

Summer Reading Outreach Guidebook



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Why Do Outreach Over the Summer?

Summer learning loss: Most young people experience a slowdown in learning over the summer, but there is a dramatic gap when comparing children from low-income and middle-income families.

Children from middle-income families start their first year of kindergarten more advanced than those from low-income families. During the school year, both learn at the same rate. But when summer comes around, the middle-income children enjoy enriching activities like library summer reading programs. They advance their skills by one or two months, while the low-income children slide back, losing as much as *three to four months* of skills. This pattern repeats itself every summer. By fifth grade, there is a 2 to 3 year gap in reading comprehension skills. By ninth grade, the summer slide accounts for about two-thirds of the reading gap.

The Idaho State Department of Education reports that in spring of 2012, **83 percent** of low-income kindergarteners had grade-level reading skills (i.e. scored 'benchmark' on the Idaho Reading Indicator). When those same first-graders returned in the fall, only **57 percent** were at grade level. The low-income first graders' reading skills fell even more drastically: in the spring **70 percent** were reading at grade-level; when they returned in the fall as second graders only **45 percent** maintained grade-level proficiency.

Research-guided principles that impact reading proficiency:

- 1) The **volume** of reading a child engages in over the summer directly relates to how much learning is maintained.
- 2) Children must have fingertip **access** to books that provide engaging, successful reading experiences.

"Underserved" children and families: In Idaho, the following groups of children have limited access to public libraries over the summer: Children in low-income families, latchkey children, English language learners, children in daycare, newcomer/refugee children, and children living in rural areas in which the library is a great distance away.

Research tells us that low-income children have few or no age-appropriate books or other print materials in the home. The same is true for children of refugee status. We also know that many child care centers do not have quality libraries on-site. And without adult interaction, latchkey children (who are oftentimes responsible for younger siblings) are more likely to turn on the television than engage in reading or learning activities.

Library outreach is critical. Children in these "underserved" populations have little or no access to books over the summer. This severely diminishes the volume of reading they engage in and results in widening the achievement gap each year. Investing in ways to keep these children reading over summer break is crucial. Reaching out to underserved children or nonlibrary users in your community to provide books and other print materials requires creative and non-traditional approaches; and this requires staff to transition from "building-based" to "community-based" thinking. Community-based approaches involve strong partnerships with schools, child care organizations and centers, social service agencies, and businesses.

This guidebook provides some community-based examples of how Idaho libraries have provided summer library services that expand accessibility to books and print materials, and increase the volume of reading children engage in over the summer. Whether your public or school library is large or small, urban or rural, there are many outreach opportunities you can customize to fit your library's budget and staff size.

Child Care Outreach

Summer Reading Outreach from Moscow Public Library, a branch of Latah County Library District

by Betsy Bybell, Outreach Services Manager at Latah County Library

Summer Reading Outreach has been an ongoing program for 12 years now with about 10 local daycares participating. By expanding outside the physical library building, I'm able to reach over 350 children each summer.

The rules are simple. If the teachers read to the children every day, every child who listens is considered to be part of summer reading. Each teacher fills out one reading log for each class, but this isn't critical. Reading aloud every day is what counts. All ages at the daycare are enrolled from babies through school-age. Children who leave for extended vacations are included. Children who start later in the summer are included.



I present library-promoted storytimes that are theme-based in June and July to each site. In August, I hand out prize books to each child. Every child gets to choose a board book, picture book, or chapter book to take home. To keep the confusion down, teachers either write the child's name inside the book or hand me a list of names to write myself. A colorful certificate with the child's name and the library's name is inserted into the book, to be placed in their cubby. The teachers choose books for the children who are absent the day I deliver prize books so every child receives the final prize of a free book. I'm able to distribute a large number of prize books because of the ICfL's Bright Futures Reaching Underserved Children program.

When I have extra books at the end, I let the teachers select a book for their classroom library. After all, they did all the reading and their enthusiasm carries the program. If there are extra incentive prizes from the Friends of the Library, I distribute those too.

Surprisingly there are a low number of duplicates whose parents also sign them up for summer reading at the library in person.

Keys to Success:

- Partner with preschools and daycares. They're a captive audience. This is an easy ongoing program because I already see these daycares during the school year from September through May. Cooperating with summer reading outreach at the daycares becomes another strength in building community relationships.
- Keep it simple for all involved. The goal of the summer reading program is to instill the love of books and know the library is a fun place when they are able to visit the building.
- Don't worry about any families that might be double-dipping by being enrolled in both daycares and library's program. The low cost of a few books and incentive prizes isn't worth the worry.

- Figure out what works with your library’s ongoing summer reading program and incorporate locations outside the physical building. These locations are a captive audience with easy reporting and little staff time compared to in-house summer reading.

More Tips:

Megan Egbert, youth services coordinator at Meridian Library District, said they are now focusing about 50 percent of their summer reading efforts outside the library. She focuses outreach efforts on child care providers, their local Parks and Recreation Department, and their Boys and Girls Club. She offered three tips for successful outreach programs:

- We dedicated a staff member to focus on outreach. That helps to make sure it gets done.
- We designed special summer reading logs for daycares/outreach places. There is room on these logs for multiple children.
- We try to pair our visits to give out prizes with a program so they can get familiar with the idea of what the library offers.

Ada County Boys and Girls Clubs & Local Libraries Summer Reading Partnership

Background:

During a December 2011 forum concerning the importance of reading by the end of third grade, representatives from the Boys and Girls Clubs (BGC) of Ada County and the local library community attended a round-table discussion on summer learning loss facilitated by the Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL). Joey Schuler, director of operations for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Ada County, and other BGC staff felt they could help address this serious issue through their summer program. The three Ada County Boys and Girls Clubs serve over 4,600 kids during the summer months, with 80 percent qualifying for free or reduced school lunches.

The library staff also believed there were ample opportunities to partner with the BGC to provide resources and support through outreach. The partnership had two main goals:

- 1) increase children’s access to age-appropriate print materials; and
- 2) keep children reading over the summer.

