

ORTON-GILLINGHAM HOLIDAY HOMEWORK?

Parents often ask how they can help their children to progress over the summer holidays. Although the philosophy of the Orton-Gillingham method does not include homework because the techniques used are specific to this type of tutoring, certainly there are ways in which students may be helped in general.

Start by using daily outings, such as a trip to the beach, as a basis for tracing letters or sounds in the sand. The sand could also be built up to form raised sounds or words. Pebbles and shells might be pressed into the sand to represent whatever your child would like to write.

Take along some books to read. These might be related to your trip in some way. Different types of oral reading serve different purposes; for example, easier reading would be done for fluency and comprehension. During this type of reading ask questions about what has been read. These may begin with literal questions and move along, as your child's understanding progresses, through the next three stages of comprehension which are 'inferential', 'critical' and lastly, 'creative'. More difficult reading may be done to stretch the understanding of phonetics and to practise sight words (words that cannot be decoded phonetically). At this time reading along simultaneously with your child would help with fluency, cadence and difficult words. As an alternative to this, have your child read while you listen, filling in words immediately upon hearing a mistake or difficulty. Reading to your child is also extremely beneficial. Often comprehension is aided when the responsibility of decoding each word is taken on by another reader.

As well as reading, keeping a journal throughout the vacation period might be a good idea. Depending upon your child's ability level, this could begin with just a word or two and an illustration, progressing to a few sentences or more. Another writing project may be to report on a book that has been read. This could be in the form of a few sentences regarding the theme or setting of the story or describing a character from the story.

These ideas are merely suggestions. It is understood that parents are concerned with their child's academic progress. The main point to remember at any time of the year is that children with learning difficulties work very hard and they, especially, need time to relax and have fun! Enjoy your vacation!

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