

Participating in a Summer Reading Program Makes a Difference in Student Achievement!

Every summer public libraries throughout the state sponsor a free, convenient, fun way to encourage children to read—the Summer Reading Program. The books and activities included in the program help parents find ways to incorporate reading and related activities into a family's vacation time.

Summer reading makes a difference in student achievement:

- Reading gets better with practice. The more we read, the better we get at it, and the better we get at it, the more we read.
- Kids lose school-year reading gains over the summer if they don't read.
- Kids who attended a summer library program read better than those in a summer camp program. Summer camp is fun, but don't forget the reading!
- Kids in a summer library program are more likely to read at or above their

grade level than their non-participating peers.

Tennessee's libraries are offering two summer reading programs, one for children and one for teens. The theme of the children's program is "Jungle Tales: Hiss, Rumble, & Roar." Through local programs and exciting reading opportunities, Tennessee's libraries will promote the development of good reading skills.



Summer Reading is not just for young children! "Tune in @ Your Library" is the theme of Tennessee's second annual statewide Teen Summer Reading Program. Through this program, older readers will have the opportunity to read and explore their unique talents through the activities outlined at local libraries.

So, visit the local library in your town this summer to find out about their summer reading programs. Help your kids get into reading!

SIG Schools in Action

Hollywood Elementary School, a neighborhood school serving grades pre-kindergarten through five, is located in the city of Memphis. Principal Carla Franklin heads up a team of teachers and staff members who work with almost 450 students.

At Hollywood, State Improvement Grant (SIG) staff members include Suzy Page, project coordinator from the Uni-

versity of Memphis, and Charlene Harmon, family consultant from Family Voices of Tennessee. Suzy works with teachers, while Charlene's main focus is family.

During the past year, Suzy's activities at Hollywood E.S. have focused on fourth and fifth grade reading/language arts, professional development for teach-

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Wayne County

Collinwood Depot Branch Library
101 East Depot Street
Collinwood, TN 38450
(931) 724-2498

Knox County

Knox County Main Library
Lawson McGhee Library
500 West Church Avenue
Knoxville, TN 37902
(865) 215.8750
<http://www.knoxcounty.org/library/>

Hawkins County

H. B. Stamps Memorial Library
407 East Main Street
Rogersville, TN 37857-3315
(423) 272-8710

Jackson/Madison

Madison Branch Library
610 Gallatin Pike South
Madison, TN 37115
(615) 862-5868

Memphis City

Hollywood Branch Library
1530 North Hollywood
Memphis, TN 38108-1597
(901) 323-6201
<http://www.memphislibrary.org/index.html>

Davidson County

Nashville Public Library – Main
615 Church Street
Nashville, TN 37219-2314
(615) 862-5800
<http://www.library.nashville.org/>

Fayette County

Somerville-Fayette County Library
216 West Market Street
Somerville, TN 38068-1592
(901) 465-5248

Claiborne County

Barbara Reynolds Carr Memorial Library
1304 Old Knoxville Rd
Tazewell, TN 37879
(423) 626-5414
http://cityofcollinwood.org/public_library.asp

Cannon County

Woodbury - Cannon County Library System
Dr. and Mrs. J. F. Adams Memorial Library
212 College Street
Woodbury, TN 37190-1402
(615) 563-5861

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ers in establishing and using classroom libraries, Saturday TCAP tutoring, and the creation and moderation of a school-wide math bee. In addition, SIG has provided extensive additions to classroom libraries, as well as publisher books and copied books to over 150 children at Hollywood's October carnival.

In her role of SIG Family consultant, Charlene Harmon set up a Literacy toolkit workshop for parents. Family members and students participated in workshop activities and received free toolkits to help children make reading and writing progress. In addition, Charlene has been instrumental in the startup of a GED program as well as planning and conducting a Truancy Workshop and a Health Fair at Hollywood Elementary School.

Somerville Elementary School is a neighborhood school in Fayette County with approximately 200 students in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. Principal David Edmonds is particularly proud of the academic progress that has been made by teaching staff and students in the past few years, and of the technology that has been incorporated into the classrooms.

