# Reducing Summer Reading Setback

In this article in *Reading Today*, Richard Allington and Anne McGill-Franzen (University of Tennessee) say that 80 percent of the rich/poor achievement gap comes from summer loss – the ground that poorer children lose because most read very little when school is not in session. Sending children home for the summer with self-selected books is an excellent intervention, say Allington and McGill-Franzen: “An annual cost of approximately $50 per child for a summer book distribution program is far less expensive than scheduling summer school programs and equally effective at enhancing the reading achievement of children from low-income families.” Here are their research-based recommendations:

* If money is short, prioritize younger children, especially kindergarten and first graders.
* Have children select books in a book-fair format; they are much more likely to read books they’ve chosen themselves.
* Send grade 1-4 children home with 12-15 books each; older children don’t need as many, perhaps 5-6 books each for sixth graders.
* Keep the program going for several years.

“Eliminating Summer Reading Setback: How We Can Close the Rich/Poor Reading Achievement Gap” by Richard Allington and Anne McGill-Franzen in *Reading Today*, April/May 2013 (Vol. 30, #5, p. 10-11), [www.reading.org/readingtoday](http://www.reading.org/readingtoday)