

Five Quick Tips To Keep Diverse Learners Engaged After Breaks

Share these ideas with teachers and families - some of them (especially the ones for families) are prime for engaging with over the break and will help you ensure the back-to-school time is as seamless and successful as possible.

TIP ONE: REUSE WHAT WORKS

What Teachers Can Do

IDEAS FOR PLANNING

Think back through your assignments and activities this year. Which ones were most popular for your students and why? What and how were you teaching when your diverse learners were most engaged?

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Create a list of engaging lesson elements to reuse. Kids loved a historical role-play or a hands-on science project? Use those same strategies again with the current content. Save your creative and new ideas for January and use what you know works now.

What Families Can Do

IDEAS FOR PLANNING

Ask your children to name the most memorable class assignments and discuss what made them so engaging. Take notes and share them with your child's teacher.

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Try using some of those same strategies for projects at home. For example, revisit a loved story from school by checking it out from the library and reading it together. Or try the second in a series.

TIP TWO: LEARN ABOUT YOUR KIDS AND CONNECT WITH THEM

What Teachers Can Do

IDEAS FOR PLANNING

Integrate identity exploration into lesson plans by incorporating activities that encourage students to share aspects of their identity. Consider assignments that delve into cultural backgrounds, personal interests, or experiences that have shaped their identity.

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Ask students to share the meaning of their names, allowing them to choose their preferred method of presentation (e.g., written essay, piece of art, video presentation, or some other format). Or engage in identity interviews where students pair up to learn more about a peer.

What Families Can Do

IDEAS FOR PLANNING

Discuss family background and traditions with your child, exploring what culture means to different people.

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Challenge your child to learn about the family traditions of a classmate, fostering connections. Discuss what they learned and how that tradition is the same and different from one of your traditions.

TIP THREE: REFRESH EXPECTATIONS AND ROUTINES

What Teachers Can Do

IDEAS FOR PLANNING

Ensure that classroom commitments, routines, and agendas are visually displayed in your classroom.

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Empower students to take charge of routine review. Assign small groups to write a story, compose a jingle, or create a new visual about one of the expectations or routines. Use those exemplars regularly for the rest of the year.

What Families Can Do

IDEAS FOR PLANNING

Email your child's teacher to understand the most important class routines (e.g., specific transition protocols, clean-up song, readiness check).

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Discuss with your child how they use routines in class and consider adopting a similar routine at home. For example, if the teacher uses a posted checklist for getting ready for recess, consider creating your list for getting ready for school in the morning.

TIP FOUR: CONNECT STUDENTS WITH EACH OTHER

What Teachers Can Do

IDEAS FOR PLANNING

Use data to consider students' strengths and preferences when forming groups. Ensure that each group has a well-balanced blend of talents and skills.

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Create short challenges that align with your content and require collaboration among students. Whether it's a problem-solving task, a creative activity, or a trivia challenge, ensure that each group member has a unique role to play. Establish regular check-ins to monitor group dynamics.

What Families Can Do

IDEAS FOR PLANNING

Plan activities that emphasize teamwork during family gatherings. This could include group sports, collaborative board games, or even escape room challenges.

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Implement a family game night with group-oriented games. Or try a home improvement or cooking task with different roles for each family member. Discuss the importance of working together, share individual experiences, and highlight the unique contributions each family member made.

TIP FIVE: PRACTICE AND TEACH GRATITUDE

What Teachers Can Do

IDEAS FOR PLANNING

Plan a gratitude activity at the next staff meeting where team members take turns drafting notes of gratitude for their peers on cardstock or paper plates. Participants can look to those words when they need a pick-me-up.

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Establish a gratitude wall where teachers and students can post notes of appreciation for one another. This visual display serves as a constant reminder of the positive impact each member has on the educational community.

What Families Can Do

IDEAS FOR PLANNING

Talk with your child about gratitude - what it is, how it is conveyed, etc. Ask for some examples of things they are grateful for. Help your child make a card for their teachers to express gratitude for their hard work and support.

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Set up a gratitude jar at home where family members can drop notes expressing gratitude for one another. Encourage specific examples of actions or qualities that are cherished.