Today’s piece was prepared by Hannah Deming, MD, based on a NY Times & Wirecutter piece [9 toys that keep kids learning](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/03/well/9-toys-that-keep-kids-learning.html).

Wirecutter, a New York Times company that reviews products, published a list of non-screen based games to encourage learning and development for children this summer. The article focuses on the “summer slide,” children losing skills during summer break. Per the authors, many parents “feel they must invest in an arsenal of high-tech, specialized learning toys.” However, the authors cite psychologists who report that some of the best learning toys are simple, unstructured or open-ended, and exploratory. Some classic and well-known options highlighted included dress-up clothes, blocks, and board games (whose particular impact on social skills was highlighted). Newer options included *Magna-Tiles* (age: 3y+; colorful, magnetic shapes from which kids can build polyhedral structures), *Snap Circuits* (age: 8+; color-coded electronics components that let kids create battery powered circuits), and *Race to the Treasure* (age: 5-8; cooperative game where kids race an ogre to unlock treasure).

This article is in line with an AAP piece [Young Children Learn A Lot When They Play](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/toddler/fitness/Pages/Young-Children-Learn-A-Lot-When-They-Play.aspx) that emphasizes the importance of play in a child’s development and describes it as “important child’s work.” In particular, it highlights the role of playing with others in the development of social skills and problem solving. The AAP also provides useful guidance on no-cost to low-cost games families can play like egg races and Simon Says, which goes beyond the *NYT* article that could imply that families must spend money to prevent the summer slide. Additionally, the AAP offers useful guidance to set children up for success like avoiding superhero dress-up clothes and toy guns that encourage aggressive play.

**RESOURCES ON PLAY:**

[Playing is How Toddler’s Learn](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/toddler/fitness/Pages/Playing-is-How-Toddlers-Learn.aspx) *HealthyChildren/American Academy of Pediatrics*

[10 No-Cost, Screen-Free Activities to Play with Your Preschooler](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/preschool/nutrition-fitness/Pages/Motor-Activity-and-Self-Play.aspx) *HealthyChildren/American Academy of Pediatrics*

[Summer Learning Loss: What is it, and What Can We Do about It?](https://www.brookings.edu/research/summer-learning-loss-what-is-it-and-what-can-we-do-about-it/) *Brookings Institution*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!