

7 Tips to Motivate Children During the Summer Months

With summer and the end of school approaching, now is the perfect time to create a plan that will help motivate children to continue learning during the warmer months ahead. Studies show that summer break often leads to a loss of learning, setting kids behind in a variety of subjects when school starts again in the fall. Here are a few simple ideas for parents to help motivate children to continue learning and avoid the summer brain drain.

Have a Plan

Think about what you would like to help your child learn in the next few months and create an action plan. Ask your child's teacher for suggestions or look over past report cards for ideas. Don't just look at things from an academic angle; summer is a great time to work on building life skills like learning to ride a bike or basic cooking.



Be sure to include your child in the process. Ask them what they would like to learn more about and make it part of the plan. For example, if your child is interested in taking karate lessons look into enrolling them in a class for the summer. If there are certain subjects that interest them, check out books from the library or purchase them from a bookstore.

Make it Fun

Sometimes the best way to learn is to sneak learning into a fun activity. For example, using an online reading program like StudyDog makes the process of learning to read both fun and easy. StudyDog incorporates interactive games and entertaining characters to make reading more enjoyable. The program adjusts to each child's reading needs, while keeping parents abreast of their progress with real-time reporting.

Create a Routine

Creating a consistent routine will give your child something to look forward to each day. For example, each morning you could have them spend 15 minutes learning from a workbook and then spend 15 minutes reading each evening. Fitting in little chunks of learning throughout the day will add up by the end of summer and will help keep your child's mind actively engaged.

Build Anticipation

Create a list of learning activities and make a goal to complete one each day. Make it visual by putting the activities into a format like a calendar or on paper strips that can be drawn from a jar. Keep the activities fun but educational to help build anticipation for what kids will do next. The activities can be as simple as writing a letter, finishing a puzzle or reading a new book.

Give Rewards

A reward system can be a great way to motivate children to reach various goals. Points, fake money or stickers can be given for completing various tasks. For example, 10 points could be awarded for finishing a new book or five points for going to piano lessons. Once the child reaches a certain number of points they can exchange them for a prize or privilege. This can vary from picking out a new toy to having a sleep over to going to a movie.

Keep it Social

Involve grandparents, aunts, uncles and family friends in learning activities to help motivate kids. Learning with someone who isn't a parent or teacher often helps encourage kids or gives them a new perspective. If they live far away, use a program like Skype or make a phone call. Even through the distance they can still enjoy activities like reading together, writing letters or singing songs.

Praise the Effort

Be sure to praise your child's effort for a job well done, for working hard and for learning something new. Taking this approach costs nothing and can be a helpful motivator for learning and building self-esteem.