

Dear Educator,

We know that for students, summer can be a season full of learning opportunities...or learning losses. Research confirms that students who don't engage in educational activities over the summer fall behind. Students that don't read over the summer typically score lower or stagnate on reading comprehension tests when they return to school. Many teachers tell us that they can see the results of the "summer slide" every fall.

According to a [study by Dr. Karl Alexander](#) of Johns Hopkins University, the greater concern is that these learning losses are cumulative for some kids, creating a wider gap each year between more advantaged and less advantaged students. By the time a struggling reader reaches middle school, summer reading losses may have accumulated to more than a two-year lag.

Jimmy Kim in his seminal study "Summer Reading and the Ethnic Achievement Gap" found that by reading four or five age-appropriate books during the summer, elementary students can avoid reading achievement losses that normally occur over those months, *regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic level, or previous achievement*. You can access the National Center for Summer Learning's research brief on Kim's study, as well as others that explain these findings in more detail at www.summerlearning.org/research.

So what can you do? Encourage kids to **read four or more** books this summer!

This summer, we're encouraging you to get students reading with the **Scholastic Summer Challenge**, a FREE summer-long literacy program designed to motivate all children to read four or more books. The web-based campaign helps kids find great books to read and provides a fun, multi-media platform for them to discover new authors, talk about books with other kids, and keep them motivated to read all summer long. They'll even make a difference by helping other children in need through Save the Children's U.S. programs.

Here's how you can help your students keep their reading and learning skills sharp:

- Give them access to books. Send them home with books to keep, or give them an age-appropriate [book list](#).
- Get parents involved. You can share the importance of summer reading by downloading [this letter](#) to send home. Don't forget the book list!
- Encourage kids to choose the books that *they* want to read. Keep it fun!
- Remind your students about the free books—and Internet access—that may be available at their local library.

Go to www.scholastic.com/summer for more summer reading resources, and encourage your students to join the Scholastic Summer Challenge! For more information about summer learning, including professional development opportunities, visit: www.summerlearning.org.

Have a great summer, and happy reading!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Francie Alexander".

Francie Alexander
Chief Academic Officer
Scholastic Inc.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Fairchild".

Ron Fairchild
Executive Director
National Center for Summer Learning