



President's Reflections

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Preventing the Summer Slide

My mother sternly told us, “You will read for at least thirty minutes after lunch every day during the summer months.” We groaned and fussed about how unfair it was, but we read every day after lunch all summer long throughout elementary school. In fact, this chore eventually turned into a love of reading for me, and for my brothers and sister. Was my mother a sadist or did she, along with my elementary school, understand instinctively what researchers have aptly named, the “Summer Slide”?

The “Summer Slide” is the tendency for students to lose achievement gains during the summer months that they had obtained the previous school year. Especially impacted for students is the loss of reading skills in the younger grade students during the summer months. The research shows that some children fall behind an average of 2 months in reading during the summer months. Research has also indicated that the summer slide accumulates over the years; or in other words, the loss can build over time.

The trick that my mother used of reading every day in our household during the summer months was spot on when it comes to the educational research. Engaging students in educational activities during the summer months helps prevent the “Summer Slide”. So what should you do as a parent?

For elementary and middle school students:

- Access to books is very beneficial. Summer reading programs can make all the difference for our children. All students can benefit from a trip to our local library.
- Go to summer reading programs at the public library
- Parents of younger students can create a reading list with their children and then reward the child when they’ve read the entire list.
- Check out Reading Skills and Speed Reading Programs on the Norwalk Catholic School website under guidance department.
- Ask your student’s teacher for a helpful list of activities and books to be completed over the summer.

For high school students:

- Go to the library for an excellent review of the literature. From the many books focused on preparation for ACT and SAT tests to practice math problems; an assortment is available for student use.
- Many teachers provide summer reading lists for students so they might enhance their abilities over the summer time.
- Simply taking time to read both fiction and non-fiction will stimulate the mind to help prevent the “Summer Slide”.

Summer should be a time to relax but it is important to make time to read and even study. Research clearly demonstrates that reading 4-6 books during the summer months will avert the loss of academic gains achieved in the previous year. Parents really need to help their children with a summer program.

I still remember my mom calling, “It’s time to do your reading” and it really did make all the difference.

**The NCS Library, Kerri Hosang, has compiled a Summer Reading List for Kindergarten through 12th Grade. You can find this list on the school website, www.NorwalkCatholicSchool.org and click on any of the building’s main school pages (i.e. ECC, Elem, JH/HS). There is also information about InfOhio’s 2015 Beach Bags for grades K-3 and the first-ever Camp INFOhio for grades 4-6. Check is out!*