

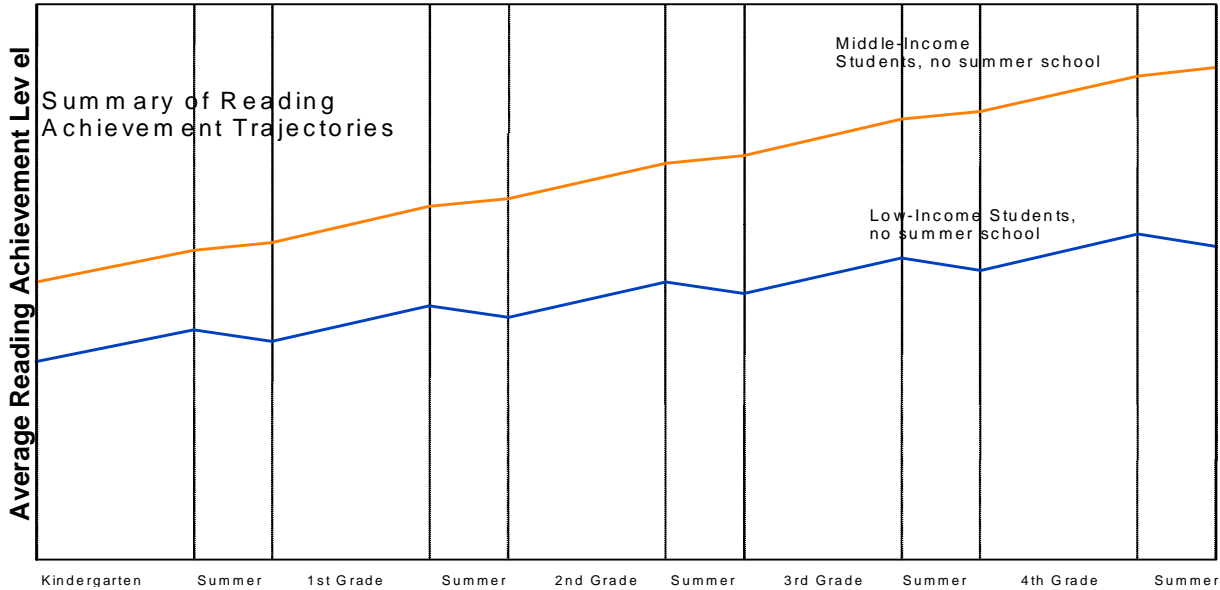


Facts About Summer Learning

- **All young people experience learning losses when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer.** Research shows that students typically score lower on standardized tests at the end of summer vacation than they do on the same tests at the beginning of summer vacation (Cooper, 1996).
- **On average, students lose approximately 2.6 months of grade level equivalency in mathematical computation skills over the summer months.** Studies reveal that the greatest areas of summer loss for all students, regardless of socio-economic status, are in factual or procedural knowledge (Cooper, 1996).
- **Low-income children and youth experience greater summer learning losses than their higher income peers.** On average, middle-income students experience slight gains in reading performance over the summer months. Low-income students experience an average summer learning loss in reading achievement of over two months (Cooper, 1996).
- **Summer learning loss contributes to the achievement gap in reading performance between lower and higher income children and youth.** Research demonstrates that while student achievement for both middle and lower-income students improves at similar rates during the school year, low-income students experience cumulative summer learning losses over the elementary school grades (Alexander & Entwisle, 1996).
- **Large numbers of students who qualify for federally subsidized meals do not have the same level of access to nutritious meals during the summer as they do during the school year.** Only one in five (21.1 per 100) of the 15.3 million children who receive free or reduced priced school lunches on a typical day during the regular school year participate in federal nutrition programs during the summer (Food Research and Action Center, 2002).
- **Studies show that out-of-school time is a dangerous time for unsupervised children and teens.** Young people who are unsupervised during out-of-school time are more likely to use alcohol, drugs, and tobacco; engage in criminal and other high-risk behaviors; receive poor grades; and drop out of school than those who have the opportunity to benefit from constructive activities supervised by responsible adults (Carnegie Council, 1994).
- **Partnerships between schools and youth development organizations can prevent summer loss in reading among low-income students.** A recent study of a summer literacy camp program in Los Angeles, CA found that when reading instruction and tutoring were integrated into a summer camp context, disadvantaged first grade children from schools whose reading test scores were below the 25th percentile made significant gains compared to students who did not attend the summer intervention (Schacter, 2003).
- **Providing access to high-quality summer programs for multiple years can help close the achievement gap.** Findings from a randomized, three-year longitudinal study of the Teach Baltimore Summer Academy program suggest that a multi-year summer intervention using collegiate volunteers as instructors can counteract the cumulative effect of summer loss on low-income students' reading outcomes (Borman, 2004).
- **Low-income and minority parents are substantially more likely to encounter problems finding quality, affordable summer programs.** A recent public opinion poll from Public Agenda revealed that low-income parents have considerable difficulty finding available summer programming, despite the fact that demand for such programming is high. A majority of students (56%) reported that they want to be involved in a summer program that "helps kids keep up with schoolwork or prepare for the next grade." (Public Agenda, 2004).
- **Reading books during summer vacation can improve students' reading proficiency.** A study conducted by Jimmy Kim of Harvard's Center for Evaluation found that reading 4 or 5 books over the summer months had an impact on fall reading achievement comparable to attending summer school. Furthermore, there were no significant differences in achievement based on which type of books children read (Kim, 2004).

The Impact of Summer Learning Loss On the Achievement Gap in Reading

Cumulative Effect of Summer Learning Loss**



**This graph depicts the typical relationship between income levels and reading achievement both during the school year and the summer. The graph assumes that children are NOT attending a summer learning program. The blue line represents the average reading achievement level of low-income children, and the red line represents the average reading achievement level of middle-income children. You will notice that low-income children lose a significant amount of reading knowledge over the summer months, while middle-income children make slight gains. This contributes to the widening of the achievement gap. By the end of fifth grade, low-income children are approximately 2 ½ years behind their more affluent peers, primarily because of summer learning loss.

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