

READING ALL SUMMER LONG





Summer is here! While it is important to let children "kick back", relax, and well, BE KIDS over the break, it is equally important to encourage them to read. Here's why:

- ☐ Many students experience learning loss during the summer due to the long break from school or structured activities. Similarly, when we do not exercise for a long time, our muscles get weaker. Reading is a "workout" for the brain that helps keep childrens' skills sharp.
- ☐ Since children will not be bogged down with a full academic schedule, homework, or other commitments, summer is the perfect time for them to explore new genres and topics. Who knows...they may discover new interests and hobbies this way.
- ☐ Reading can help children retain spelling words they have learned during the school year.
- ☐ Believe it or not, parents may hear the words, "I'M BORED!" coming from their children's mouths now that school is no longer in session. Reading is a fun cure for boredom!
- ☐ Reading exposes your children to new vocabulary, ideas, and builds their capacity for thought, and should be encouraged year round!



WHAT CAN FAMILIES DO TO ENCOURAGE SUMMER READING?

- ❖ Children may take home a summer reading list at the end of the school year. Parents should look at the list and ensure their children obtain the books. Parents may want to read the books also (or listen to them on tape) so they can discuss the content with their children.
- ❖ Take your children to the library each week so they can check out books, magazines, and other reading materials. Most libraries also have computers with Internet access. Children of all ages can "log-on" to read more about a topic they find interesting. This is a great follow-up to a family field trip, e.g., children can check out books about animals or read about them on the Web after a visit to the zoo, 
- ❖ Planning a summer trip? Have your children research fun activities for families in that destination by writing to the tourist board or going on-line for information.
- ❖ The Massachusetts Regional Library Systems 2003 Statewide Summer Library Adventure theme is **Read! Think! Create! @ Your Library**. See what activities your local library has planned.
- ❖ Integrate reading into summer activities. When in a restaurant, encourage young readers to decipher the menu. In museums, encourage children to read the descriptions accompanying exhibits. For example, at the Aquarium ask children, "What does the board say about whales?" 
- ❖ Local bookstores, museums, or other organizations may host book clubs for adults and children. Ask around to see what is offered in your area.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- ◆ **Reading is Fundamental (RIF)** has produced a colorful brochure, "Summertime Reading Adventures" that contains ideas and reading activities children could do over the summer break. Visit www.rif.org to download a free copy.
- ◆ The **American Library Association** Web site at www.ala.org lists promotional events for libraries and literacy, and the **Young Adult Library Services Association** at www.ala.org/yalsa has posted a recommended booklist for young adults.