

## Education: Stopping the Summer Slide for Delaware's Young Readers



“During the school year, I could see my child making progress with reading. I didn’t want summer to mean losing all that momentum.”

That concern is shared by families across Delaware. Only **26% of Delaware students entering fourth grade read at or above grade level**. Students who aren’t proficient by then are four times more likely to drop out of school, and 13 times more likely if they live in poverty.

Summer is a critical part of the equation. Without access to summer learning, students can lose an average of **two months of reading gains made during the school year**, known as the “summer slide.”

United Way of Delaware’s **Get Delaware Reading Summer** initiative is working to change that. Through trusted community partners, children receive personalized, high-dosage reading tutoring along with books, recreation, and a safe, supportive place to spend their summer days.

In Summer 2026, GDR Summer reached **more than 3,270 students at 65 sites across all three Delaware counties**. Independent evaluations have shown that the initiative has **stopped the summer slide every year since its launch**.

“My child came home excited about books—and went back to school feeling confident and ready. That’s what every parent wants.”