



# COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

201 East Colfax Avenue [Central Office 303.866.6600]  
Denver, Colorado 80203-1704 • [www.cde.state.co.us](http://www.cde.state.co.us)

**William J. Moloney**  
Commissioner of Education

**Roscoe Davidson**  
Deputy Commissioner

## COLORADO STATE LIBRARY

[Article or handout]

### Explore the possibilities with summer reading @your library!

Fabian R. Maes, Colorado Department of Education, State Library

Do you find it difficult to encourage your children to read during the summer? Where can you get a list of the latest books that are appropriate for your children? Many of the answers are right at your fingertips via the Internet or by visiting your local library.

At your local library, the exploration begins! Libraries have summer reading programs, story hours, and even day and after-school programs for children. And studies show children who read during the summer maintain or improve their reading levels. Smaller youngsters learn to love books.

Public libraries have established summer reading programs for children. Summer reading programs are designed to encourage children to read, and often libraries provide special events and incentives as well.

When visiting your library be sure to keep in mind several key points:

- **Find books at the right reading level** – Consider children’s reading levels and interests. The reference librarian can help you choose appropriate books. Or check out this web site for recommended titles before heading out to your library. Books are categorized by age and/or grade <<http://childrensbooks.about.com/od/agegradebooksby/>>.
- **Get books that your children will like** – One of the best ways to keep children reading regularly is to explore a series of books they like.
- **Read aloud to your children** – While you and they enjoy the book, reading aloud to your children each day also improves their listening and vocabulary skills.

According to the late Jeanne Chall, a renowned reading specialist and professor emerita at Harvard University, reading isn’t something that comes naturally – like learning to speak does. Chall goes on to explain that reading is a learned skill; and two methods, whole language and phonics, encourage children to read. Reading experts advocate a balanced program, between literature and phonics. Adults, especially parents, have a major impact on the literature side of the scale, when they show kids how fun books can be.

How can you make time in busy summer schedules for reading? Try these ideas:

- Turn off the television for half an hour in the early morning or before bedtime! The family can read together.
- Organize a family Summer Reading Program. You as well as the kids pledge to read at least a book a week. Reward yourselves with gold stars or a treat for each one.

- Have someone (not the driver!) read a book aloud in the car while traveling.
- Before you enroll your children in a summer camp or child care center, ask if they schedule a time for reading every day.

In the summer of 2004, an estimated 104,615 children enrolled in the state's summer reading programs. Contact a local public library for information regarding summer reading programs and encourage kids to sign up.

Almost every public library in Colorado produces a Summer Reading Program. Each has its own guidelines, but in general, children need to read a certain number of books or a minimum number of hours to qualify for prizes. Many libraries welcome young children as well as students through the age of 12. They also sponsor young adult programs. Most offer crafts, entertainment, and prizes along with books, magazines, videotapes, and recordings.

The Internet has many FREE resources for adults and children including games, stories, crafts, how-to lists. Explore them! If you don't have a computer, visit a local library and ask the staff to help you get on-line.

- **Family Education** – Welcome to Family Education, where millions of parents find school solutions, homework help, parenting tips, and expert advice, <http://familyeducation.com/home/>.
- **Get Ready To Read** – *Get Ready to Read! (GRTR!)* is a national program to build early literacy skills of preschool children, <http://www.getreadytoread.org/>.
- **READ\*WRITE\*NOW (US Dept. of Education)** – activities and printout sheets for kids birth through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, <http://www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/readnow.html>. Spanish too!
- **Reading Tips for Parents** – free brochure you can print off your computer, “Reading Tips for Parents,” from Colorado State Library, <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/slreadtips.htm>.
- **READY\*SET\*READ (US Dept. of Education)** – Early childhood learning kit for caregivers and parents, activity guides in English and Spanish, <http://www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/RSRkit.html>.
- **Kids Literacy Colorado** – A Colorado-specific site with ideas and links to all types of reading fun. Sponsored by Children's Literacy Coalition, [www.kidsliteracycolorado.douglascountylibraries.org](http://www.kidsliteracycolorado.douglascountylibraries.org).

For more information on summer reading programs, contact B. F. McCune, Colorado State Library, via phone (303) 866-6891 or e-mail [mccune\\_b@cde.state.co.us](mailto:mccune_b@cde.state.co.us).

#####