

# How to Trick Your Kids Into Reading All Summer Long

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## *The Atlantic:*

As the school year ends, students' thoughts turn to summer vacation staples like swimming, camp, and popsicles. Teachers—and most parents—would like them to think about reading, too. School and district officials offer summer reading lists, hoping that specific recommendations will move students away from video games and toward books. But most will ignore these worthy suggestions, and indeed will read very little. How can parents nudge kids toward books this summer?

The natural strategies most parents would think of first should not be the ones they actually try first. One is to offer rewards for reading. Rewards may get kids reading in the short term, but research shows there's a danger they will like reading *less* once the rewards stop. A reward comes bundled with an implicit message: "Your guess that reading is not fun must be right. That's why they're paying you." The same holds for a second strategy, the daily reading target. If reading were fun (as parents claim), they wouldn't need to set minimum goals. Parents feel no need to say "I want to see you on that swing set for twenty minutes every day, mister. And swing like you mean it." But if you don't reward or coerce your child, what would make him freely choose to read?

Read the whole story: [\*The Atlantic\*](#)