



Exercise your child's brain this summer with library books.

Don't let summertime stop learning

Perhaps it's an idea carried from elementary school that leads us to believe that summer is a time when school and learning should be put on the back burner. The excitement of being outside, of course, can squash the desire to pursue educational activities, but do we have to choose physical exercise over exercising our brains?

Summer education offers the opportunity to keep the brain as active as the rest of our body, but it doesn't have to mean sitting inside watching the world go by. There are many options available to students of all ages that allow for the combination of fun and learning.

"Summer learning should be fun. It's a great time to check out the neighborhood library and help your child

make a Read and Watch program," says Ronald Kar, Ph.D., program chair of Instructional Leadership for Argosy University, Sarasota Campus.

Neighborhood libraries are filled with books children love and movies based on those books. Children can go to the library, check out the book and then, when they have read the book, watch the movie version. Librarians are parents' best friends and will help children and parents identify age appropriate books and movies. Parents can then talk to the child about the surprises and differences from book to movie and spend quality time reading, watching and talking with their child.

"It's important to understand the relationship between reading and talking. And the best way to get children talking is to begin a con-

versation with "Tell me about..." says Kar.

Dr. Kar emphasizes the importance of physical activity during the day, with long breaks for reading. He encourages children and parents to watch the book-based movie together in the evening.

He also recommends visiting museums and talking with children about the exhibits. "It is important for parents to encourage their children to talk about what they see and experience. One of my favorite suggestions to parents is turn off the car radio and engage their children in conversation about the world around them."

For older students or professionals seeking to expand their knowledge, online and blended learning offers students the option of spending less time in the classroom

while still gaining a quality education.

"Those taking courses online have the option of completing coursework anywhere, any time — even while sitting on the beach in the summer sun," says Marcy Trew, Department of Education chair at Brown Mackie College — Akron.

During the summer, many schools offer traditional courses in more condensed versions, giving students the opportunity to complete a full course in half the time.

No matter what your age, learning can, and should, be fun any time of the year. Many opportunities for learning that summer provides — both formal and informal — could be missed if people save education for the fall.

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