

## How Teachers And Parents Can Work Together To Combat Summer Slide

(NAPSA)—Summer vacations can be a wonderful time to relax and enjoy warm weather, summer camps and family vacations. However, these lengthy gaps spent away from the educational environment could negatively impact a student's academic progress. Researchers who study education call this phenomenon “summer slide”—the tendency for students to lose some of the academic gains they made during the previous school year once summer arrives, when they are no longer in a structured academic environment.

Time away from school does not just mean progress stops. For many students, they may lose some of the progress they have made. By fifth grade, summer learning loss can leave students 2.5 to three years behind their peers. Summer learning loss in the elementary school years alone accounts for at least half of the ninth-grade reading achievement gap.

One of the best ways to combat the summer slide is a team effort made by teachers, parents and students themselves. However, Americans have mixed feelings about summer slide, as well as how to address it. In a recent University of Phoenix® College of Education survey of American adults, 61 percent of respondents agree that it is important that children be involved in an educational summer program while school is out during summer break. However, when asked whether it is appropriate for schools to provide assignments for students to complete while school is out on summer break, nearly half of respondents (48 percent) said that it is not appropriate, while only 37 percent said it is appropriate.

“Given these statistics, it may seem challenging to win everyone over to the idea of being proactive about preventing summer slide,” said Pamela Roggeman, Ed.D., academic dean for University of Phoenix College of Education. “But there are many activities and resources that teachers can provide to students and their parents during the summer months that don't include a heavy volume of homework or summer school.”

Dr. Roggeman provides the following tips to help teachers communicate with parents in motivating their students this season:

**1. Summer reading.** Summer reading is helpful for students to maintain and continue building their reading skills. Teachers should consider assigning books that aren't simply homework



**Parents, teachers and students can combat the “summer slide” in knowledge.**

based, but will make the child think on a much larger level.

**2. Keep an activity journal.** Encourage students to start keeping a journal to regularly document their activities throughout the summer. Give guidelines about what they can think about or consider writing about, and build in the potential for them to use this journal to write a summary at the start of the new school year.

**3. Create a parent/student activity calendar.** Provide parents with information for educational camps and structured social activities that parents can participate in with their children. Encourage parents to take part in these activities wherever possible to make it more fun for children and make it feel less like “homework.”

**4. Capitalize on screen time.** Challenge students to teach their parents about what they have learned from time spent on videos, podcasts and social media accounts.

**5. Create a matching agreement.** For every hour spent in front of a screen entertaining themselves by playing video games or watching Netflix, children should match that time with time spent on a learning activity. There are a multitude of educational online options varying from math games to improving keyboarding skills suited perfectly for this purpose.

**6. Set learning self-improvement goals.** These goals can include number of books read, minutes of math tutorials a day, or pages written. Then agree on a fun reward for goals attained.

Summer does not have to be a time when children fall behind in their academic development. Teachers, along with parents, with the tips listed above, can help students stay engaged and keep their minds sharp even when not in school.

1 <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec11/vol69/num04/Slowing-the-Summer-Slide.aspx>

2 Ibid.

3 <http://www.summerlearning.org/>

4 <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/ncase-summer-learning-brief.pdf>

5 This poll was conducted from June 15-19, 2017, among a national sample of 2,528 adults. E-interviews were conducted online and the data were weighted to approximate a target sample of adults based on age, race/ethnicity, gender, educational attainment and region. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus two percentage points.