



## Summer Reading ADVENTURE!

Over the summer, it's important to help children maintain and even develop their reading skills. As a parent or caregiver, you can make books and reading part of your child's summer fun. Keep your child's skills developing by encouraging her to read for fun and relaxation. Weave reading into your family's summer, and your child will go back to school refreshed, excited, and ready to pick up where she left off.

**Set out on a summer reading quest!** Seek out books and reading materials that tie into your child's summer activities, such as baseball, collecting, or art. Keep these books handy in a reading corner or bookshelf, where kids will enjoy relaxing and reading after a swing or an active game. Also, take a bag of books to the beach or park for those in-between times.

**Library treasures.** Make regular trips to the library with your child. Encourage your child to explore the shelves or talk to the librarian to get new ideas. Praise your child's choices, even if you think the books

seem too easy. Reading easier books is good practice and builds confidence in reading ability.

**Explore reading together.** Be a model—show your child how *your* interests relate to reading. Pick up a book or magazine for yourself, and encourage your child to choose one of his own. Read together, stopping once in a while to talk about what each of you is reading and why you like it.

Read to your children every day—even the older ones. Take time to discuss what you're reading. Engage children in longer books and create interest and anticipation by reading one part each day. Let older children read parts of the book to you. Reading together before bedtime can be a great way to end the day.

**TV journeys.** During the summer, kids can spend hours in front of the TV. Encourage a balance that includes TV and reading for pleasure. Read the TV listings with your children and help them find programs that tie in with books. Rent movies that are based on books. Set TV and video-game time limits, just as you do during the school year.

**Reading voyages, real and imaginary.** Family outings are ideal for sparking reading. Whether it's a trip to the museum, a baseball game, the beach, or a faraway

place, there are things to read before and during the trip. Gather articles, brochures, and books about the place you are going and read them with your child.

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## BPS Showcase of Schools



Mayor Menino, top left, shown at the Showcase of Schools with (clockwise from center) the Principal of Mozart Public School Albert Taylor; Special Education Teacher Julie Pouloupoulos; Seanna Ricci, and Betty Blanes

On Tuesday, January 8, 2002, Boston families attended the Citywide Showcase of Schools at the Bayside Expo Center in Dorchester to learn about the educational opportunities in the Boston Public Schools. The Showcase provided families an excellent opportunity to learn about and meet staff from the city's 131 elementary, middle, and high schools. Boston Mayor Thomas Menino and Thomas Payzant, Superintendent of Boston Public Schools, attended the event and greeted families and staff.

## Save the Date!

May 25, 2002

### Families & Schools Together Famílias e Escolas Juntas

Education Summit in Framingham for Portuguese-speaking families

Conference will be held in Portuguese.

8:30 am – 3:30 pm  
Framingham City Hall

- **Workshops for families and professionals on:**

- \* *Parents Are Powerful*

- \* *MCAS*

- \* *Basic Rights in Special Education*

- \* *Information for Immigrant Families*

- Awards to community & parent leaders
- Brazilian puppeteer, Roberto Maranhão
- Breakfast, lunch, and limited childcare (for ages 4-12) provided

For more information or to register, contact Sandy Blanes at 877-471-0980 x144.

Hosted by Parents' PLACE at the Federation for Children, with support from the Consulate General of Brazil in Boston and the Framingham Public Schools Bilingual Program.



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# Getting Ready for College Early:

## What Parents of Middle and Junior High School Students Need to Know (First in a series)

*Getting a college education is an investment that will pay back for a lifetime: people with a college education have better job opportunities, earn more money, and develop skills and knowledge that can never be taken away. However, what many families don't realize is that preparing for college doesn't begin during a student's junior or senior year of high school—it begins even before a student first sets foot in school, and it continues through middle school and high school. Getting read for college means planning for the future and making some very important decisions early.*

### MAKING THE DECISION: WHY GOING TO COLLEGE IS IMPORTANT

A two- or four-year college degree is becoming increasingly important for unlocking the doors to economic and educational opportunity in America today. Getting a college education requires time, effort, and careful planning by parents and students, but it provides knowledge and skills students will use their entire lives. By going to college, students:

**Get (and keep) a better job.** Because the world is changing rapidly, and many jobs rely on new technology, more and more jobs require education beyond high school. With a college education, your child will have more jobs from which to choose.

**Earn more money.** On average a person who goes to college earns more than a per-

son who does not. Someone with a two-year associate degree earns more than a high school graduate. In 1995, a man with a college degree earned almost 89 percent more than a man with only a high school diploma, and a woman with a college degree earned almost 73 percent more than a woman with only a high school diploma.

