

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Garfield School District
ELA Department

A book club can motivate your elementary schooler to keep reading all summer long

Want to keep your elementary schooler reading over the summer? Help your child start a book club with friends. Your child will get the opportunity to explore new books, engage in thoughtful conversations—and participate in a fun social activity.

To get started, the book club members should:

- **Select books** that will spark interesting discussions. Let the children vote on a book they'd like to read together.
- **Set ground rules**, such as “Everybody gets a chance to talk” and “No put-downs.”
- **Brainstorm** open-ended questions that invite a lot of discussion. Questions like, “Why do you think the character acted this way?” will promote more in-depth conversation than “Did you like this book? Why or why not?”



Suggest books that will make your child want to read

If your child needs a bit of encouragement to pick up a book, suggest reading:



- **The first book** in a popular series, like *The Magic Treehouse* or *I Survived ...*
- **A joke book.** Ask your child to read you the funniest jokes.
- **A “choose your own adventure” book.** These books allow kids to create their own story as they read.

Try a timed reading game

Strong readers don't just read well. They read quickly, too. To give your child practice:

1. **Pick a page** in a book your child can read easily.
2. **Give your child** one minute to read it.
3. **Count the number** of words read.
4. **Try again** in a few days. Can your child beat the previous number?



Plan fun summer family reading activities

Get the whole family involved in reading this summer by planning exciting reading events. Here are some to try:

- **Trivia night.** Choose a book that everyone in your family can take turns reading. Or, read a short book together. Then, have each person write three trivia questions about the story. Take turns quizzing each other. Who remembers the most? The winner gets to pick the next book you read.
- **Theme dinners.** What do the characters in your child's books have for dinner? Ask your elementary schooler to help you base a meal around a favorite book. If the story takes place in another country or time period, help your child research what to include on the menu.

Build thinking skills with analogies

Analogies are comparisons between pairs of words that have a relationship with each other—like *dog is to fur as bird is to feather*.



Have your child fill in the missing word in these analogies:

- *Sand is to beach as _____ is to the North Pole. (snow)*
- *Fly is to airplane as _____ is to car. (drive)*
- *Good is to wonderful as _____ is to terrible. (bad)*

Strengthen literacy skills with a summer log

Summer is a great time for your child to start keeping a log. All that's needed is an empty notebook and a few ideas to get started. Here are some suggestions:

- **A research log.** Have your child pick a fun subject, such as fashion. Over the summer, your child can research and write about it.
- **A travel log.** Each time your family goes somewhere special—whether it's far away or close to home—your child can keep a record by taking photos, drawing or journaling.
- **An observation log.** Suggest that your child observe something over a period of time, such as a summer vegetable as it grows. Or, your child can pick something to describe in detail, such as a bug or an animal.



Help your child improve reading habits

There is no such thing as too much reading—it just has to be done responsibly. Here are three common reading problems and easy ways to turn them around:

1. **Tattered books.** Choose a special spot for books where they won't get trampled—like a basket or a shelf.
2. **Overdue library books.** Record when books are due on your calendar, then set a weekly schedule to return books with your child. Make sure your child returns items on time. Then, have fun browsing in person or on the library's website for new material to check out.
3. **Late night reading.** On school nights, tuck your child in early so there is time to read in bed before lights out. On occasional weekend nights, it's OK to let your child stay up later to read.



Q: My elementary schooler sometimes has trouble reading and gets very frustrated. How can I encourage my child to keep trying and not give up?

A: Remind your child that every new skill takes practice. Show examples of books your child now finds easy to read. Say, “At one time, these books were hard for you to read.” Offer reassurance that your child will learn how to read more complex texts. It simply takes determination, patience and hard work!

Set limits on screen activities

One way to limit passive recreational screen time is to require your child to earn it. Assign points for time spent doing chores, playing outside and—of course—reading. Your child can redeem a certain number of points for a set amount of TV and video watching time.



For lower elementary readers:

- ***Ike's Incredible Ink*** by Brianne Farley. Ike sits down to write a story and decides to make his own ink. Join him on his journey to gather the materials for just the right ink.

- ***The Hole Story of the Doughnut*** by Pat Miller. Learn how this tasty treat came to be—all because of a boy who was a ship's assistant cook.



For upper elementary readers:

- ***Eureka! Great Inventions and How They Happened*** by Richard Platt. Ever wonder how the hot air balloon was invented? Or the vacuum cleaner? Learn all about inventions and the creative minds that produced them.
- ***Running Shoes*** by Frederick Lipp. Sophy receives the most wonderful gift—a pair of running shoes—and is inspired to do great things.

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Publisher: Doris McLaughlin.

Publisher Emeritus: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.

Editor: Rebecca Hasty Miyares.

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P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474

1-800-756-5525

www.parent-institute.com