Suzy Page and Charlene Harmon are also the SIG staff members at Somerville. Highlights of the SIG work Suzy has been doing at Somerville include extensive mentoring/coaching

for a new teacher, developing modifications for an intervention program in grades four through six, assisting teachers with integration of existing technology (smart boards, surround sound), and providing numerous professional development opportunities that include vocabulary development and data driven instruction.

Charlene Harmon recently set up two Parent Literacy Toolkit workshops for Somerville parents; one session was held at the Somerville Adult Learning Center for Families First parents, while the Somerville Elementary Session coincided with the April PTA meeting. Before the toolkit workshop, parents

were treated to an overview of some of the technology that has been installed at Somerville. Parents were given the opportunity to vote for PTA members though a new technology system that allowed the candidates' names to be shown on a "smart Board" while parents used individual handheld controls to place their votes electronically. This activity showed parents how teachers are able to use technology to teach lessons and assess student learning quickly and anonymously, so that teachers know whether students have learned the material, or if the material needs to be reviewed before moving on to new lessons.



Janie O'Brien King

Staff members of the Tennessee State Improvement Grant were greatly distressed by the recent death of coworker and friend, Janie King. Sadly, Janie was a victim of the tornadoes that hit Dyersburg on April 3rd. Services were held on Thursday, April 6, at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Dyersburg, TN.

Janie, an employee of the Tennessee Department of Education's Division of Special Education, was a family consultant for public schools in West Tennessee. Janie was a former elementary school teacher who enjoyed working with families and coworkers to help every child succeed in school.

Janie considered her daughter, Claire, a new law school graduate, to be her greatest accomplishment and legacy. Those who worked with Janie will remember not just her hard work helping Tennessee's children, but her sense of humor and enjoyment of life. Our own lives have been touched by Janie's presence, and we'll miss her tremendously.

Summer Home Learning Recipes

Adapted from the U.S. Department of Education

"Parents and families are the first and most important teachers. If families teach a love of learning, it can make all the difference in the world to our children."

Richard W. Riley
U.S. Secretary of
Education

Educational research has made it clear that parents who are actively involved in their children's learning at home help their children become more successful learners in and out of school. In addition, children often lose ground educationally over the summer when they put aside their school activities, and teachers spend a large amount of time when school starts trying to catch kids up on what they already knew but forgot over the summer.

Following are some Home Learning Recipe activities that help children keep up their skills in reading, writing, math, social studies, and science throughout the summer. These have been developed by the Home and School Institute. Parents find them to be easy and enjoyable ways to work with the school—using materials they have at home to build their children's skills. Some of these activities may sound too easy to do any good, but they really work!

Children are eager learners: they are interested in everything around them. These easy-to-do activities encourage children's active learning and those wonderful words of grow-

ing confidence, “I can do it.” Think of these as starter activities to get your ideas going. There are opportunities everywhere for teaching and learning.

Take a little time to do a lot of good!

Fun Summer Activities for Elementary School Students

And That’s the End of the Story—

Improve listening skills and imagination. Read a story aloud to your child and stop before the end. Ask the child how the story will turn out. Then finish the story and discuss the ending with the child. Did it turn out the way you thought?

Comic Strip Writing—Use comic strips to help with writing. Cut apart the segments of a comic strip and ask your child to arrange them in order. Then ask your child to fill in the words of the characters (orally or in writing).

Discussion cards—Create some cards with simple questions, such as “If you could live anywhere you wanted to live, where would it be?” “What is the best book you’ve ever read?” and “If you had a million dollars, how would you spend it?”. Take turns with everyone in the family answering the questions, and explain why you answered the way you did.

Napkin Fractions—Make fractions fun. Fold paper towels or napkins into large and small fractions. Start with halves and move to eighths and sixteenths. Use magic markers to label the fractions.

Newspaper Math—Use the Weather section to check temperatures across the nation and the world. This is good geography practice, too. Discuss baseball and football scores and averages on the sports pages. Who are the high scores? What are the percentages?

