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Support Literacy Learning All Year Long

The Importance of Reading and Writing Beyond the Classroom

Why are reading and writing important?

As adults, we know how important reading and writing are in all parts of our lives. We also know that a passion for reading and writing can help children and teens find ways to understand not only different cultures and worlds but also themselves. And writing can help them find ways to work through and communicate their hopes, fears, and dreams.

Why read and write beyond the classroom?

Research tells us that children and teens who don't read and write outside of school, especially during long breaks such as summer vacation, face a big loss in their literacy growth compared to those who do continue learning all year long. This means the summer months and other breaks from school offer wonderful opportunities for families, caregivers, and out-of-school educators to help improve reading and writing.

What can you do?

How can you as a family member, caregiver, or educator help your child or teen read and write more outside of school? There are some simple things you can do to help develop a lifelong love of reading and writing:

- Get caught reading and writing. Let your child or teen see you engaging in everyday literate activities, like reading the newspaper or making a grocery list, and talk about what you do.
- Read and write to your child or teen. Snuggle up with a book and your child before bed. Share books on tape with your teen or read aloud on car trips. And don't forget writing. Leaving short notes on the refrigerator, a nighttime message on a pillow, or a letter expressing your pride in an accomplishment encourages reading and demonstrates the power of words.
- Share a love of reading and writing together. Read some of the books, magazines, or websites your child or teen is reading and then discuss them together. Write a journal, scrapbook, or blog as a family, taking time to record daily events. You can even write group e-mails or letters to family and friends.