Idaho Family Reading Week is an annual statewide celebration of reading as a family activity. The theme this year is “Imagine the Fun at Your Library.” Libraries across the state are planning fun events that celebrate family reading.

Your library can help you find lots of great books that spark your child’s imagination. The library also offers storytimes, and many libraries offer game nights, arts and crafts, workshops, kids’ clubs, adult clubs, teen programs, computer access, video games, movies, music, and more...at no cost!

**Imagine That!**

In order for children to understand what they are reading, they must be able to imagine what the characters are doing, why they are doing it, and what they might do next. If children have never engaged in imaginative play, it is very difficult for them to do this. Singing, talking, reading, playing, and writing/drawing with your young child every day will help her develop the skills she needs in order to learn to read. Here are some things you can do:

- Encourage your child to draw their own pictures on blank paper, rather than use coloring books.
- Make up silly songs to familiar tunes.
- Join in “pretend” play with your child.
- Read books that spark your child’s imagination.

**Book of the Month**

*Skippyjon Jones*, by Judy Schachner

Skippyjon Jones is a Siamese kitten who doesn’t want to be an ordinary cat. While having a time-out in his room, his imagination turns him into a superhero— the great Spanish sword fighter “Skippito,” who happens to be a Chihuahua. This is a wild, crazy and over-the-top adventure that is fun to read aloud. The colorful pictures, Spanish words and phrases, and funny text make it a favorite for both children and grown-ups!

If your child enjoyed this story, check out some of the other *Skippyjon Jones* books:

- *Skippyjon Jones in the Doghouse*
- *Skippyjon Jones in MummyTrouble*
- *Skippyjon Jones and the Big Bones*
- *Skippyjon Jones: Lost in Spice*
- *Skippyjon Jones: Class Action*
- *Skippyjon Jones: Cirque de Ole*

**More books to spark imagination:**

*If I Ran the Zoo and If I Ran the Circus*, by Dr. Seuss

*Isabella: Star of the Story*, by Jennifer Fosberry

*Not a Box*, by Antoinette Portis

*Oliver*, by Birgitta Sif

*Perfect Square*, by Michael Hall

*Roxaboxen*, by Alice McLerran

*Traction Man Is Here!* by Mini Grey

*Where the Wild Things Are*, by Maurice Sendak
More fun with *Skippyjon Jones*…

**Math connection…** Skippyjon pops Alfredo Buzzito like a balloon, and every kind of bean comes out! Give your child a container of mixed dried beans. Let her sort them so that “each pile is alike in some way.” Encourage your child to find new ways to sort them each time, such as color, type, size, shape. Being able to sort things by different “attributes” is an important math skill!

**Print motivation…** Check out an information book from the library about Siamese cats or Chihuahuas.

**Where in the world?** “Geography” is the study of people, places and locations.

- In the story, Skippyjon travels far away to old Mexico. Help your child find Mexico on a map or globe.
- There are lots of Spanish words in the story: *muy* (much), *frijoles* (beans), *¿Por qué?* (why?), *Yo quiero* (I want), *vamos* (go/leave), *Hola, muchachitas* (Hey, girls), *Buenas noches, mis amigos* (Goodnight, my friends). Can your child find others?

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**Song**

When Skippyjon sings his song, “Oh, my name is Skippito Friskito,” he is singing to the tune of the *Mexican Hat Dance*, or *Jarabe tapatío*.

The song has become a folk dance popular throughout Mexico and the Southwestern United States as a symbol of the national pride and honor of the Mexican people.

You can hear the tune at http://www.janbrett.com/piggybacks/hatdance.htm

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**Action Song**

*Here We Go Looby Loo*

Here we go looby loo,
Here we go looby light,
Here we go looby loo,
All on a Saturday night.

You put your right hand in.
Your take your right hand out.
You give your hand a shake, shake, shake,
And turn yourself about.

Repeat...

You put your left hand in...
You put your right foot in...
You put your left foot in...
You put your whole self in...

You can hear this song at http://bussongs.com/songs/here-we-go-looby-loo.php

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**What your library can do for you…**

Ask your librarian about special events and programs planned for Family Reading Week!