

Guiding Principles for Summer Reading Programs

Evidence-Based Characteristics of Summer Reading Programs That Benefit Students

This document is intended to provide guidance for program planning. It is not anticipated that a single program would address every characteristic.

Program Culture

- A unique summer culture is created to provide an enriching experience different from school year routines. A detailed daily schedule is included.
- Evidence-based engagement strategies are intentionally and responsively crafted to make the program fun (high-interest, highly-engaging) for the students it serves.
- The program reflects a deep knowledge of the community and includes responsive and inclusive strategies to engage families, community members, and stakeholders in designing the summer program.
- The program engages families in reading, talking about reading, writing, field trips, and writing family stories with their children. There is abundant evidence of family engagement in the form of questionnaires, sign-in sheets, family writing pieces, etc.

Instructors

- All instructors are well-qualified with literacy credentials and experience in providing effective literacy instruction; they may include college students and other volunteers who have been trained in literacy practices.
- Instructors provide expert guidance with reading and writing, discussing books, and making curricular connections to school.
- The program includes and values reading instructors for book talks, read-alouds, reading and writing with students, etc.

Instruction & Activities

- The program creatively integrates best practices in project-based learning (e.g., author, genre, or thematic study) with authentic performance tasks to build a depth of knowledge and reading comprehension.
- The program intentionally connects real-world contexts with reading instruction; enriching activities include field trips and other experiences directly to the text (e.g., nature walks to learn about plants when reading about environmental science).
- The program highlights age-appropriate interactive, hands-on, multimodal activities that enhance text ideas and applications (field trips, science experiments, art and music, dramatic interpretations, drawings, etc.).
- Library trips are at the center of activities such as book talks, book clubs, book reading, and writing activities.

Instructional Resources & Materials

- Student choice of books and activities is intentionally integrated into the program plans to address motivation as well as differentiation for readiness, interests, age, background, culture, etc.
- The program's book selection deliberately includes books where children can see themselves in the books.
- The books are intentionally connected to local events, interests, and enriching community resources, including libraries, zoos, museums, visual and performing arts, historic sites, etc.