The Read to Me program was given hundreds of new quality books from a Barnes and Noble Holiday Book Drive in 2011. With the donated books, the Read to Me staff were able to work with the libraries and Clubs to establish a Reading Corner at each site -- Kuna Center / Kuna Public Library; Meridian Center / Meridian Library District; and the Mosely Center / Garden City Library. The libraries worked directly with BGC staff to provide services to the children attending the Centers to increase their access to high-quality print materials. They were able to get Book Corners established in the spring (except in Kuna since they only offer a summer program), which helped strengthen relationships with Club staff and have things in place before the Summer Reading pilot started.

Dr. Roger Stewart, a College of Education professor at Boise State University who conducted previous evaluations of ICfL Read to Me programs since 2008, also met with library and BGC staff to talk about evaluating the program. The question to determine was “by providing quality, appealing, and ample reading materials for children at the BGC, as well as time during the day to read, will these children read more over the summer?” Although there were some challenges in getting the program up and going, the answer to the question was a resounding “yes!”

Pilot Program

Phase One: Establish or Enhance Reading Corners (February, March 2012)

Staff from each library inventoried their BGC’s current collection of books and other print materials, then chose two hundred books from the Barnes and Noble donations according to the Center’s needs. Libraries worked with BGC staff to catalog the books and establish a space to house the collection. The BGC centers needed to procure shelving and comfortable seating if necessary. The Commission provided signage acknowledging the sponsors: Barnes and Noble, the ICfL, and the local library.



The newly restocked reading corner in the Meridian Boys and Girls Club was a great place for kids to hang out.

Phase Two: Summer Reading Programs (May, June, July, August 2012)

Main components: Training and “buy-in” of BGC staff prior to start-up of the summer program was a crucial part of this pilot program. Training included basic research about summer reading loss and the importance of access to print materials, an overview of the pilot program, and logistics. Joey had acknowledged the fact that most BGC staff believed that summer was a time to focus on fun and were concerned that implementing a summer reading program with everything else they have going on would be too academic and might not be a good fit for them. Knowing about the reservations was important in planning the trainings and getting staff excited about what the program could do for kids in the long-term.

The partners also met to establish group reading goals and figure out ways to track the amount of reading. The focus for the summer reading program was on elementary age students and it helped to not try to focus on every age group with the pilot program. Outreach visits from local library staff were done each week and give-away books and prizes were provided. A reading attitude survey was developed, but the timing for getting them back for both pre- and post-testing was not ideal and this aspect of the pilot program was not completed.

Children tracked how many minutes they read by filling out a coupon for each 10 minutes of reading they completed. Those were collected each week by the library staff and ICfL volunteers tallied them.

Each BGC Center provided a minimum of 15 – 20 minutes each day for voluntary reading for 10 weeks. Kids could use this time to read, or they could use it as “chill” time if they didn’t want to read, as long as they weren’t bothering others who were reading. Staff found that if the time was provided, many kids chose to spend it with books (reading on their own, reading with a friend, listening to a read-aloud from a grownup or

older student, thumbing through a picture book, listening to an audio book, etc.). Having BGC staff read their own books and model reading was a huge part of the program and part of a cultural shift that occurred at the centers. Megan Egbert, youth services coordinator at Meridian Library District, encouraged BGC staff to “fake it until you make it,” meaning even if they didn’t enjoy reading, they should find a comic book or magazine article that appeals to them and try it. It’s critical for the kids to see adults read.

Results: In 2012 youth participants read over 1,972 hours inside the three clubs over ten weeks. BGC staff didn’t track reading time in 2011, but estimate fewer than ten hours were spent on an individual basis reading since it was not a priority of the Clubs at that time. All three clubs achieved or surpassed their reading goals.

In 2013, the partnerships at all three sites continued and some changes were made. Youth at the Meridian center read over 1,500 hours. Instead of paper logs, the Meridian site utilized their online tracking system (that they log in and out with) in the reading room to track their progress. This posed new challenges, but still provided invaluable data. Megan reported 165 kids completed level one of Meridian’s Summer Reading Program (200 minutes of reading). A sampling of participants surveyed showed 87 percent of youth liked to read at the end of summer, a 3 percent increase from the beginning of summer.

Changes proposed for 2014 include more emphasis on staff training, improvement to the process for recording reading time, and consideration of switching to an informal reading assessment that captures skills and abilities rather than perceptions about reading.

Key Points – from Megan’s perspective:

- Staff training is essential
- Traditional programming methods might not work
- Embrace “controlled chaos”
- Gather as much feedback as possible
- Put high energy staff who are “kid people” in charge of outreach programs

Key Points – from Joey’s perspective:

- Partnership must be a win-win for both agencies
- Create buy-in at multiple levels in the organizations to create a real “shift in culture”
- Plan your strategies and include front-line staff in planning (which also builds buy-in)
- Be willing to adapt to ensure success
- Learn the basics of research and use it
- This model is not limited to Boys and Girls Clubs – could work in lots of other settings

Summer Reading Programs in Elementary School Libraries

School libraries often close their doors during summer, but in districts where they are able to provide access to students throughout the summer it is an excellent way to minimize the summer slide. A few school libraries in Idaho have tried this model with success. New Plymouth Elementary School, for example, is open two days a week for four hours a day. Another example, highlighted below, is from the Caldwell School District.



Caldwell School District's Summer Library Program

By Norma Jean Sprouske, Teacher-Librarian at Syringa Middle School and Library Coordinator for K-8

The Caldwell School District (CSD) has been able to utilize Title 1 funds (and grants when possible) to keep three elementary school libraries open during the summer for the past twelve years. The main goals for the program are:

- to provide resources and motivation for students and their families to read for pleasure;
- to increase students' reading skills; and
- to provide hands-on opportunities for exploration of curricular subjects.

The District strategically selects the three school libraries farthest from the public library to participate. School libraries are open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for nine weeks. The summer library program starts the week after school is out and continues until the end of July. The program dovetails nicely with the summer feeding program which provides free lunches at the schools through state funding.

