

# WYCKOFF TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

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Dear Family,

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 will want to encourage your child to read to you as well!

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) Have book baskets throughout your home.** If you don't already have book baskets in your home, start this summer. Always keep book baskets accessible. We keep ours in my kids' rooms, our bedroom (we have a "Mom book box" and a "Dad book box"), the kitchen, bathrooms, and even the cars. We rotate the books regularly but if one of my kids is particularly attached to a specific title, that book can stick around longer. Having lots of books available makes it more likely that your child will find a book he connects with and will keep reading all summer long.

**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) Give your child a book light so she can read in bed.** Younger children can have a child-friendly flashlight or even a book light. Once she's old enough you can give her a bed lamp and let her stay up past bedtime. Jim Trelease, author of *The Read-Aloud Handbook*, recommends saying "We think you are now old enough to stay up later at night, like Mommy and Daddy do, so we bought you this lamp so you can stay up and read if you want. If you don't want to read, that is okay too. We'll just turn off the light at the usual time." This makes reading time extra special. Summer is a great time to start this new tradition. That way if your child stays up very late reading, there is a little more of an opportunity to make up for lost sleep in the morning.

**7) Take your child to the library.** In a study of children from print-poor environments, parents reported that 96 percent of the children became more interested in reading after a single visit to the library, and 94 percent spent more time with books after one visit. Encourage your child to get to know the librarian this summer. I have a book-loving friend who brings her kids to the library so frequently that they are on a first name basis with the librarian.

**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/>

Caldecott Award Winners:

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

The Children's Book Council <http://www.cbcbooks.org/readinglists/>

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

*Grace White*

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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-\\_b5knecljuv](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-_b5knecljuv)*