

# The Critical Role of Summer Learning in Grade-Level Reading: An Overview

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NSLA's mission is to connect and equip schools, providers, communities and families to deliver high-quality summer learning opportunities to our nation's youth to help close the achievement gap and support healthy development.

NSLA seeks to:

- Improve the quality of summer learning opportunities
- Expand access to summer learning
- Increase demand for summer learning

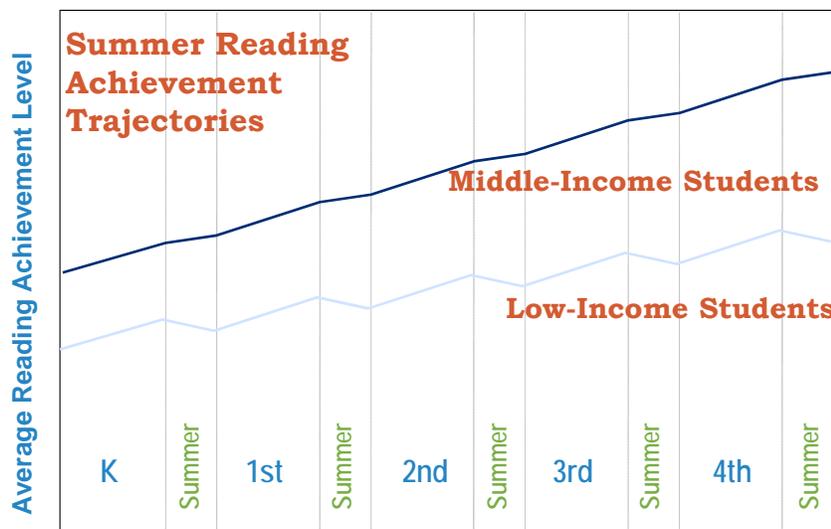


## The Effects of Summer Learning Loss

- Since 1906, numerous studies have confirmed that children experience learning losses in math and reading without continued opportunities for skill building over the summer (White, Heyns, Cooper, Downey, Alexander)
- More than half of the ninth grade achievement gap in reading can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities during the elementary school years (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007)
- Summer learning losses have later life consequences, including high school curriculum placement, high school dropout, and college attendance (ibid.)



### SUMMER LEARNING AND THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP



Source: Adapted from Borman, G.D. (2000). The effects of summer school: Questions answered, questions raised. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 65 (1, Serial N. 260).

## Summer Learning Programs Can Stem Loss

- Students who attend high-quality summer learning programs have better outcomes than similar peers who do not attend
- Voluntary, mandatory, and home-based summer reading programs all found to have positive effects
- Certain program characteristics are linked to student achievement gains:

- Smaller class sizes & individualized instruction
- Involving parents
- High-quality instructors
- Curriculum matches student needs
- Early planning



--"Making Summer Count" (RAND, 2011)



## Getting the Most Out of Summer Reading

Reading is most effective when adults provide guidance.



- In comprehensive study of elementary and middle school students' summer reading, just providing books without guidance made no difference for younger children.
- Children should choose books that interest them, but adults can help find "sweet spot" where the reading level is challenging but not frustrating.
- Test fluency with "five-finger rule": Ask a child to read 100 words from a book and to raise one finger for each word that is too difficult to figure out. If the child has more than five fingers up, the book is probably too hard.

--Interview with Harvard researcher James Kim



# Events and Resources



*Summer*  
Changes Everything™

**National Conference  
on Summer Learning**  
Westin Convention Center, Pittsburgh  
October 22 – 24, 2012



Register today at: [www.summerlearning.org/conference](http://www.summerlearning.org/conference)



## At the *Summer Changes Everything™* conference

“Strategies for Building a City-wide Summer Learning System”

“The Partnership Puzzle: Putting the Pieces Together”

“Tackling Grade-Level Reading with Summer Learning:  
the Council Bluffs Model”

“Ready To Learn: Early Childhood, Summer  
Learning, and PBS KIDS Transmedia”



Celebrate and call attention to reading with events on  
June 21, 2013, and beyond!

- Find tools and resources at [summerlearning.org/sld](http://summerlearning.org/sld)
- List your event on the interactive Summer Learning Day  
map at [summerlearningdaymap.org](http://summerlearningdaymap.org)



## Upcoming Summer Learning Webinars

- *Planning for Summer Success*
- *Program Quality*
- *Partnerships and the Role of School Districts*
- *Funding and Policy*



## Contact Us!

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*Find research and other resources at  
summerlearning.org.*

