

Calling All Parents and Grandparents

We Need Your Ideas For Helping Children Learn to Read FOR FUN!

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We know some of you have tried wild ideas to get your son or daughter or grandchild to read during the summer. Studies (Cooper, Truby, McGill-Franzen & Allington) are showing that children maintain the reading growth they attain during the school year if they will read at least 6 books during the summer. These same studies found that children who read 8 to 12 books actually made reading gains during the summer. When I first heard this in 2004, I immediately shared it with my own children and grandchildren. The two who were in 4th grade, going into 5th had been given the MAP test in the spring. When they took the MAP again in the fall, one of them had read exactly 6 books and maintained his spring score. The other had read 10 to 12 books and raised her reading level by four months. If you have kept track of your students' spring and fall reading scores, you already know that "maintaining" is almost a nonentity (Hasbroach & Tindel) – even for your top students,

Can you imagine what this piece of research could do for all our students? Now that we have the research, we must find some "wild ideas" for getting and keeping them involved in reading all summer.

I am going to share some of the ideas people have already given to me, that have been successful. But I also want you to send me ideas that have worked for you or someone you know. If we can find enough of these, maybe we can find one for every girl or boy out there. That is our goal! We will put them on the TCARC link on MRA's website.(mnreading.org)

1. Jim Trelease says that children need the three B's. Books, (notice it is plural) a book basket and a bed lamp. ("Most children will do anything in order to stay up later.")
2. In order to play a video game for 30 minutes, s/he first had to read for 30 minutes.
3. Start a reading club in the neighborhood. Bring them together (with food) several times during the summer and talk about what they liked about their book. The group can be multi aged and it still works.
4. Give away books in the spring (ask your faith communities to bring in lightly used books) so that everyone can have 10 to 15 books available during the summer.
5. Open the library in your school at least one evening a week during the summer (for a few hours) to provide ample choices for the children.
6. (This one hasn't been tried – I don't think – but our boys would love it.) Have a contest and place the children in teams. Each child would keep track of the books s/he read during the summer. In the fall, the team with the most books read could get a trophy. Boys love contests and trophies.
7. Some schools are having readathons for a money raiser. Again – boys love contests and trophies.
8. (As a true Swede – this one was a bit hard for me to swallow – but it worked.) PAY the child for every book read. Maybe a dollar a book for the first 6 and two dollars a book for the next 4 and three dollars a book for the next 4.
9. Help the child find books in a series that s/he likes. The beauty of this is that after they have finished one – there is always another and another and another. Children are like you and me – we often choose books in a series or genre. As a grandmother, I made a leveled list of series books for my grandchildren. I wanted them to whip right through the books – so when we went to Border's or Barnes and Noble or the Red Balloon or Wild Rumpus Room, I would have an idea of just how difficult the book might be for them. Then of course I bought them several. My husband said that

we could have gone to the library – but I thought they would like their own – to own. If you want this list, please send me an email. I will enclose it.

10. I have some dear teacher friends who you will find on the beaches somewhere in the world in the summer, who have a personal “book jacket” they have made for the “trashy” book they are reading. Their minds are on vacation and they are loving the book. I don’t know if you have noticed, but boys are reading *Captain Underpants* and *Zombie Butts from Uranus*, In my 8th grade remedial reading class I couldn’t keep enough of them on the shelf. Maybe reading them makes them feel like they are on vacation.
11. In conversation at our last TCARC board meeting, someone brought up graphic novels that begin at the back of the book. Boys love them. Manga is the term for this sub-genre.
12. When children are in the primary grades, they often read more books because they are shorter. One mom made a paper chain for her son and each link had the name of a book he had read. It grew all summer. She found he loved rereading some books – which is also a good idea that comes from Jay Samuels. For every time he reread the book she added another chain link to the original link for the book..
13. Another idea for rereading books if they are your own – the child can place a check or sticker in the front of the book after each reading.
14. My grandson has two great friends in his neighborhood. His mom talked with the other mothers and the boys got together once a week to read the same book. They would take turns reading until they finished the book.
15. Have the child write a plan for which books s/he would like to read during the summer. Place it on his/her bulletin board.
16. I would like to add one idea to Jim Trelease’s “three.” Give the child a flashlight to keep by his/her bed. It’s amazing how they feel reading is fun to do in the middle of the night. This is one we used with our four when they were in elementary school. If you have a cabin – leave some flashlights by the books that are near their beds.
17. Cut this article out and put in the workplace of your husband or wife, or copy it and send it home to your parents.

Now we need to hear from you. And we need to share. What a gift to give a child! Can you imagine how our students would feel if they came back in the fall reading better than they had in the spring! Such an accomplishment – what a feat to celebrate!

And THANK YOU!

Resources:

www.trelease-on-reading.org
www.reading.org
www.guysread.com
www.mnreading.org
www.mnreading.org/tcarc_.html
www.readingrockets.org