The three summer library programs run on a budget of under \$5,000 for the nine weeks. Often school librarians are hired to coordinate the program, but Norma Jean said that "once in awhile another aide or a teacher picks it up. We try hard to recruit from the school year's personnel to attract kids to a known entity at their school." Most of the \$5,000 budget goes toward personnel costs (about \$4,000) and the rest is for incentive books and a few supplies. Personnel get one extra "day" of four hours to attend a training, plan, set up, and to provide a statistical report at the conclusion of the program. The coordinators often recruit a Foster Grandparent, VISTA Reads person, or middle school student to help daily at each library.

Norma Jean said they encourage families to attend together and promote the programs heavily during the last three weeks of school. The schools also coordinate with staff at the Caldwell Public Library to encourage summer reading. Caldwell Public Library (CPL) files the ICFL reports by combining statistics from students participating at the school libraries and those at their library. Award winners and participants are also recognized at fall assemblies at each school with a visit from CPL's children's librarian. Services and activities offered during the school library programs include:

- circulate to any parent or K-6 student within the school's boundaries, even though some are homeschooled and the schools are K-5;
- read to a librarian, parent, Foster Grandparent, or buddy;
- play carefully chosen computer games and learning games linked from the CSD library's website (time is earned by reading or a limited time is set using a timer for a group);
- earn a free book when they complete 10 days of at least 20 minutes of reading or being read to (tweaks on the CPL's reading incentive program);
- earn free restaurant coupons and rodeo tickets as part of the reading incentive (CPL provides);
- perform Reader's Theater (some kids write their own too);
- listen to storytime;
- participate in the weekly Canyon County 4-H program with a book shared and activity tie-in;
- participate in a presentation from the local Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge;
- use borrowed book activity kits &/or puppets from CPL;

- explore rotating stations such as an audio book and picture book; art activity; play board games & puzzles; hands-on science.

The school libraries find it useful to set clear expectations and guidelines at the beginning of the program.

Rules include:

- children younger than graduated kindergarteners must be accompanied by someone 18 or older;
- seventh-grade students and older may not be in the library unless they are directly responsible for the younger siblings participating;
- one outside door serves as entrance and exit;
- a sign-in and sign-out sheet with name & times for all users is at the entrance;
- information forms have parent's signature and contact info for the kids using the library.

Norma Jean said some students do spend all four hours Tuesday through Thursday at the programs because there's not much else for some of our kids to do during the summer. Having emergency contact information and guidelines in place help eliminate potential challenges for staff.

Results: Data gathered from the last five years show the program is meeting its goals. The number of books checked out from each school library has ranged from a low of 370 to a high of 949. The average circulation for all of the schools is 581 items circulated during the nine weeks. This does not include the many books read on-site. Summer librarians also track the number of students who



register and participate in the school's version of the CPL's summer reading program; per school registration has ranged from 67 to a high of 177 and averages at 112. In the past five years, cumulative attendance ranges from a low of 554 at one school one summer to a high of 1,221. In 2013, 290 students registered for Caldwell Public Library Summer Reading Program at the three elementary schools. Additional students participated in the elementary summer reading program, but just taking the 290 registered students with a budget of \$5,000 shows the program was very cost effective at approximately \$17.24 per student. Personnel involved in the program say providing access to books and enriching activities for students has helped meet an important need in the community and been a great return on the investment.

Literacy in the Park: Come for the Food, Stay for the Books

By Julie Armstrong, ICfL AmeriCorp VISTA

As the noon hour approached during the summer of 2013, parks and apartment complexes across Boise and Garden City filled up with children coming for Picnic in the Park. The Idaho FoodBank has provided free lunch for children eighteen-years and younger during the summer for the



past 15 years. If they were going to feed their stomachs, then the libraries could be feeding their minds. Several public libraries in the area had partnered with the FoodBank in past years, but a new pilot program, Literacy in the Park, was coordinated by ICfL's Read to Me team to have a consistent presence at each of the 24 feeding sites along with planned enrichment activities and new "Little Libraries" to increase access to books for all ages.

The FoodBank provided lunch five days a week at 24 sites across Boise and Garden City to over 1,000 children. FoodBank staff have utilized Americorps VISTA Summer Associates and graciously allocated one of their 10 Associate slots to work full time for ten weeks on the Literacy in the Park program. ICfL staff worked with staff from Ada Community Library, Boise Public Library, and Garden City Public Library to plan activities and figure out a schedule to cover each of the 24 sites one day per week for ten weeks during the summer.

The anchor of the program, storytime, was carried out by our partner librarians and volunteers. Themes had been chosen for the ten weeks of the program that were loosely based on the Cooperate Summer Library Program (CSLP) Summer Reading theme, "Dig In!" and tied in when possible with the mission of the FoodBank. (See the following pages of the Guidebook for an outline of themes, books, and activities.) Each site visit lasted anywhere from 30 minutes to just under two hours. Staff read one or two books, often incorporated a song or fingerplays, and then focused on the week's enrichment activity and encouraging kids to take out books from the Little Libraries bin.

Community partners and volunteers were an integral part of the success of the program. Using VolunteerMatch.org and the AmeriCorps network, volunteers were recruited to support each route. A newspaper editor, Head Start teacher, bank employee, Master's Literacy student, and Americorps Reads VISTAs participated. They helped children select books from the Little Libraries, did storytime, and helped with the enrichment activities. Over 500 volunteer hours were logged for the program, including the 40 hours per week the Summer Associate dedicated to the program. Local businesses donated soil, seeds, plastic containers, and gift cards. The Modern Woodmen Fraternal Financial Organization donated jump ropes, magnifying glasses, mini-binoculars, pencils, and other supplies.

Little Libraries were a hit with the children and their parents. ICfL and the three library partners received over 1,100 gently-used books from community members, friends of staff, and partners. They were sorted, cleaned, and stickered before being placed in plastic bins. New books were also utilized through the Commission's Summer Reading Undeserved Program. A balance of board and picture books, early chapter books, and Young Adult books were included in each bin. A sticker on each book said "Read and Return," and staff spent time explaining the concept of the book-lending program to children and parents. If the books came back that was good, but if they didn't that was okay since one of the goals of the program was to increase access to print. On good weeks about 25 percent of the books were returned.



