



# Special Connections

A newsletter connecting our Special Kids, Families and Schools

## SUMMERTIME...AND THE READING IS EASY

Parents are looking forward to a leisurely summer with their children. Long days without early school bells, after school practice, and homework beckon to children. Children are enthusiastic about weeks of leisure. However, after a very short time the plaintive call is heard throughout the land, "I'm bored. I don't have anything to do." A bit of planning now will replace complaints with fun for children and a more pleasurable time for the entire family.

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Gather books from the public library so that children may learn more about people who have been successful in sports, fine arts, and academic fields. Make a trip to the library a family affair. Parents who set the example of reading are much more likely to have children who succeed in reading. Most

public libraries have a selection of videos of classic literature. Make an evening at the movies a follow-up to reading the book. Before viewing the movie, ask children, "If you were writing this script for a movie, what important things would you include? What would you leave out? How do you think the characters will look in the movie?" Make notes of everyone's opinions. After sharing the movie, compare predictions with the actual film. Through such casual family evenings, children learn to be critical viewers. Ask if the language was realistic and truly expressed the characters' feelings as well as the book. Making comparisons with the imagined scenario and the dramatized version reinforces children's ability to differentiate between reality and fantasy. Many families make this a weekly event. One or two line critiques are jotted into the Summer Storybook along with the title

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Second, get the calendar and determine which dates are already planned for the family. Explore community offerings for children's summer activities. Determine what kinds of things are conveniently available that are attractive to the individual child. Resources frequently offering summer day camps include YMCA, YWCA, civic theatres, city parks and recreation departments, Boys and Girls Clubs, museums, churches and synagogues. Special interest activities include sports, swimming, horseback riding, art, drama, dance, music and study skills. City libraries are gold mines of summer offerings. Day trips and one time events are alternate choices. Once the array of possibilities is collected, choose the things that are of most interest to children and that are most convenient for parents. Choosing the activities together allows children to learn the importance of accommodation to the family's needs while giving them a sense of self-direction. Once the choices have been made, write them down in the front of the Summer Storybook.

## READING UNKNOWN WORDS

### School Notes

If I don't know the word, I can....

- Check the picture
  - Reread
  - Find a part I know.
  - Start the word and reread.
- 
- Think: What would make sense?
  - Skip the word, read to the end of the sentence and reread.  
    The \_\_\_\_ lives in the barn.
  - Think: Do I know a word like this?
  - Ask someone else.

### UPCOMING FEATURES

This is the final issue in this school year cycle. There will be another 4 issues next school year starting in early September. Have a good summer break.

## Summertime (continued from page 1)

This becomes your "table of contents" and planning calendar. Families may also wish to set aside some time to do community service together. Family visits to nursing homes, participation in community beautification projects, assistance to elderly or disabled neighbors all are possible choices which instill a sense of community.

Third, make a weekly calendar for the refrigerator door that shows each family member's activities for that week. Everyone can see what is happening just by reading the calendar. This encourages independence and organization. It also illustrates to children that everyone in the family has planned times away from home as well as home responsibilities. Once a week has passed, tuck the calendar into the Summer Storybook.

Writing the story of their summer gives children a sense of continuity. It also allows them to apply the skills they acquired during the school year. Reading is a way to gain information and to share others' pleasures. Writing is a way to express ideas and feelings so that others may learn and share the author's life. This simple Summer Storybook is an instrument that cements parent-child partnerships while leaving enthusiasm for summer fun intact. Children who share such family planning and recording return to school with skills intact for they have applied them throughout the summer. And, the bonus that cannot be measured by tests stands the test of time. It is the strengthened sense of belonging and importance to the family and community that children acquire.

## Summer Reading & Writing Tips

As a parent, you can provide opportunities for your child to improve reading skills. Suggestions include...

- Join the neighborhood library's summer reading program.
- Use the public library for reading materials.
- Read magazines, newspapers, menus, food labels and recipes.
- Read to you and listen to you read for at least 15 minutes daily.
- Communicate in writing by using daily journals, thank you notes, letters, to-do lists.
- Discuss and read about current events.
- Join a book club.
- Keep a journal to record family events.
- Read various types of maps (road maps, amusement park maps, hurricane maps).
- Make reading connections.

### Make Reading Connections

As a parent, you can help your child make reading connections. Making connections is important to understanding and comprehension. When a child has had an experience similar to that of a character in a story, he or she is more likely to understand the characters motives, thoughts and feelings. The connections can be distinguished by these three categories...

- ❖ **TEXT TO SELF** ... Connection to personal past experiences or background.
- ❖ **TEXT TO TEXT**... Connection to another book, poem, song, or written material.
- ❖ **TEXT TO WORLD** ... Connection to events of society or bigger issues in the world.