



Summer Slide for Immersion Students

Immersion parents want to support their student's language growth during the summer months but do not know how to help. Below are a few FAQ that will help you plan.

Question #1: I don't speak Spanish! Does my kid need summer school?

Absolutely NOT. Unless your child's teacher has come to you with concerns and advised support during the summer for other reasons based on school expectations, you shouldn't put pressure on yourself to find summer school in the immersion language.

Instead, focus on making sure that the non-English language of the immersion program is held in high regard. Make sure your child's positive outlook on their educational experience remains intact, even though they may not be in day-to-day contact with it.

Do this by:

- reflecting on the year and on how much they've learned in the language
- reviewing fun projects that they created in the language
- listening to your child read stories or books they wrote in the immersion language

If options exist in your area for your child to participate in a summer camp, VBS, or enrichment program, seize the opportunity. Time and intensity matter when it comes to language learning. But know that if your child doesn't participate or if one is not accessible, you really don't need to worry that your child will enter school "behind" in the fall.

Question #2: I hear a lot about the "summer slide" with academics. Is language a part of that, too?

Yes. It is true. Unless your child is in year-round schooling, the summer slide always has potential to become a reality. What is important for us to remember, however, is that we do not have to skill-n-drill our kids with isolated vocabulary flashcards or ask them to translate everything they hear into Spanish. *Doing so would prompt a) a real snooze fest in the middle of the summer and b) encourage kids to start disliking the thought of learning another language! That is everything we DO NOT want to have happen!*

Ultimately, all kids experience a bit of a "dip" in the summer months. This means that your child's teachers know what to do to ensure a linguistically rich environment that your child will grow quickly accustomed to...because it is an expectation that we know they can handle! Parents can relax with confidence knowing teachers will help students get back on track as they begin the new school year.

Question #3: What opportunities are there for me to continue to foster a love for the immersion language when school is out?

It only makes sense that, even with what has been explained above, we still want to seek every opportunity to ensure that our children engage with the language as much as possible. Check out some of these recommendations to keep the summer light and FUN!

- Find a sitter who speaks both languages and ensure that she speaks solely your child's second language during their time. Encourage them to play games and have fun using as much of the language as they can.
- Tutor time? Nope. It does not have to be what you think it is! Your child does not have to be struggling in school to get the most out of this. Sometimes teachers or educational assistants tutor in the summer months. Take the advantage of their availability so your children hear different accents and experience new cultures. Check with your child's teacher for summer tutoring options.
- Family movie night? Try it out in Spanish! Come on...You haven't LIVED until you have had the opportunity to sing "Let it go!" as "¡Libre soy!"
- Step into the community! Make contacts with people in your community who speak the language your child is learning. Head to local restaurants or shops where they can use their language skills authentically. Invite your child to read items off the menu or on the shelves and speak with the employees. What good is knowing the language if we don't use it to connect with people, right?
- Preserve reading time in Spanish. I can't reiterate this one enough. It's critical to encourage students to engage with the language independently and foster a love for reading. Need access to books? Check out places like Barnes & Noble, Scholastic en español, Santillana publishing, cuentosinteractivos, storyplace, and your local library for Spanish titles at a variety of levels!
- Take suggestions from your children. We all know how much children love having choice! If you ask your kids, this is what you will probably hear:
 - Dance Party! Silly favorites are Blippi en español, Pica Pica and any other songs under the umbrella of canciones infantiles!
- Technology fun! Some iPad apps and websites can be a great reinforcement. Check out ones like ABC Spanish Reading Magic, Kandoobi Animales, Ebooks Spanish, Lee Paso a Paso, Raz Kids, BrainPop in Spanish. Remember, though, no app or website can replace human interaction and not all apps are created equally. It is not a realistic or appropriate expectation to over-prescribe an iPad just to "keep up on Spanish". Follow your family's typical boundaries for technology.
- Be sure to check for celebrations in your area that honor the cultures of the language your child is learning. For example, on May 31st the Mariachi Los Galleros will be at the Buddy Holly Center. For more local events check the City of Lubbock Activity Guide

In the end, learning a language is intended to help us connect across languages and cultures, and summer is a wonderful time to get out there and connect. Read. Meet people. PLAY.

Enjoy your summer!

Adapted from a post by **Stephanie Irizarry**-add.a.lingua