Results: The Summer Associate kept accurate statistics of the number of books that were "checked out" at each of the 16 parks she visited each week. Records from the other seven parks were not as accurate, but at least 202 books were checked out at three of the other parks for a total of 2,503 books circulating through the Little Libraries over the ten weeks of the program. Of those, 480 were checked out and returned to the parks

for others to check out. The last two weeks of the program, children could take one of the books home to keep. The Read to Me program also provided a free book, *Amazing Animals*, during the week of June 24 along with a blank nature journal, activity sheet and pencil. Statistics were kept at 19 of the 23 parks to see how many were distributed and the total was 487, or an average of 25 per park.

Dr. Roger Stewart, BSU Literacy Professor and Read to Me evaluator, designed surveys for youth and parents or caregivers. The last two weeks of the program, Dr. Stewart, Read to Me team members, and a public librarian went to each of the 23 sites to individually ask the survey questions to youth and parents. 64 children ranging in age from three to 15 answered the 10 questions asked of them. When asked if they read more this summer than in previous summers, 45 of the 64 reported they read more this summer. When asked why they read more, responses ranged from finding a great book or several books they enjoyed to "I want to be smart!" Several cited having "the library" come to the park as the impetus in reading more this summer. When asked if the summer reading activities in the park were fun, all but eight said yes. When asked if they attended the *public library* summer reading program, 43 of 64 said no. 38 of 64 said they visited the public library this summer.

65 parents or caregivers took time to answer surveyors' questions. Respondents were asked if their children liked the books that they received. 50 of 51 respondents said yes and the other response was "some." No one said no, didn't read them, or not sure. Parent/caregivers were asked what their child's favorite books were. 68 different topics, themes, or specific books were mentioned. The most often mentioned were the Magic Tree House series (7 mentions) and dinosaurs (6 mentions). These results reveal the patrons' diverse interests and underscore the need for eclectic collections to stimulate and maintain interest. When asked whether their children read more during the summer than in previous summers, 38 of 59 respondents said yes (64.4%). 16 said no and 5 said didn't know. Reasons given for reading more were convenient access to books through the Summer Literacy in the Park program, interesting books available, and their children finding a particular interest in reading (e.g., genre, author, topic) and thus reading more.

Staff and volunteers were also asked to collect anecdotal comments throughout the program. Here are a few comments that were collected:

- A mom told us that after seeing us last week she took her kids to the library for the first time and got them library cards. She herself hadn't been to the library since she was a kid."
- As a child was picking out lots of books she said, "I'm going to be reading all summer!"
- Kids asked for books in Spanish so their mom could read to them. And we had a nice selection to offer.
- Mom says kids look forward to the library at each park they go to. "It's the highlight of their day!"
- One mother said having the library come to the parks made it easier for her. "With four kids, getting any place is difficult. I really appreciate what you are doing. Thank you."
- A dad found a book in the Little Libraries he liked as a child and read it to his son.

The full Literacy in the Park evaluation report can be found on the Read to Me website, <http://libraries.idaho.gov/landing/read-to-me>

A Powtoon presentation on the program can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9yxCNuXU5k

Key lessons learned from Literacy in the Park:

Numbers — Numbers of children will fluctuate from park to park, day to day, week to week. Severe weather (rain, heat) will keep numbers down, as will vacations and holidays. Summer school for elementary kids in some districts is the entire month of July. Always keep track of numbers so there are enough materials. An easy way to do this is to start with a pre-counted box of give-away items. At the end of the day, count how many remain and that will tell you how many kids were there (even if not all of them come to the library storytime). You can do this with the Little Libraries inventory to track how many books get borrowed. Keep returns separate, at least until they are tallied and written down (in case someone wants to borrow a book someone else just returned).

Books — The Little Libraries bins started with a book ratio of age appropriate books, but you will soon get a feeling for what books the kids at each site like. Be aware, however, that there may be great fluctuation week to week. You may see the same kids each week, or an entirely different group each time. If a child asks for a certain kind of book, be sure to have it with you the next week. Be aware that he or she may not be there the next week, however. It is best to be on the safe side. They may come the following week, so if it is not a high-demand title, hang on to it for another week, just in case. Kids have long memories!

Give-aways — It is helpful to always have some kind of give-away (not just literacy pamphlets) to give to the kids in the park. These are helpful to encourage kids to visit the Little Libraries when you first arrive, especially if kids seem more interested in the playground.

- Some give-aways are part of the activity (for example, the Model Magic worms or planted seeds). These should only be given to kids who participate in the activity (you will need fewer of these than other give-aways).

Size of Parks — Some parks are very large and sprawling, and lunch may start before you arrive. It is best at these parks to set up and then canvass the area, letting kids and parents know you are there and tell them that storytime will start in five minutes (for example). This is the time that give-aways can be best utilized. (“Would you like a coloring book? Come see us at the library table, over there under the big tree!”) Always identify yourself as being from the library, as it puts kids and parents at ease when you are offering toys. When possible, wear a library or summer reading t-shirt, name tag, summer reading button, etc. At smaller parks, lunch may only be served for only a brief time. You may arrive and set up long before any kids arrive. In these cases, it is better to wait to do storytime until kids have food. As they wait in line, let them know to come to the Little Libraries for a story while they eat.

Site volunteers— It is not necessary for site volunteers to undergo extensive training. It is recommended that site volunteers be placed in charge of the Little Libraries (helping children pick out books, answering parent questions) while library staff supervise the activity or do storytime. Volunteers should be aware of the importance of self-selection and how to help children choose books that are appropriate to their reading level.

The outline for the ten weeks of Literacy in the Park programming follows on the next five pages:



Week One: Libraries Rock!

