

Summer Learning Tips for Families Read, Write, and Play Together

Summer is a great time for children and families to learn, connect, and have fun. Here are some ideas to help you build special memories while you learn together!

Read Together – Use some of Barbara Bush’s favorite reading tips:

- Read stories using fun or silly voices for the characters in the books. Look at the pictures and talk about them. You can act out the stories, draw pictures, sing, or make up your own stories together.
- Visit the library to read all types of books and explore digital texts too! [ReadLife Bookshelf](#) is a free collection of books for adults, children, and families with activities for each book!
- Make reading time special and fun. Give your full attention and let your child choose the books. Read favorite books over and over!
- Read all different types of material: books, magazines, signs, posters, or toy and food labels. Read different kinds of books like stories, fact books, and poetry. Check out audiobooks too!
- Talk about what you are reading to help your child connect to the book. Ask questions like, “What do you think will happen next?” or “What do you think the character is feeling?”
- Be a reading role model! Make sure your child sees you reading throughout the week. Talk about books when you aren’t reading by asking questions like, “Tell me why you liked the book we read earlier” or by telling your child about what you are reading.

Write Together – Explore writing in different ways:

- Write lists, add events to calendars, and create stories together!
- Find a picture in a book, magazine, or online to talk about. Ask your child, “What do you see? How does the picture make you feel? How would you describe the picture to someone?” Write a few sentences to describe the picture. This is called a caption.
- All ages will like this game! Have one person pick a picture from a book or magazine without telling the other person what it is. Write a caption for the picture, describing what you see. Then, have the other person guess what the picture or image is. Have fun and take turns with this game!
- Read a story together and then create a [comic strip](#)! You can draw a comic strip outline on a piece of paper (draw a long rectangle with three parts to

it) or create it online. Choose a funny or important part of the story and draw 2-3 pictures that describe it. Write a caption or dialogue (characters talking) below each picture to create a short story.

- Create a *shared* journal: Anything can be used for a journal – you don't need to buy one! Loose paper can be stapled or glued together, and a cover page can be decorated. You can create a journal by [using materials you already have in your home](#). Take turns writing to each other about anything! Share your day, a memory, or ask a question. And remember, journals do not have to be all about writing. Drawings, word lists, collages, etc. are all part of journaling! Your shared journal will be a great place to capture memories!

Play Together – Families who play together create memories:

- Talk about favorite characters or animals from stories you have read together by playing charades. Have your child think of a favorite character or animal in a book. What do they say? What do they sound like? How do they act? How do they move? Have them pretend to be that character or animal and you guess who it is. Then it's your turn!
- Enjoy all the ways your child can move as they grow! Are they crawling, hopping, skipping, swinging, or somersaulting? How can you move together while you play?
- Younger children will enjoy singing songs and playing finger games like [The Itsy-Bitsy Spider](#). You can also make up songs about silly things that happen during the day.
- Older children will love games like Thumb War! Face each other and hold hands so that all fingers (not the thumb!) curl around each other. Try to pin each other's thumb down, but first remember to say, "One, two, three, four, I declare a thumb war!" Need more information? Search online using these words – *thumb war*.
- Children of all ages love movement games. Can you find a place to run and move outside or at a local community center or school? Have races or create obstacle courses with objects from home. You can also have fun creating races inside or outside with different objects. Toss balls, roll coins, or fold paper airplanes (all you need is a few pieces of paper). To learn how to fold a paper airplane, look for directions online. Search online by using these words – *folding a paper airplane*.