the park, the zoo, the aquarium, a sports event, a historical landmark, or a children's museum. Go on a hike or to a natural attraction in your area. When you're indoors, watch a TV program about volcanoes or the rainforest or marsupials, or use the web to take a virtual field trip to a faraway place.

Step 2: Talk about it

Talk about the plants and animals you see, or the rules of a game, or the history of your town, or the new things you learned. Ask questions that get your child to talk, like "If you could be one of those animals we saw today, which one would you be?" or "Why do you think those boulders were shaped like that?"

Step 3: Follow up with a book

Find out what interests your child, and visit the library to get more information. Check out books about butterflies or basketball players or whatever caught your child's attention. Encourage their learning with comments like, "That was cool to see the inside of a computer at the museum today. Let's learn more about that."

You could even have your children create their own book, with photos or illustrations of your activity and their own commentary. This is great writing practice and makes a wonderful summer memory book.

Building background knowledge isn't just fun, it's also a great way to spend your summer!

By [Reading Rockets](#)