Books: *Maybe a Bear Ate It*, by Robie Harris; *Silly Sally*, by Audrey Wood

Materials supplied (packaged in a plastic bag):

- Let's Go to the Library coloring book
- Box of crayons
- Summer Reading brochure

It is helpful to have printed information for parents to give them:

- Schedule (all parks with times)
- How/where to return books
- Summer reading loss info
- Identification (who we are)

Activity:

- Introduce summer program
- Introduce Little Libraries



Week Two: Delightful Dirt

Books: *Dirt on My Shirt*, by Jeff Foxworthy. *Poems read include "Dirt on My Shirt," "Roly-poly," and "What do You See?"* *Dirt*, by Steve Tomecek. *Excerpts read on page 5, 7, 13, 24.*

Materials supplied:

- Magnifying glasses
- Compost
- Tablecloths (to lay soil on)

Activity:

- Discuss different types of soil
- Let children explore dirt with magnifying glasses
 - *Be careful to not allow children to light anything on fire with magnifying glasses!*
 - *Have a list of bugs for kids to hunt for in the dirt (ants, roly-polys, earwigs, etc.).*

Take-home extension activity:

- Magnifying glasses (if there are enough)
- Six Literacy Skills brochure



Week Three: Wonderful Worms

Books: *Wonderful Worms*, by Linda Glaser; *Diary of a Worm*, by Doreen Cronin

Materials supplied:

- Model Magic
- Worms (where requested) Get fat earthworms (the little red ones may die easier, not as cute)
 - *Worms can live for a long time in the fridge but make sure worms have air and water!*
- Vinyl tablecloths
- Magnifying glasses (left over from Delightful Dirt activity)
- Optional gloves/ hand sanitizer

Activity:

- Observe worms
 - Lay worms on a paper towel (in the shade) to keep them from drying out
 - One adult should remain with the children and worms at all times
- Make Model Magic worms

Take-home extension activity:

- Dialogic Reading brochure
- Finished worm sculpture



Week Four: Amazing Animals

Books: *I Love Animals*, by Flora McDonnell; *In the Small, Small Pond*, by Denise Fleming; *Amazing Animals*, by Betsy Franco-Feeney

Materials supplied (packaged in a plastic bag):

- *Amazing Animals* book
- Observation journal & pencil
- Binoculars

Activity:

- Go through the kit, explain how to assemble/use binoculars
- Talk about what to look for when observing animals

Take-home extension activity:

- Bagged observation kit (*Amazing Animals*, binoculars, pencil and journal) and Habitat Bingo handout



Week Five: Healthy Food!

Book: *Rah! Rah! Radishes!* by April Pulley Sayre

Materials supplied:

- Food pictures
- Magnetic frames (Breakfast is Cool, etc.)

Activity:

- Put food pictures in a bag/box for children to pull out and identify *or*
- Always foods/sometimes foods/rarely foods

Take-home extension activity:

- Magnetic frames (for pictures they draw at home of food)
- Bilingual Reading Tip brochure
- Healthy Foods brochure (ABCs of Healthy Snacking)



Activate Treasure Valley activities: Bean Bag Toss game with small prizes

Ask kids questions about food groups

Children throw the bean bag on the correct response, win prizes

(Modification for younger children—ask them colors or words)

Week Six: Get Moving!

Books: *Miss Mary Mack*, by Mary Ann Hoberman; *Dinosaur Roar!* by Paul & Henrietta Stickland

Materials supplied:

- Jump ropes
- Jump rope chant handout
- Get active handout

Activity:

- Practice jump rope—go through chants
- Ask kids what chants they already know

Take-home extension activity:

- Literacy on the Go booklets



Week Seven: Books are Fun

Books: *Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes*, by James Dean & Eric Litwin; *I Ain't Gonna Paint No More!* by Karen Beaumont

Materials supplied:

- Bookmarks
- Sharpies/ Markers
- Stamps/ Stickers

Activity:

- Write names and decorate bookmarks

Take-home extension activity:

- Music & Rhymes booklets



Week Eight: Gardens are Great

Books: *Up, Up, and Around*, by Katherine Ayres; *Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!* by Candace Fleming

Materials supplied:

- Seeds
- Soil
- Plastic Containers
- Spray bottles

Activity:

- Write name on plastic cup
- Fill plastic cup with potting soil
- Plant seed (based on package requirements) – write variety of seed on label
- Spray with water

Take-home extension activity:

- Take home plastic container with planted seeds



Week Nine: S.T.E.M. is Super and Marvelous Magnets

Book: *Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons*, by James Dean & Eric Litwin

Materials supplied:

- Horseshoe magnets
- Assortment of magnets
- Dot lids (magnetized)
- Cookie sheets

Activity:

- Explore if things are magnetic or not
- Create math problems with dot lids

Take-home extension activity:

- Magnets
- STEM booklets



Week Ten: Summer Fun!

Book: *Rhyming Dust Bunnies*, by Jan Thomas

Materials supplied:

- Pencils
- Puppet patterns

Activity:

- Make pencil puppets
- Survey participants

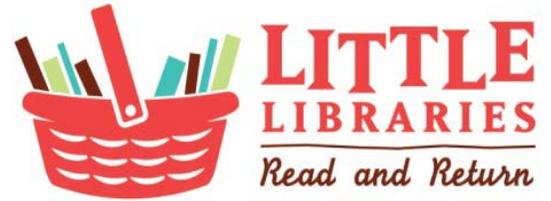
Take-home extension activity:

- TumbleBook postcard

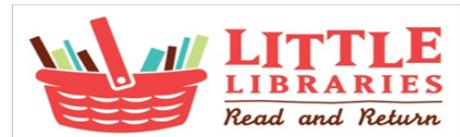


Other Ways to Increase Access to Print

Little Libraries: This model was adapted by the Idaho Commission for Libraries based on the Little Free Library™ model (see page 19 for more info). Commission staff collected new or gently used books from community partners and friends. They solicited books through posting on Facebook, email, and contacting community partners including the Boise Rescue Mission and Rediscovered Bookshop. The books were sorted, cleaned, stickered, and sorted by genre. Approximately 2,000 books were collected, including some that were purchased by the Commission. The books were placed in 14-gallon Rubbermaid bins. A rough “formula” was used for bins to divvy up the books for different age groups and interests. Each bin contained approximately 25 chapter books, five board books, and 30 picture books. A few bigger bins were used for larger parks that had more books. The Little Libraries were transported to Literacy in the Park sites each day and children were encouraged to borrow books for one week or until they were done reading their book. Books were borrowed on the honor system and some books came back while others didn’t. A reminder was given to participants about the purpose of the Little Libraries midway through the program, but there was a constant need to educate children and parents about how the program worked. This is the reminder that was provided:



Bring the book back in a week or when your child is done reading it. If it gets lost or damaged, no worries!



