

Pointers For Parents

Using Vacation Time To Help Master Skills

(NAPSA)—A recent report shows that when it comes to improving education skills, America's students have some catching up to do. The three-yearly OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) report, which compares the knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds in 70 countries around the world, ranked the U.S. 14th out of 34 OECD countries for reading skills, 17th for science and a below-average 25th for mathematics.

Vacations can be a great time to reverse the trend and enrich your child's learning experience. Here are a few ways to help:

1. **Lead by example.** Take your favorite paperback (or two) and stuff it in your beach bag. Your child needs to see you reading for enjoyment.

2. **Build vocabulary** with a weekly "Word Workout." Select a new word each week for your family to learn. Use it in conversations, play games with it and have contests using the new word.

3. **Visit a library or bookstore together.** Browse the shelves together and note what topics interest your child. Make sure you each have your own library card. Consider joining a book club.

4. **Read aloud daily.** Reading aloud is a great way to model your love of reading. Encourage your child to read along with you. Point out new vocabulary and ideas. Ask questions about the story and about the characters and their motivations.

5. **Tell stories together.** Storytelling is an art and a way to help develop language and listening skills. Tell your favorite childhood stories and stories about your families. Encourage your child to tell stories and even make up stories together. Then, write them down.



Many students benefit from one-on-one support in the classroom.

6. **Help kids see the connections** between their personal lives and the stories or articles they read and hear. Ask questions and make comparisons as they read, watch TV and go to the movies.

7. **Sign kids up for an enrichment program.** Many students benefit from one-on-one support, an often-difficult thing to provide in the classroom.

Fortunately, individualized online programs can help bridge the gap by supporting students in areas where they need help. Because such programs can be tailored to a student's strengths and weaknesses, they can be an effective aid for literacy, especially during vacation time.

For example, Achieve3000, which offers Web-based learning solutions, uses the concept of differentiated instruction for improving literacy and student performance. Differentiated instruction provides content at a student's level, then brings students to the level they need to be at.

By meeting students where students are, it's easier to improve their reading level and help them achieve success across the curriculum. One-click reporting and management allow teachers to use performance data to inform instruction.

For more information, visit www.achieve3000.com/parenttips.