**Get a good start in life.** A college education helps your child acquire a wide range of knowledge in many subjects, as well as advanced knowledge in the specific subjects they are most interested in. College also trains students to express thoughts clearly in speech and in writing, to make informed decisions, and to use technology—useful skills on and off the job.

Students who are not interested in going to a four-year college or university can benefit from the skills and knowledge that two years of college provide to compete in today's job market. These students may want to pursue a technical program in a community, junior, or technical college, which provides the skills and experience employers look for. Many high schools and some local employers offer career-focused programs called "school-to-work," or "school-to-career," which are linked to community and technical colleges. These programs coordinate high school course work with course work at local colleges, and in some cases give students the chance to learn in a real work setting. This way, the high school material better prepares students for college-level work, and also starts the student on a clear path toward a college degree.

Students interested in technical programs will probably want to take some occupational or technical course in high school, but they also need to take "core" courses in English, math, science, history, and geography that will be explained in the Summer 2002 *Bulletin*.

For more information, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the U.S. Department of Education's website at [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

## Choosing a Great Summer Camp!



It's time to think about summer plans for your children! If you are planning to enroll your child in a summer camp, there are many things to consider as you choose a program.

Knowing your child's and your family's needs is the first step to finding the right camp. Be sure to involve your child in the selection process so you will both be satisfied with the choice.

Below are some questions to consider as you look for a camp that fits your specific needs. Don't be hesitant to ask lots of questions. Camp staff understand that parents want to find the best camp for their child.

- What are the camp's goals and philosophy? What kind of camper is most likely to have a good experience at this camp? What percentage of campers return the following year?

- How long is the camp session? Are several sessions offered?
- What is the director's background? Will the director supply references?
- Who is directly responsible for your child's supervision? What kind of training or education is required of the staff?
- What is the counselor/child ratio? (Look for camps that do not have more than ten children per adult counselor.) Does the ratio change during activities that require closer supervision (e.g., swimming, horseback riding, etc.)? Do the children move around in one large group or several smaller groups?
- What is the schedule like? Is it a structured program, or one that emphasizes a lot of free choice? Which activities are required? Is instruction given in each activity? How long does each activity period last?
- What happens when a child does not want to participate in an activity? What happens when the weather is bad? How does the camp program meet individual needs and differences?
- What is the camp's discipline policy? Are the parents contacted if there is a concern about the child?
- How does the camp ensure the safety of its campers? What kind of insurance coverage is there? What medical facilities and staff are available? Are their accommodations for children with disabilities?
- What are the sleeping arrangements? What are the camp rules regarding parent visits, telephone calls, etc? Who can the child talk to if he or she has a problem or concern?
- What is the food like, and who prepares it? What toilet and shower facilities exist?
- What are the total costs of the camp, including extras? Are there additional charges for some of the activities? Will the camp supply all the needed equipment? What is the refund policy?

*This information was taken from the American Camping Association's and the National Camp Association's literature. For more information, visit [www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org) or [www.summercamp.org](http://www.summercamp.org).*

## Better Breakfast Means Better Learning

Recent studies confirm what parents already know: hungry children don't learn well. A study of Boston-area children shows a strong link between hunger, a decreased ability to learn, childhood illnesses, and school disruption and discipline problems.

Drs. Michael Murphy and Ronald Kleinman of the Massachusetts General Hospital, in collaboration with Project Bread and Boston Public Schools, conducted a two-year study, which tracked academic performance and behavior after installing a universal free breakfast program in sixteen elementary schools.

The study findings showed that increased breakfast participation is associated with improved nutrition, school attendance, emotional functioning, and math grades. Teachers observed the difference it made in the classroom. Nearly two-thirds of interviewed school staff reported a positive change in student behavior and an improvement in student attentiveness.



In light of the study's findings, Project Bread submitted a bill to the Massachusetts legislature, entitled "An Act to End Child Hunger in Massachusetts" (Senate 722/House 2183). Using a "one-stop shopping" approach to address hunger-related problems, the new legislation would link five nutrition initiatives — school breakfast, food stamps, WIC (the federally-funded Women, Infants, and Children's program), after-school snacks and summer food and recreation programs.

The bill, which is set to expire this summer, focuses on five objectives over a three-year period to provide food for low-income children, with a major focus on expanding the free universal breakfast program throughout the state.

For more information about this bill, contact Project Bread at 617-239-2509, or check out their website, at [www.projectbread.org](http://www.projectbread.org).

## Summer Reading Adventure! continued from page 1

Even if you're not traveling, children can have adventures by reading about far-away places. Ask your child to choose a place he would like to visit someday, or the culture of a friend or relative, and find out as much as possible via the library and the Internet. Get the whole family involved!