Lunch Schedule:

Monday – Ivywild Park, Manitou Park

Tuesday – Veteran’s Park, Waterfront Park, Mystic Cove

Wednesday – Latah Apartments, Cassia Park, Liberty Park, Borah Park

Thursday – Phillipi Park, Oak Park Village, Owyhee Park

Friday – Winstead Park, Mtn. View Park, Valley View School

Your child worked hard to be a better reader over the school year. Don’t let them lose that hard work. Kids that read 4 or 5 books over the summer hang onto their reading skills better than those who don’t.

Brought to you by the Idaho Commission for Libraries and your local library.



Little Free Libraries: A Little Free Library™ is a “take a book, return a book” gathering place where neighbors share their favorite literature and stories. In its most basic form, a Little Free Library is a box full of books where anyone may stop by and pick up a book and bring back another book to share. The program started in Wisconsin and has grown to an estimated 15,000 Little Free Libraries in 55 countries. In May, 2012, Little Free Library was officially established as a Wisconsin nonprofit corporation with a board of directors and Internal Revenue Service tax-exempt status. Official registered Little Libraries are listed on the website <http://littlefreelibrary.org/>. Idaho had 17 as of October, 2013. To start a Little Free Library (TM), visit <http://littlefreelibrary.org/getinvolved/>.

Book Corners: Efforts are underway throughout Idaho to establish Book Corners in doctor’s offices, Health District waiting rooms, WIC (Women Infant and Children) waiting rooms, laundromats, Boys and Girls Clubs, after school and summer school programs, child care centers, apartment complexes, and other places that families gather. A Book Corner often has reading posters, simple book shelves, and a rotating stock of good, age-appropriate books for children and families to share while waiting. The Read to Me program also helps provide free books to establish or refresh book corners.

Give-Away Books: It is important for children to have books of their own to read and re-read. The Commission for Libraries provides at least one paperback book for each child who participates in public library summer reading outreach programs through the Reaching Underserved Children / Bright Futures program. Last year over 50 libraries participated in this program, providing over 11,000 books for Idaho children at summer reading outreach sites.

End-of-School-Year Book Fair Model: In a study directed by Richard L. Allington and Anne McGill-Franzen, students from high-poverty elementary schools were invited to a book fair at the end of the school year (the study is featured in their book, *Summer Reading: Closing the Rich/Poor Reading Achievement Gap*). They were allowed to choose 12 books to keep and read over the summer. There were gains of 35-40 percent of a grade level made in the standardized tests that were taken after this intervention. This program didn’t have a high cost point per child (roughly \$50 per student) and there was a relatively low workload. The authors of this study have also observed models in which school libraries empty their shelves of books at the end of the school year by letting students check out many books to read over the summer. The authors noted in a *School Library Journal* article (see bibliography) that “typically the book loss is less than 10 percent of the books loaned. The cost of replacing lost books, compared to the high costs of summer learning loss, was believed to be well worth it.

Deposit Collections: Public libraries may decide to house rotating or static collections of books in child care settings, summer school programs, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start sites or other locations in the communities to improve access to books over the summer. Often these books are used “in-house” at the sites. Books can be selected from the library’s collection, purchased by Friends Groups, or through other funding avenues.



Nampa Public worked with ICfL and Barnes and Noble's Wish Book program to establish a book corner at their area WIC office. It is very popular with families!

Books to Go: The Idaho Commission for Libraries offers bins of Books to Go for child care settings, Head Start, developmental preschools and other places where children can be found. This program has been funded with an Institute of Museum and Library Services National Leadership Grant. While many Head Start sites close during the summer, creative solutions can be found to maintain access to these bins of books over the summer months. St. Maries Public Library, for example, collected the bin at the end of last summer and made the Books to Go bags available for check out at the library when families requested access. Others have been able to get them out to home visitors or other programs. For more information on how libraries can apply to partner with child care providers and others to offer Books to Go, visit <http://libraries.idaho.gov/landing/routes-to-reading>.

Don't forget to promote TumbleBooks and DaybyDayID.org. Promoting access to free online books and resources are another way to improve access to books. All Idaho libraries have access to these resources, at least through October 31, 2015. ICfL's statistics show a small percentage of Idaho families are aware of these resources.



National Outreach Models and Resources

Lunch and Learn in Bend, Oregon provides students with the opportunity to participate in a recreational summer reading program. A teacher is at the *Lunch and Learn* site to encourage and coach students as they work on reading skills. Sites are in parks and the Boys and Girls Club, with meals hosted by the school district. As students read and participate in the program they can earn books and other incentives.

www.ktvz.com/news/bendla-pine-summer-lunch-and-learn-set/-/413192/20514538/-/yi9687/-/index.html

School's Out Washington works in partnership with the **Children's Alliance**, Discuren Charitable Foundation, and **Page Ahead**, to address summer learning loss and hunger through the Feed Your Brain project. This project provides grants and training to schools, community-based organizations, or tribes that administer summer feeding programs in rural areas of Washington state. Grants are awarded for up to \$5000. Grant money may be used to pay for summer learning activities -salaries, training, transportation, curriculum, supplies, equipment, furniture, and contracted services. The program must provide summer literacy (reading and writing) activities for 1.5 hours and sponsor a feeding site through the **Summer Food Service Program** in high-need, rural communities (25,000 or less population) with limited resources.

www.schoolsoutwashington.org/228/FeedYourBrainGrants.htm

Summer Lunch at the Library, in California, offers children and families enrichment activities during the free lunch program at the library. *Lunch at the Library* is a project of the California Library Association and California Summer Meal Coalition and is funded by a grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

www.cla-net.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=588

Summer Learning Resources website

www.schoolsoutwashington.org/1045_198/SummerLearningResources.htm

The Importance of Self-Selection

Studies done by Kim et al, and Allington and Franzen, show that self-selection is an important piece in empowering children in poverty to make gains over the summer. By allowing them to choose their own books, children made comparable gains to those who attended summer school. Children who are weaker readers oftentimes do not select books that are at appropriate reading levels. They often select books without sampling the text or reading the back cover synopsis. Children sometimes select a book because it is popular or like the cover art. They should be allowed to replace books if they are too difficult for them to read.