A Trip to the Supermarket—Plan ahead with the 3 R’s. Ask your child to choose a dish to prepare for a meal—a pudding, a salad, a sandwich. Have your

child check to see what supplies are on hand and then make a shopping list. At the supermarket, let your child select the food on the list. First, your child decides which items are the best buys and makes selections. Also have your child write the price of each item on the list and if possible figure the total, checking the prices against the sales receipt.

On the Move—Sharpen math skills on trips. Use even short trips around town. For example, at the gas station, ask your child how much gas you needed and the cost per gallon. On the highway, ask your children to read the signs and check the different speed limits.

A Closer Look at Responsibilities—

Help your children become aware of family responsibilities. Make a chart of family chores, including the name of the person responsible, the days and time required, etc. Discuss ways to change or improve these job assignments.

Float and Sink—Encourage hypothesizing (guessing). Use several objects—soap, a dry sock, a bottle of shampoo, a wet sponge, an empty bottle. Ask your child which objects will float when dropped into water in a sink or bathtub. Then drop the objects in the water, one by one, to see what happens.

Stretch, Run, Bike—Ask your child to do at least one kind of exercise every day. For example, run or walk briskly for 10 minutes. Walk, when possible, instead of riding, for any distance less than a mile. Have your youngster make a week-long exercise plan. Try to think of a modest reward for sticking to the plan and exercise right along with your child.

Fun Summer Activities for Middle and High School Students

How Much Does It Cost?—Put math skills to work. Help your children understand living costs by discussing household expenses with them. For example, make a list of monthly bills—heat, electricity, tele-

phone, mortgage or rent. Fold the paper to hide the costs and ask your youngsters to guess the cost of each item. Unfold the paper. How do the estimates compare with the actual costs? Were they close?

Follow the News—As a family, choose an important news event to follow for a day or two. Ask each person to find as much information on the topic as possible—read newspapers, listen to the radio, watch TV news. Then talk about what everyone learned.

Math Marks—Are they really necessary? Ask your children to look through the newspaper to find and list as many percentages and decimal numbers as possible—sale prices, sports scores, bank rates. Ask what would happen without those marks?

Looking at Advertisements—Take a closer look. Help your children improve their thinking and writing skills by looking carefully at newspaper, magazine, and TV advertisements. What is the main point of the ad? What details does it use to communicate its message? For example, a strong, handsome man holding a soft drink in an expensive car with a beautiful woman at his side is telling us something about the soft drink.

Pro and Con: What Do You Think?—

Make a family game of discussing a special issue—for example, “Teenagers should be allowed to vote,” or “There should never be any homework.” Ask your youngsters to think of all the reasons they can to support their views. Then, ask them to think of reasons against their views. Which views are most convincing?

Expanding Horizons—Help your child learn about people from different countries. Suggest talking to neighbors from foreign countries, reading library books about other cultures, reading newspapers, and watching TV specials.

Remember—keep the talk flowing. It’s the stuff high test scores are made of and it’s the basis for parent/child closeness.

Teachers, It's Summer!

Rest your body, restore your soul and have some fun!

adapted from www.bgrubercourses.com

Use your summer break to relax and recharge—you will return to school brimming with enthusiasm and energy. It's so easy for the summer to whiz by—in the blink of an eye it is time for school to start again! Don't let this summer fly by—schedule some good times for yourself on your calendar! Treat yourself to a leisurely walk, browse through your favorite antique store, window shop on ebay, rent a funny video and pamper yourself with bubble baths on a regular basis.

Make sure those fun times actually happen—write them on your calendar in ink! Treat yourself to a real break from being a teacher!

You need a "What's Happening?" Box

Here's a tip that will help you be organized and fit more fun into your life. It's a "What's Happening?" box—if you don't have one already, you can make one in five minutes. All you need is fifteen file folders and a box large enough to hold the folders upright. Many shoeboxes are just the right size to hold file folders! Label twelve of the file folders with the months of the year and label the others:

- Books to Read,
- Videos/Movies to See,
- Fun Things to Do.