**Authors of excitement.** Reading and writing skills are connected closely. Summer activities provide a wealth of writing possibilities. Young children can dictate stories that you write down for them to illustrate, or older children can write for themselves. Encourage them to write about family outings, to keep a journal, to write letters or postcards to friends and relatives, to help with shopping lists, or to create stories. You can turn their work into simple, stapled books for them to keep or send to friends and relatives.

Summer is a time for fun, relaxation . . . and reading adventures! You are your child's most important teacher. Help him or her realize the joy of reading for pleasure and information. Fit a few minutes of reading into every summer day.

**Additional resources.** The International Reading Association offers free lists of new children's books, *Children's Choices* and *Teachers' Choices*. Download copies at [www.readingonline.org/reviews/](http://www.readingonline.org/reviews/), or send a 9x12 self-addressed envelope plus \$1 for shipping and handling to: International Reading Association 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139 Newark, DE 19714-8139

Check out IRA's website at [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org) for additional information. The Children's Book Council website has a page for parents,

## Fifth Annual Dads Make a Difference: A Celebration of Fathering and Families

The For Fathering Project of The Medical Foundation is excited to announce the Fifth Annual *Dads Make a Difference: A Celebration of Fathering and Families* on Father's Day, June 16 from 1:00 to 5:00 pm at the Boston Common Parade Ground.



Dads, children, and families are invited to gather at the Parade Grounds of the Boston Common for an afternoon of fun, music, games, performers, and giveaways. *Dads Make a Difference* is also a time to recognize the unique role dads play in the lives of children and the special contributions they make to the development of healthy and happy kids. One of the special highlights will be recognizing "Super Dads" contest winners from across the state. All Massachusetts children are invited to enter their dads for the contest!

The joys of being a dad are many, but so are the challenges. Organizations and service agencies from throughout greater Boston will be there to share their resources and services with the dads and families attending the celebration.

For more information or to learn more about the Super Dads awards, call Tony Palomba, Program Director of The Medical Foundation, at 617-451-0049 x285 or visit their website, [www.dadsmakeadifference.com](http://www.dadsmakeadifference.com).

[www.cbcbooks.org/html/choosing.html](http://www.cbcbooks.org/html/choosing.html), with tips on how to choose good books for children at every age.

*This article is excerpted from Summer Reading Adventures, by the International Reading Association (IRA). For more information, call IRA 302-731-1600, or visit [www.reading.org/publications/brochures/brochures.html](http://www.reading.org/publications/brochures/brochures.html).*

## Upcoming Parents' PLACE Events April–June 2002

This calendar lists some of the upcoming events sponsored by Parents' PLACE and its partners. FamiliesFirst workshops listed below are sponsored by Parents' PLACE and are free of charge. For more information on any of these events, please call Marva Blake at Parents' PLACE at 877-471-0980, x113.

### MAY 2002

**5/14 Tues, Cambridge, *What Families & Schools Can Do to Prevent Violence*, in English, 6–8pm**

**5/15 Wed, Boston, *FamiliesFirst: Things Kids Do That Drive Us Nuts*, in English, 6–8:30pm\*\***

**5/16 Thurs, West Revere, *Parents Are Powerful*, in Spanish, 6–8pm**

**5/16 Thurs, Roxbury, *Raising Student Achievement*, in English, 10am–12pm**

**5/17 Fri, Framingham, *Parents Are Powerful in American Schools*, in Portuguese, 9–11am**

**5/20 Mon, South Boston, *Families and Schools Together*, in English, 6–8:30pm**

**5/22 Wed, Worcester, *FamiliesFirst: Positive Approaches to Discipline*, in Spanish, 10–11:30am**

**5/25 Sat, Framingham, *Famílias e Escolas Juntas*, Education Summit in Portuguese, 8:30am–3:30pm**

**5/29 Wed, Boston, *FamiliesFirst: Self Esteem: How Do Children Get It? How Do Parents Give it?*, in English, 6–8:30pm\*\***

### JUNE 2002

**6/5 Wed, Dorchester, *What Families & Schools Can Do to Prevent Violence*, in English, 6–8 pm**

**6/7 Fri, Dorchester, *What Families & Schools Can Do to Prevent Violence*, 8:45–10:15am**

**6/12 Wed, Boston, *An Introduction to Recognizing, Understanding, and Supporting a Child with a Nonverbal Learning Disability*, in English, 6–8:30pm\*\***

\* Paid event, special registration required. Contact Parents' PLACE for more information.

\*\* Co-sponsored by Parents' PLACE and the Community Outreach and Empowerment (COEP) Project at the Federation. COEP is funded by The Boston Foundation.

## BPS Showcase of Schools



Sandy Blanes and Becca Hubble staff the Parents' PLACE display table.

**Call now to schedule fall 2002  
workshops for families and schools!  
877-471-0980 x 113**

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