Children need to be taught how to self-select books by teachers, librarians, and parents. Parents may not have these skills either, so parent workshops can be offered or information sent home. Children should have lots of opportunities to practice self-selection skills at home, in the classroom, at the library, or when shopping. Some children may be overwhelmed by too much choice, so they may do better with limited choices. According to Allington and McGill-Franzen, "Acquiring the ability to self-select a book that is both of interest and of the appropriate level of difficulty is a critical early literacy proficiency." (56) Listed below are some guidelines from *Summer Reading* (see bibliography) for determining appropriate reading levels:

- "Independent level - reads with 99% accuracy and in phrases with expression and 90% comprehension
- Instructional level - Reads with 95-98% accuracy mostly in phrases with 75% comprehension use borrowed book activity kits &/or puppets from CPL;
- Frustration level - Reads with less than 95% accuracy and often word by word with comprehension below 75%"

For self-selected summer reading, children should choose books that they will be able to read at the Independent level. This means that they will recognize 99% of the words in the text and if they were to be assessed over the content they will score 90% correct or better. Texts at this level can be read by the child with no intervention or support from adults or others at higher reading levels than the child's. If a child has access to such supports, then books at the Instructional level could be considered, but keep in mind the child will not be able to effectively read these books without some help. Frustration level text should be avoided because children gain little from reading such texts.

This is not to say, however, that children should only choose books within their assigned Accelerated Reading (AR) level. In addition, limiting children to the selection of books with available AR tests, or incorporating the school's AR program into summer reading could, in fact, have a negative affect on children's enthusiasm to read over the summer.

It will take listening to and observing children as they look at books to determine what kind of books are of interest to them and which are at an appropriate level. Within programs it is more effective to actually provide books instead of lists to children as parents don't always have the means to get specific titles.

Allington, Richard L. & McGill-Franzen, *Summer Reading: Closing the Rich/Poor Reading Achievement Gap*. New York. Teachers College Press, 2013. P. 41, 44-46, 56, 100-101, 103-106

Working with Partners and Volunteers

There are different levels of partnering that will contribute to the success of your summer program. Partners may work with you throughout the year, or be recruited just for the summer. There are key partners that you should connect with a few months before your program begins:

- **Summer nutrition sites or local food banks.** Ask for lunch site locations and times, projected numbers, and any special information you should know about holidays, etc. It is best to have a face-to-face meeting before you get too deep into your planning. Be sure that you are aware of the rules that need to be enforced at the lunch sites so staff can support those. If possible, meet with the lunch staff to discuss your goals, objectives, and activities. If not, prepare a handout for them to introduce your program and staff. See the information below on hosting summer nutrition sites at libraries.
- **Other libraries.** Neighboring libraries can be great assets. It's good when everyone knows what surrounding libraries are doing with summer reading outreach and programming as families often cross library boundaries.
- **Contact other programs** and agencies who may be involved in summer programming. These might include: city parks and recreation day camps, city parks and recreation mobile vans, community centers, YMCA programs, Boys and Girls Clubs, church programs, etc.
- **School districts** that are within the boundaries of your program sites. Send home flyers announcing your program and find out if they will be hosting lunch at any of their sites. Knowing about summer school schedules also helps with planning. An excellent idea is to create a sticker that can be placed on report cards. "Vacation reading equals better grades. Take your child to the public library for summer reading" is an example of what the school district in Torrance, California did.
- **News media** can help get the word out on community calendars, etc. Make them aware of photo opportunities and what your library has planned.
- **Social media** is used by a large percentage of families. Promote your program on your Facebook page and encourage established partners to share the information.

Partners to collaborate with before your programs get rolling include:

- **Daycares or preschool programs.** Give them a schedule and ask them if they would like to be included in storytime, activities, or book lending.
- **Parents.** Give them a handout of your schedule and activities at every opportunity. Involve them in planning when possible. Ask for feedback and use it!
- **Site volunteers.** It is not necessary for site volunteers to undergo extensive training. It is recommended that site volunteers be placed in charge of the Little Libraries (helping children pick out books, answering parent questions) while library staff supervise activities or do storytimes.

A note about Summer Food Service Programs. The Child Nutrition Division of the State Department of Education is seeking sponsors for this year's Summer Food Service Program, which provides free meals for children, ages 1-18, who live in areas in need of economic assistance during school summer vacations. This program helps fill the gap for families who may not be able to afford to give their children nutritious meals during the summer months when school is not in session.



The Department contracts with sponsors to feed low-income children during the summer months. Nationally, more than 26 million children eat school lunch daily when school is in session, and about half of them receive their meals free or at a reduced price because they are from families with low household incomes. The summer program offers them nutritious food when school is not in session.

In 2012, Idaho's 84 summer food sponsors served approximately 1.38 million meals at 343 sites. **Jerome Public Library** has been a sponsor for the past few years. They have had a positive experience with the program and plan to continue it this year. Several other libraries partner with their local school district to have meals delivered and served at the library including **Garden Valley District Library, Payette Public Library, Blanchard Branch Library, and Priest River Library.**

All sponsors, new and returning, are required to attend training and complete the application process. Additional information about the Summer Food Service Program is available at www.sde.idaho.gov/site/cnp/summerFoods, or from Angela T. Miller, (208) 332-6821 or at ATMiller@sde.idaho.gov

Tapping into the Foster Grandparent Program. There is a group of senior citizens who are making a difference in the world. They are Foster Grandparents, a branch of Senior Corps. These committed folks volunteer their time to work in libraries and other educational programs. They commit to help out daily for half or full days. They typically work during the school year, but this past summer some of them extended their volunteer work to help with Summer Reading programs in Idaho public libraries.