Take a moment to jot a list of birthdays and important dates on the fronts of the monthly folders. Now, place the folders in the box in chronological order and pop the other three folders in the front of the box. Voila—you now have a "What's Happening?" box! When you read a don't-miss-this review of a book, film or restaurant, clip it and pop it in the appropriate folder. When you see a magazine article about lavender sachets you would

love to make—clip it and pop it in the Things to Do folder. When you are catching up on reading magazines over the summer, often you are reading the February issues in the month of July. Don't let those good ideas get away—just clip and file ideas that pertain to holidays or certain months in the appropriate monthly folders. Now that you have a "What's Happening?" box up and running, let's think about school for a moment.

No matter how hard you try, it's almost impossible not to think about school during the summer break! Try this—during the first week of your summer break, take some time to reflect on the past school year. Think about the high points and the low spots—every teacher has some of each! What do you plan to do differently next school year? What do you want to be sure to do again? Jot a quick list of things you want to remember to implement during the next school year. File the paper in your "What's Happening?" box in the folder for the month when school starts. Now that you've jotted the ideas down, you don't have to think about them any more until the start of school. Get those school ideas out of your head so you can maximize your enjoyment of your summer break.

Schedule these four important days on your calendar now!

▲ **Classroom Day**—within a few days of the last day of school, go back to your classroom on one day for four or five hours. Do the three back-to-school jobs that you dread the most. Get these tasks done, lock the classroom and get out of there for the rest of the summer.

▲ **Reunion Day**—plan lunch or a coffee talk session with friends you haven't had a chance to see during the busy school year.

▲ **All About Me Days**—schedule a special day for yourself in July and in August. On these days, the entire day is dedicated to nothing and no-one except you! Don't cook, clean, do laundry, or any kind of work—do fun stuff for the entire day!

This is your day to be a prince or a princess!

▲ **Outing Day**—plan a visit to a nearby place you've always wanted to visit and just haven't taken the time for. We plan to take a tour of the Jelly Belly Jellybean factory and then go to the outlet mall in that area. This is going to be a fun day—what could be better than eating jelly beans and shopping for bargains?

Bring more laughter into your life!

Laughter is good medicine—it actually reduces stress and improves our immune systems. How can you get more laughter into your life?

You can:

- Hang out with people who are simply fun to be with
- Rent funny videos
- Read funny books
- Watch children play
- Buy a dozen or so funny birthday cards to keep on hand
- Take life less seriously—try to be lighthearted and find amusement in simple things in life such as watching birds fluttering in birdbaths, watching children play, people watching and enjoying time with a pet.
- Take yourself less seriously—learn to laugh at yourself!

Things to Do!

✦ **Grow something**—plant some easy-to-grow flowers or buy a new houseplant!

✦ **Make something**—have you always

Conferences of Interest

ETSU Early Education Conference

Johnson City, TN

July 27-29, 2006

<http://child.etsu.edu/programs.html>

Call Kathy Greer at 423-439-7561 for more information.

SIG Summer Institute

Preston Hotel, Nashville Airport

July 18-20, 2006

Professional development for teachers in SIG schools. For more information, contact Reggie Curran at rcurran@utk.edu or (865)-974-1320.

wanted to learn to knit, do a craft, etc? Go to your local craft store and get some ideas for simple projects.

✦ **Eat something**—try some new recipes or try an ethnic restaurant that offers a cuisine you have not tried before. You just might discover a new favorite kind of food!

✦ **Fix something**—do you have a bracelet

with a broken clasp or a camera case with a broken zipper? Summer is a perfect time to take care of pesky little jobs and get things fixed or replaced.

✦ **Take a class**—that has nothing to do with school. Learn to take better photographs, knit or make scrapbooks! We hear knitting is back in vogue and lots of people are taking classes! Get a catalog of classes from the recreation department

and the community college in your area.

✦ **Or...**take a class that has something to do with school—stretch your mind and learn new strategies for helping your students learn and grow!

Have a wonderful summer break from school. Be sure to find time to smell the roses and spend time doing things you enjoy!

SPOTLIGHT ON SIG PARTNER

The Center for Literacy Studies

This month's SIG spotlight is on the Center for Literacy Studies. CLS is located within the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee. The goal of the Center for Literacy Studies is to support and advance literacy education across the lifespan. The Center for Literacy Studies works with providers of literacy education to strengthen their capacity to help individuals build knowledge and improve skills needed to be life-long learners and active members of families, communities, and workplaces.

