

Dear Parents,

Happy summer and happy summer reading! We hope that this year's reading suggestion list will get your child's reading juices going. Some of our favorite books for children are listed on Summer Reading Booklist. We've intentionally included some great books that not everyone may have heard of! Your child can, of course, read any books they want.

Each school year, children learn and strengthen reading skills. A great deal of research shows that summer reading helps children retain and build upon reading skills that they acquired during the previous school year. In other words, "Use it or lose it!" The main reason we encourage children to read consistently over the summer is to emphasize reading as a habit for the whole year, not just when school is in session.

Please read over the summer reading letter for your child with them and help make sure they have what they need to read 5-10 books over the summer. Children will need different levels of support as they complete one of our summer reading response forms for each of the books that they read.

The first key goal for supporting your child's reading is finding books that really are of interest to the child. We've developed an extra-long summer reading list with plenty of genres to choose from! The second goal is to emphasize the use of strategies previously taught at school to help children better comprehend what they are reading. Being an active reader keeps one engaged with the text. In class we introduce and support children in using the following strategies:

1. *Visualizing*

Visualizing asks the reader to pause and create an image in his or her mind of what is being read. This strategy is particularly helpful in reading books with few illustrations.

2. *Making Connections*

We encourage children to make connections to what they are reading in three different ways:

- *Text to self:* A text to self connection occurs when a child reads about something in a book that has actually happened to him/ her. For example: in the book *Olivia*, the character of Olivia the pig goes to an art gallery in a big city. A child reading that book can better imagine what that is like for Olivia if he/she has been to an art gallery and can make a connection to his/her own life.
- *Text to world:* A text to world connection occurs when the reader connects something he/she is reading to something that is happening in the world.
- *Text to text:* A text to text connection occurs when the reader connects something he/she has read in one book to something he/she has read in another book.

3. *Retelling or Summarizing:*

Summarizing is a useful strategy to help the child remember what he/she has read and then put that into his/her own words. We often use summarizing in reading groups before starting a new chapter of a book to make sure everyone has understood what they have read.

A parent, when reading with a child, can prompt reading strategies by asking questions such as, “Can you make a connection to this part in the book?”; “Can you visualize what a night sky of fireflies might look like?”; “Could you summarize what we read yesterday?” Asking your child reading strategy questions helps this practice become internalized and automatic.

Here are a few more tips for encouraging literacy.

1. Make reading and writing a regular part of your daily activities. Let your child see you using reading and writing for real purposes.
2. Visit the public library. Help your child get his or her own library card.
3. Read to your child regularly, even after your child is able to read books independently.
4. Listen to your child read; use the reading strategies mentioned above when reading together.
5. Talk to your child about what he or she is reading. Ask open-ended questions such as “What do you think about the story?” “What would you have done if you were that character?”
6. Praise your child’s efforts at reading.
7. Play word games such as thinking of different words to describe things.
8. Support your child’s writing. Have writing materials such as paper, markers, and pencils available. Read what your child writes.
9. Set reasonable limits for screen time.
10. Check out some websites for summer reading,  
PBS: [www.pbs.org/parents/education/read/](http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/read/).  
Scholastic: [www.scholastic.com/ups/campaigns/src-2013/parent](http://www.scholastic.com/ups/campaigns/src-2013/parent)  
Scholastic: [www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/collection/more-reading-resources/keep-your-kids-reading-all-summer-long](http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/collection/more-reading-resources/keep-your-kids-reading-all-summer-long)  
<http://www.books4yourkids.com>  
<http://www.vintagechildrensbooksmykidloves.com>

We hope you have a great summer and enjoy reading as you go. Remember you can take a book along when you go to the lake, park or beach and enjoy relaxing while reading!

Happy Reading! See you in September.

Scott, Deb, Becky, Melani, Dawn, Katri and Patrice