

WYCKOFF TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Students and Parents,

The school year provides students with many opportunities to develop and mature as learners. The summer months afford this opportunity as well. Reading is an enjoyable, academic pursuit that complements any activity. Books are easily transportable and offer a relaxing, fun way to spend vacation or anytime!

Throughout the school year we read for many purposes. We read to become informed, to escape, to laugh... The summer can be a continuation of this practice. Consider selecting titles from this list to read together and engage in informal conversations with your child. You may also consider maintaining a reading log so that when students return to school in September, teachers can review children's choices as a way of learning about the interests and personalities of each member of their new class.

Please keep in mind that the list is by no means exhaustive in its offerings. In addition to those listed on our website, there are many wonderful books your children may also choose to read. What is most important is that our children continue to read and enjoy good literature over the summer.

Below are several tips based upon a recent article entitled, "How to Raise a Reader This Summer" by Jenn Berman M.F.T., Psy.D.*

1) Make summer reading goals as a family. Mom and Dad are not off the hook! Parents are the best reading role models a kid has, so making goals for every family member makes it more likely your child will achieve her goals. When working together to make your child's goals, keep in mind that a study done by Jimmy S. Kim found that students who read four to five books over the summer scored significantly better than their peers.

2) Give your child literary free will. In her book *The Book Whisperer: Awakening the Inner Reader in Every Child*, Donalyn Miller talks a lot about the importance of letting children pick the books that call to them and not being critical of their choices. Never criticize your child's choice of reading materials. It is okay to read a book multiple times, to choose comic books or magazines, or to read a less traditional book. What matters is that the child has the experience of connecting with the literature.

3) Encourage your child to carry reading material and do the same yourself. This makes reaching those summer reading goals more achievable. Next time you are standing together in a long line at the bank, let your child see you pulling out a book. Instead of buying your child a Game Boy or cell phone for his birthday, get him a Nook which allows him to carry a world of books and weighs less than a magazine.

4) Continue reading to your child, even after she has learned to read for herself. I encourage you to continue to read aloud as long as possible to your child. One of my happiest childhood memories is my mother reading *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. She read the same copy of the book to me that her own mother had read to her, the same one that I will one day read to my daughters. I was about seven years old at the time; and even though the book is recommended for nine to twelve-year-olds, I loved it. Children are able to listen on

a different and more advanced reading level than they are able to read. It isn't until about the eighth grade that they are able to listen and read on the same level. Make read-aloud books part of your summer experience with your child.

5) Create family reading rituals. Have a regular family reading ritual, a time when the television and the computers are off and you all hang out in a room reading. Seeing parents reading, especially dads, sets a great example for children. It can help everyone achieve their summer reading goals and it shows that literacy is a family priority, not to mention that having quiet time together also creates a wonderful connection.

6) Buy books as random gifts. Summer time is the perfect time to get in the habit of giving books to your child as presents. You don't have to wait for a birthday or holiday, just give a book for no reason at all. Make books appear out of nowhere. The other day, I felt like a magician when one of my daughters pointed to a picture of a book she wanted and asked me if I would buy it for her. Having guessed that she would like that particular book, I had already bought it and was holding onto it, waiting for the perfect moment to make it appear! I keep hidden baskets of books in the house so that we always have something new and exciting available to read.

7) Start a book club with your child. Book clubs are a social way to nurture a life-long love of reading by giving kids the chance to share their reading experience with other children. Forming a summer book club is a great way to get other parents and kids involved in summer reading, making it more likely that your child will read those four or more books over the vacation. Make peer pressure work in your favor.

Book clubs are generally best for kids five years and older. For great tips about forming books clubs check out *The Kid's Book Club Book*, by Judy Gelman and Vicky Levy Krupp and also *The Mother-Daughter Book Club: How Ten Busy Mothers and Daughters Came Together to Talk, Laugh, and Learn Through Their Love of Reading*, by Shireen Dodson.

8) Create positive reading associations. Never use reading as a punishment and don't reprimand if your child doesn't reach his reading goals. Instead, create positive incentives and rituals. Your child will remember your whole family camped out under a tree in the park reading together or a celebratory family outing to the ice cream store that was sparked because everyone in the family finished their first book of the summer. Look for ways to celebrate your family's emerging love of books this summer, whenever you can. In addition to reviewing the titles included on our website, you may also review the following sites for a more exhaustive list of classic and current literature.

American Library Association <http://www.ala.org/>

Newberry Award Winners

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/newberymedal/newberyhonors/newberymedal.cfm>

Young Adult Library Services Association

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/booklistsbook.cfm>

On behalf of the Wyckoff Schools, I wish you a happy, reading-filled summer!

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**For the complete copy of this article, see: http://www.barnesandnoble.com/container/kids-article.asp?r=1&pid=37454&cm_em=dawn@mylittlehome.com&cm_mmc=Other_-_Kids_Targeted_-_110518_MI01_KC_NEWSLETTER-_b5knecluv*