

The 74 Days of Summer

Promoting a Reading Culture in the Home

When our children are in elementary school, we very often devote tremendous energy to creating a genuine love of reading. We read to them with enthusiasm, and we show a natural excitement about the characters and storylines. However, as our children become independent readers, and digital devices provide other forms of entertainment, we may no longer readily promote a robust reading culture at home for our teenagers. Yet every indicator shows that it is as important as during elementary school.

The educational research is powerful. Children are more resilient, have a greater sense of empathy, achieve higher grades in school and success on college admissions tests, express greater overall emotional well-being, and are more optimistic, confident and independent when they ...

- read regularly for enjoyment from a wide array of sources such as fiction, nonfiction, magazines, poetry, etc.
- talk about the books they read, including the storylines and characters they like or dislike and why.
- see their parents or guardians reading for enjoyment and hear them talking about the books they read.
- hear their parents or guardians enthusiastically talking about words, word usage and engaging in word-related games such as *Scrabble*.

Along with opening doors to different ways of thinking, encountering new cultures and exposing the reader to characters with resilient habits, reading helps children of all ages develop necessary academic skills that can be applied in every discipline. For example, talking about stories or character dilemmas is a form of summarizing and synthesizing content. This singular act promotes clarity of expression, which is a crucial step in enhancing a person's ability to think deeply and write effectively.

One of the simplest and most advantageous strategies we can use as parents is to read books and talk about how we have found them interesting, tedious, difficult to understand, enjoyable, challenging, etc. Including our children in these types of discussions is better still. **Interestingly, in hundreds of discussions and surveys with students, the number one reason children give for why they have read a certain book outside of school is “because my parent liked it.”** To ensure that our children see us enjoying books ourselves, we may need to be mindful of how much time we spend on our laptops or phones so that we model the habit of reading for pleasure at home.

The summer also provides a great opportunity to visit our [local libraries](#) which offer a variety of engaging events, [teen summer programs](#) and monthly book clubs for all ages.

In short, I encourage you to set a goal for the “74 Days of Summer” to create a culture of a love of books, reading, and storytelling in your home. Not only will you be setting your children up for academic success but, more importantly, you will be creating enjoyable and lasting memories for your family.