



BRAIN HEALTH BOOST



Keep Students' Brains Sharp This Summer With Reading List, Tips

*The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is working to develop brain healthy communities, creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health, optimizing brain performance, and preventing and fighting brain illness across the lifespan for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. **Today, we share the importance of summer reading for students, parents and educator's brain health and performance and offer a few suggestions for each group.***

It's summertime, and the livin' is easy. Vacations, sleeping in, long days at the beach or the playground. That's how children – and maybe even some of their teachers – envision the summer months playing out with no school and fewer responsibilities.

But it's important to keep engaged through reading, no matter your age or level of education. Daily reading protects brain health and promotes brain performance. For students, reading helps children and young adults retain knowledge and skills gained during the school year, continue social-emotional development, and cement in their minds the benefits of lifelong learning.

The Harvard Graduate School of Education offers these summer reading-list suggestions for students, parents and educators:

FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

- For young readers, the books [All Around Us](#) by Xelena Gonzalez and [The Wedding Portrait](#) by Innosanto Nagara are great for teaching social-justice themes. *All Around Us* shows about the cycles that connect us to the earth, while *The Wedding Portrait* celebrates activists who broke the rules in the name of justice.
- For upper-elementary and middle school readers seeking an escape, consider [The Thing About Jellyfish](#) by Ali Benjamin, about a young researcher devoted to investigating her friend's death, and [Amari and the Night Brothers](#) by B.B. Alston, a story about magic and discovering self-confidence.

- This suggestion, for high school students, falls outside the Harvard Graduate School of Education list, but draws rave reviews from other experts. [The Serpent King](#) by Jeff Zentner is the story of three friends considered outcasts in their small town. The book is about not letting circumstances define who you are and who you are meant to become.

FOR PARENTS

- Experts recommend a pair of titles for parents who want to support their teenagers through the challenges of coming of age. [The End of Adolescence: The Lost Art of Delaying Adulthood](#) by Nancy Hill and Alexis Redding helps parents understand what youth need in the transition to adulthood. [The Age of Opportunity: Lessons from the New Science of Adolescence](#) by Laurence Steinberg takes a close look at adolescents' brain development.

FOR EDUCATORS

- If you're a teacher seeking a new approach in the classroom for next school year, try [Think Like Socrates: Using Question to Invite Wonder and Empathy in the Classroom](#) by Shana Peeples. The author shows how asking students questions revolutionizes the classroom atmosphere in different grades and across subject areas.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

Reading during the summer break is key for children of all ages to prevent the dreaded summer slide and encourage a lifelong habit of acquiring knowledge. The BHI offers these tips for parents to get young people reading.

- **FOR YOUNG CHILDREN, READ ALOUD TOGETHER.** Have fun by going outside and reading to your child and letting them read to you.
- **SHOW THE WAY.** Set a good example. Let your child see you read and devote time for everyone in the family to pull out their books.
- **DOUBLE UP.** Read a book your child is reading and talk about it with them. This will help the child with comprehension and analytical skills.
- **DON'T JUDGE.** Let children choose what they read. Don't discourage the reading habit by making value judgments about the material.
- **GO TO THE LIBRARY.** The local library often provides age-appropriate summer reading lists and reading clubs. Look out for special activities, too.
- **WRITE TO A PEN PAL.** If your child misses a school chum, encourage them to write letters or emails.
- **HIT THE ROAD.** During vacation, ask your child to read road signs and billboards. Let them map your route and help you navigate.
- **MAKE A SCRAPBOOK.** Save all the mementoes of summer, like photos, ticket stubs, and postcards, to make a scrapbook. Have the child write captions and read them aloud together.

BE BRAIN HEALTHY and adopt a lifestyle that includes thoughts, behaviors, emotions, responses, and language that promote brain health protective factors:

- Stress resilience
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- Sleep
- Social connection
- Emotional well-being
- Meaning and Purpose
- Cognitive stimulation and creativity
- Engaging with nature
- General health
- Positive impacts

Brain Health Initiative (www.brainhealthinitiative.org)

The Brain Health Initiative, Inc (BHI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit, uses a cutting-edge approach to protecting brain health, promoting brain performance, and preventing and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI is building brain healthy communities, cultures that promote brain healthy lifestyles, foster protective factors and address risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes at the individual and community level for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. ***Brain Health Matters and Lifestyle Makes a Difference.***