To advance literacy education, CLS links theory, research, and practice by working with diverse stakeholders to support creative and innovative ways to address literacy issues, providing professional development opportunities, developing and fostering partnerships, adapting new and existing technologies, sharing the knowledge of the field through professional networking, technology, technical assistance and publications, conducting research and evaluation, and providing analysis, statistical support, and accountability services. For more information about CLS, please visit <http://www.cls.utk.edu/>

Current CLS projects/programs

■ **State Improvement Grant (SIG):** The Tennessee State Improvement Grant (SIG) supports children, preschool through high school, in the development of language, communication, pre-literacy and literacy skills to ensure academic achievement. The Center for Literacy Studies supports communication in the SIG grant, including this newsletter, and provides consultation and products that support family involvement and literacy.

■ **Tennessee Adult Education:** The Tennessee Division of Adult Education contracts with the Center for Literacy Studies to help plan and facilitate professional development for Tennessee practitioners. UTCLS employs associates who research best practices, instructional methods, materials, and methods of staff development delivery in order to help meet the diverse needs of the field.

■ **Equipped for the Future (EFF):** Since 1994 the National Institute for Literacy has led the EFF initiative to develop adult learning standards that can guide instruction and assessment and improve the quality and results of adult literacy programs. The EFF Center for Training and Technical Assistance, located at the Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, provides support for states and program in adopting and using the EFF Standards.

■ **LINCS Special Collections:** The LINCS Special Collections are one-stop electronic gateways to specialized information on high-quality literacy practices and materials for use in adult education and literacy programs. LINCS Special Collections are built around specific content areas, specific settings or contexts, and professional development topics.

■ **NCSALL Connecting Practice, Policy, and Research:** From its start, the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) has been a leader in bringing a research perspective to improving policy and practice, and in highlighting adult literacy's crucial connections to other fields, such as health, employment development, and postsecondary education. CLS has been collaborating with NCSALL for many years, and the CLS website includes materials developed by NCSALL that are intended to more closely integrate the work of the adult literacy field's key sectors.

■ **AE Pro:** The mission of AE Pro is to provide online courses and course modules for adult education professional development, to provide technical assistance in online course development and facilitation, to provide a complete course development platform, and to be a gateway to other online professional development. Adult Education Professional offers Continuing Education Units. For those who request them, AE Pro can provide one CEU for each course completed.

■ **Reading First:** The Center for Literacy Studies collaborates with Tennessee Reading First management to assist in the delivery and evaluation of professional development to teachers in Reading.

Center for Literacy Studies
600 Henley St., Suite 312
Knoxville, TN 37996

Resources for Parents and Teachers

■ **Activities for Kids Calendar:** This site includes three calendars, one for each month kids are off during the summer. Each day has a site to click on that will provide a new learning experience for kids, such as recipes, jokes, "travel" to different cities and counties, etc.

<http://www.activitiesforkids.com/summer/calendar.htm>

■ **Tennessee Public Libraries 2006 Summer Reading Program:** If you are working with children this summer and need some activities to help them improve their reading skills, the Tennessee Summer Reading Programs are available online.

<http://www.tennessee.gov/tsla/lps/srp/index.htm>

■ **Enchanted Learning** site includes craft projects for preschool, kindergarten and elementary school children. The crafts use materials found around the house, like egg cartons, cardboard, paper, boxes, string, crayons, paint, glue, etc.

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/summer/>

■ Running out of ideas for things for the kids to do outside? Ready...Set...Go! Great game ideas, resources and activities

for birthday parties, picnics, youth groups, summer camps, company events, educators, family life, home schooling or just for the fun of it. And the winner is...

http://www.funattic.com/game_list.htm

■ 100 Activities and Ideas for parents and kids to do over the Summer Holidays

http://www.fvsd.ab.ca/stm/end_of_the_year_and_summer_activ.htm#100%20activities

<http://sig.cls.utk.edu>

Check out
Tennessee's SIG
website for resources
and information about
the State Improvement
Grant, as well as
reading, parenting,
and teaching
strategies.



**Tennessee State
Improvement Grant**

Advancing the Skills of Tennessee Students

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