Foster Grandparents are tasked with supporting at-risk and exceptional students with their literacy skills and mentoring them to be more successful in school. They receive a small stipend for their travel costs and time. They also receive monthly training from their agency on best practices for working with youth. Visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps/foster-grandparents> for more information on this program to get more helping adults in your summer programming.

Engaging Volunteers to Assist With Your Programs

With thousands of Idahoans seeking new ways to use their skills and experience to make a difference in their community, public libraries are positioned to engage this talent to extend their capacity in the community and to develop advocates and supporters of their services.

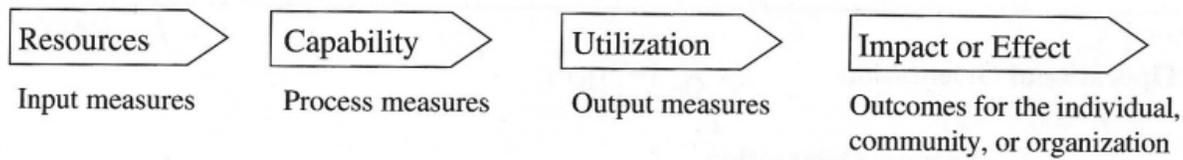
A statewide partnership with Volunteermatch.org provides free upgraded online volunteer recruitment accounts for every library in the state. Get Involved: Powered by your library is raising awareness about high-skilled volunteers and preparing libraries to recruit, engage, train and support skilled volunteers more effectively. California libraries are successfully recruiting high skilled volunteers in positions like: Job Center Coach, Event Planner, Computer Coach, Graphic Designer, Photographer, Adult Literacy Tutor, After School Program Coordinator, and Homework Coach.

The Commission has also compiled valuable resources on all aspects of volunteering, from writing effective job descriptions to managing volunteers. Visit <http://libraries.idaho.gov/page/volunteer-engagement-resources> to see everything available.

Evaluating Outreach Programs

During the planning stages for an outreach program, staff should consider the outcomes they desire to obtain. Outcomes help drive programming needs and what types of data should be collected to best evaluate the program at its conclusion. Outcomes can be specific, such as increasing library card usage by five percent, or they can be general, such as increasing the amount of time that parents read to their children. For summer outreach programs, identify which children in the community are most apt to experience summer learning loss.

Orr's evaluation model is a commonly used tool to help design programs. By considering each of these elements, you'll have a framework to build on.



Resources, or input measures will be items such as the budget for materials and transportation, staffing needs that allow outreach efforts, and facility needs. Capability considerations will evaluate the potential that your program has to successfully implement an outreach program. Utilization or output measures are deciding what data you will collect -- how many participants, how many books or time read, did reading time increase, etc. The impact or effect describes what kind of outcomes you are working for in your program. Do you want to show a change in parent or children's literacy behavior? Do you want to show an improvement in a specific literacy skill level? Outcomes should be able to be measured qualitatively or quantitatively with some type of assessment tool.

Surveys are a common tool used in evaluations. They can be a quick version done on the spot after an activity, or a more comprehensive tool used at the end of the program. Assessments can also be harvested from standardized test scores from school district reports. A solid evaluation can impact the support that you receive from the community, financially or physically. Evaluations must be able to show a cause and effect relationship between your program and the desired outcomes. The outcomes must also be measurable in a consistent, reliable way.

Evaluating your outreach program will provide a solid foundation to build on for future programming, requesting funding, or meeting community needs.

Matthews, Joe. "Evaluating Summer Reading Programs: Suggested Improvement." <http://publiclibrariesonline.org>. 10 May 2013. Retrieved 7/31/13.

Summer 2013 Literacy in the Park: Youth Participant Survey

Park: _____ Date: _____ Surveyor's Name: _____

1. Gender of youth:

Male	Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. What is your age? _____

3. What grade will you be going into this fall?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<input type="checkbox"/>											

4. What school will you attend this fall? _____

5. How many times per week do you come to the park for lunch?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>				

6. Have you enjoyed the books you received by participating in summer reading in the park?

Yes	No	Some	Didn't Read Them	Didn't Receive	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>					

6a. If answer to #6 was **Yes** or **Some** ask: What were your favorite books you received?

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

7. Have you read more this summer than in previous summers?

Yes	No	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7a. If answer to #7 was **Yes**: Why have you read more this summer? _____

7b. If answer to #7 was **No**: Why haven't you read more this summer? _____

8. Are the summer reading activities in the park fun?

Yes	No	Some	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Have you attended the *public library* summer reading program this summer?

Yes	No	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Have you visited the *public library* this summer?

Yes	No	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank-you!!

Summer 2013 Literacy in the Park: Parent-Care Giver Survey

Park: _____ Date: _____ Surveyor: _____

1. Gender of adult:

Male	Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. How many times per week does your child come to the park for lunch?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>				

3. Has your child received free books this summer from attending lunch in the park?

Yes	No	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. If #3 was **Yes** ask: Has your child enjoyed the books?

Yes	No	Some	Didn't Read Them	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>				

5. If answer to #4 was **Yes** or **Some** ask: What were your child's favorite books that you received?
 a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

6. Has your child read more this summer than in previous summers?

Yes	No	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. If answer to #6 was **Yes**: Why has your child read more this summer?

8. If answer to #6 was **No**: Why hasn't your child read more this summer?

9. Has your child participated in the summer reading activities in the park?

Yes	No	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. If #9 was **Yes**: Has your child enjoyed the summer reading activities in the park?

Yes	No	Some	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Has your child attended the *public library* summer reading program this summer?

Yes	No	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Have you visited the *public library* this summer?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank-You!!!

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Acknowledgements and Contact Information

The Read to Me team would like to thank the dedicated library and school staff who contributed to this guidebook, who work hard to find new ways to reach out to families in their communities, and who provide leadership in the Idaho library community!

Please contact the Read to Me team members for any youth services outreach questions, concerns, or consulting. We are here to help build the capacity of library staff to better serve their communities.

Be sure to visit the Read to Me / Summer Reading Website at <http://libraries.idaho.gov/landing/read-to-me> .

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