



Like most kids, I couldn't wait for summer vacation when I was young. As a dyslexic student, school was my greatest stressor, and that fact only made my longing for summer break more intense. During my carefree summer months, I rode my bike, climbed trees, went swimming, played ball with friends, went exploring constantly, fished, caught frogs, and went on a family vacation. I felt like a normal kid. The last thing on my mind was reading books: neither I, nor my parents, thought about school, reading, or the need to maintain what I'd struggled so hard to learn during the school season.

The truth is, all children, dyslexic or not, face an unintended consequence of the much-anticipated summer break from school: a "summer slide," or learning loss. A 2011 RAND study revealed that students lose an average of 1–2 months of learning progress every summer, and the effects are cumulative. Without a plan for intervention, educational losses compound summer after summer. According to the study, 20% of third-graders couldn't read at grade level, and by the eighth grade, the number of students reading below grade level had increased to 33%. The accumulation of several summers' worth of reading loss is a big factor.

Here's the thing: even small efforts to counteract the summer reading slide bring big returns. The threshold seems to be at least five books. In other words, if your child reads *at least* that amount this summer, he or she can prevent the loss of hard-won reading skills.

What could a plan for your child this summer look like?

- Encourage an interest in reading. Talk with your child and discover what their current interests are. Ask a lot of "why" questions, and then find the answer together through reading. Using online resources counts too: it's still reading.
- Use online tools such as <http://pbskids.org/games/reading/>, <http://www.read.gov/kids/>, <https://www.tween.com> and for older kids, <https://www.goodreads.com/> and <https://litpick.com/>. These interactive platforms allow your child to read, comment on, and rate the books on their reading list while interacting with friends.

- Compounding (dis)Interest: Don't Let the Summer Reading Slide Stall Your Child's Literacy
- 5 Fun Ways to Teach Your Kids About Money: Part 1
- CEOMOM Podcast: Episode 6 – Teaching Your Daughters About Money With Kris Miller – Part II

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- Check your local library for summer reading programs and activities. Some even have author visits!
- If your child is a struggling reader, ask about free audiobooks at your local library, or use <https://www.bookshare.org/cms/> to give them free access to audiobooks. And don't miss the [Sir Kaye series on audiobook](#)—they're fan favorites!
- Make it fun and foster a sense of achievement by using gold stars, colored stickers, or other marks of completion that they can keep on the fridge, hang in their room, or post online.
- Read books together. You might be thinking: my kid is in school now, so they should be practicing their own reading skills, not having me do the reading. But according to reading expert Faith Borkowsky, nothing could be farther from the truth. In her [blog](#), she lists 5 reasons why parents should continue to read with their children as long as possible. Not reading to your child can send the wrong message, as if you are saying, "You are in school, not me. If you HAVE TO READ, then go and read. That's behind me now." Reading shouldn't be seen by kids as a dreaded household chore like cleaning their room, and when kids see you enjoying reading personally and sharing that enjoyment with them, they get the message that it's an enjoyable priority, not something odious.



By personalizing the reading experience, your child can *still* look forward to a summer full of fun and adventure while growing – rather than stunting – their literacy. Instead of falling behind, by the time summer comes to an end, they will be ready to head back to school happy and ahead of the game.

Don M. Winn is a multiple award-winning children's author of eleven picture books and four children's novels.

Winn has been writing for over 20 years. After beginning with poetry, he moved on to writing children's picture books. Almost immediately, his growing young readers begged for chapter books, which led to the creation of the Sir Kaye series. As a dyslexic, who well knows the challenge of learning to love to read, Winn's goal is to write books that are so engaging they will entice even the most reluctant or struggling reader. Winn lives in Round Rock, Texas.

Find out more at www.donwinn.com and connect with the author on:

[Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [Goodreads](#), [Pinterest](#), and his [Blog](#). *The Eldridge Conspiracy* is available for purchase on [Amazon](#).

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