

# WHY SUMMER STILL MATTERS

## POLICY BRIEF

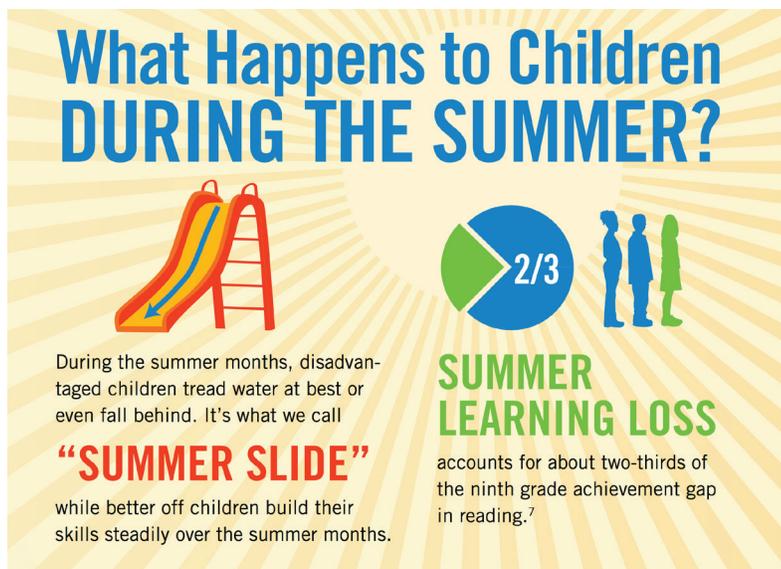


### THE SUMMER SLIDE

According to the Campaign for Grade Level Reading:

Research spanning 100 years has proven that students lose ground academically when they are out of school for the summer. The problem is particularly acute among low-income students who lose an average of more than two months in reading achievement in the summer, which slows their progress toward third grade reading proficiency. And it exacerbates the achievement gap with their middle-class peers.

The issue of the “Summer Slide,” in which youth lose proficiency over the summer, is pertinent to all youth, but especially those in most need of academic and social supports. Without access to high quality programming over the summer, they lose the gains made during the academic year. Thus, simply maintaining proficiency over the summer is a worthy goal. This must be a priority for policymakers.



*National Summer Learning Association*

### WHAT WORKS TO COMBAT THE SUMMER SLIDE

Summer programs that couple intensive academic assistance with enrichment are:

- » More likely to raise proficiency rates
- » More cost effective
- » Likely to see higher attendance over the summer

Evaluations of summer programs have shown that without coupling intensive academic assistance with enrichments, such as physical fitness, nutrition, field trips, and the arts, youth do not make gains over the summer. A recent study by the Iowa Reading Research Center showed that programs that only required time in intensive programming for 70 hours over a summer were not successful in raising proficiency over that time period.

Programs that couple academic assistance with enrichment are successful in raising proficiency over the summer, especially in reading, because they integrate core concepts, including reading, writing, and mathematics, into their programming throughout the day. This does not require certified teachers and often is more cost efficient. What's more, these summer programs are also more likely to have sustained attendance over the summer because of the enrichment provided.

### COMMUNITIES COMBATING THE SUMMER SLIDE



Cedar Rapids Kids on Course ran a six-week Summer University for students in the Cedar Rapids School District. **Of the 600 students served, initial results show that 60 percent of participating students increased their reading scores over the previous spring.** This model paired high quality instructional time with enrichment for a full day of programming over 30 days of the summer.



CFUM in Des Moines has run summer programming for several years and always sees results. **87 percent of participants' reading levels progressed or stayed the same over the summer break. 58% of these students made gains of at least one reading level over the summer.** Of this group that made improvements in their reading level, almost one-third improved by two or more reading levels over the summer! This program model consists of primarily intentional enrichment opportunities, with literacy integrated throughout the day over the summer.

### Resources

Iowa Afterschool Alliance: [www.iowaafterschoolalliance.org](http://www.iowaafterschoolalliance.org)

Afterschool Alliance: [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)

Campaign for Grade Level Reading: [www.gradelevelreading.net](http://www.gradelevelreading.net)

National Summer Learning Association: [www.nsla.org](http://www.nsla.org)

**Iowa Afterschool Alliance**

2910 Westown Parkway, STE 302

West Des Moines, IA 50266

515-243-2000

[www.iowaafterschoolalliance.org](http://www.iowaafterschoolalliance.org)

[mrich@sppg.com](mailto:mrich@sppg.com)