

Expert gives tips on how to prevent summer brain drain

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Summer is a time when most students are able to relax and have fun away from the classroom, but it also can be a time when important lessons learned during the year are forgotten. A Baylor College of

Medicine expert has some tips on how to prevent summer brain drain across different age groups.

"During [summer](#) kids can get out of the habit and the discipline of engaging in their regular educational activities. They most likely aren't having daily reading, writing and math lessons so sometimes they forget what they learned during the year because they are not using these skills, something we refer to as summer brain drain," said Dr. James Bray, associate professor of family and community medicine at Baylor and family psychologist.

For parents with kids in elementary, middle or high [school](#), Bray offered the following tips to help prevent summer brain drain.

Elementary school:

"At this age, it is important for parents to encourage kids to read. Finding books that are engaging and that the kids will enjoy reading is a great way to keep their minds active and for them to keep learning. Often, schools will make a list of books that they recommend that kids read during the summer, and that's a useful place to start," Bray said.

He added that it is also helpful for parents to engage kids in games that involve some of the skills that they were learning before school let out. For example, if they were learning about their colors, they may engage in games that they have to use colors, or if they were learning new [math skills](#), they should play games that strengthen their math skills – these can be games like UNO and Monopoly.

Middle school:

At this age, Bray said that while reading is still helpful for kids, he

suggests that they choose books that are a bit more challenging so they can advance their reading skills.

Bray also recommends that kids in this age group keep their minds active during summer by learning a new skill. For example, if they are interested in computers, they may go to a camp where they can learn new computer skills such as how to edit photos or how to use different programs on the computer.

High school:

For [high schoolers](#), Bray said that it is important for parents to encourage them to decide what it is that they want to engage in – this could be getting involved in more academic camps or participating in volunteer activities.

Summer jobs also are a great way to make sure high schoolers are still learning, Bray said. He gave the example that if they work in retail, they often will be working the cash register and handling money, which can help keep their math skills sharp. An added benefit of this type of work is that, since they will be dealing with many different types of people, their social skills can improve, he said.

"If you don't use certain skills, you lose them. That's why it is so important that students keep their minds active during the summer and focus on developing [skills](#) that can help them advance before the school year even begins," Bray said.

Provided by Baylor College of Medicine

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