

Educators and Therapists Are Unanimous: Beware of That “Summer Slide”

Speech, language and social skills can regress during months of vacation from school

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, CA, USA, June 5, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- “Use it or lose it” was a literary phrase first coined over 40 years ago in reference to perspective. Over the decades, in the vernacular, “it” has included everything from physical conditioning and money to mechanical systems and faith. Scientists, [speech-language pathologists](#) (SLPs) and other health professionals likewise adopted the maxim to simplify and summarize the principles of neuroplasticity for the rest of us.



From birth to death, the human brain is in a constant state of adaptation and change. That beehive of activity is never more pronounced than in the learning process among young children. As we age, much of our knowledge is already embedded into our subconscious, routine and daily lives, “... just like riding a bicycle.” Developing brains are more readily altered than mature ones. Among infants, toddlers and even adolescents, absent stimulation and practice, lessons-learned can be too quickly un-learned. At any age, one demographic facing the greatest potential risk is those who have, or may have, speech, language or communications disorders.

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Narissa Ventress

Subject to any number of variables, there is a significant consensus among experts that most students begin a new school year, after a 2 to 3-month summer break, upwards of a month behind the reading level at which they finished the previous year. Among STEM disciplines, the negative impact is usually even more substantial. Neither approaches the level of vulnerability that is shared by students in need of special education programs.

Certainly every child (and adult) is entitled to summertime recreation, a break from the routine and to just enjoy acting like a kid. But the integration of ongoing structure, social interaction, reading and other learning experiences can reinforce, advance, existing skills and be motivational as well as entertaining at the same time. The alternative is to descend into that [summer slide](#) and jeopardize previous progress and accomplishments. Leading practitioners in most communities will be able to provide guidance in how to most effectively complement their therapy with family activities throughout the season. Some of the most prominent will even

expand their services in order to enhance continuity between school sessions.

One notable facility is [Avid Speech Therapy](https://www.avidspeech.com/iep-extension-summer-program), in Fountain Valley, CA. <https://www.avidspeech.com/iep-extension-summer-program> With a multilingual (to include American Sign Language) staff of licensed SLPs, client programs are both customized and comprehensive. As founder Narissa Ventress, M.A., CCC-SLP, responded in a recent interview, "From our first evaluation, throughout therapy, we encourage family input and involvement. We are committed to our clients inside or outside our offices – at home, in school, at work or on vacation."

Ms Ventress continued the conversation and explained how remarkable the capabilities of our brain actually are. In lay terms, as efficiency and Mother Nature dictate, connections required to send and receive information, control functions, throughout our bodies can be re-routed, created or deleted. Educators and therapists agree that the learning experience is a prime example of "Use it or lose it."

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