

A Note From the Principal



In general, reading is much like any other skill, the more we practice the better we become. Teachers can see a big difference between children who read during the summer and children who don't, because reading helps develop a wide range of skills. Good readers are usually good spellers and better writers. In *Summer Learning and the Effects of Schooling*, Barbara Heyns states reading is the single most effective summer activity in regards to summer learning. Heyns concludes that children who read as few as six books during the summer months gain or maintain reading skills achieved during the preceding school year, while students who do not read during the summer may fall back as much as a grade level in their skills.

Following are several ideas for making reading an everyday part of you youngster's summer break.

Keep reading materials available

Leave a pile of magazines on the coffee table, keep graphic novels on the nightstand, put the newspaper on the kitchen table, and stash books in the car. Make reading convenient and your children will be more likely to read for pleasure.

Try a program

Help your youngsters check around town for summer reading programs. They may find them at libraries, bookstores, local colleges, or parks and recreation departments. Many programs sponsor reading contests or offer book clubs that your children can join for free. Help them stick with the program by challenging

them to set a goal (read a certain number of pages per week or finish a certain number of books per month).

Tie books to activities

Summer outings can be a springboard for reading. After going to a fair, concert, or carnival, you can visit the library to find related books. A trip to a state fair might encourage you children to check out books about hobbies or other interests. Watching a fireworks display might lead to reading about the science of colors.

Make it a family affair

Together, decide on a time for your family to read each week, and mark it on your calendar. For example, you might read sections of the newspaper on Sunday mornings or your favorite magazines on Wednesday nights.

Here are some tips that may help keep a steady supply of great books available for your children.

- Suggest that they swap favorite books with a friend.
- Children can list two or three books that they love. They can show the list to the librarian and ask for help in choosing similar books.
- Give your children books to read that you loved as a child. You might even reread them so you can discuss them later.

Tip: Remind your youngsters that it's okay to set aside a book that doesn't interest them after a few chapters and pick up another one to read.

Read the next Tuesday/Newsday for information on interesting summer reading activities and contests.....