



Wisconsin Summer Reading Brief 2012

Wisconsin's public libraries provide free voluntary summer reading programs, activities that link stories to real-world experiences, and special performances to engage and motivate young readers. Librarians help children and teens select reading materials that match their reading ability and, most importantly, their personal interests. Many libraries now offer adult reading programs, which have a benefit of modeling reading to children and increase family literacy. In many communities, librarians partner with local organizations that support disadvantaged families to bring summer reading to the young people who may not get to the library or other enrichment programs when school is not in session.

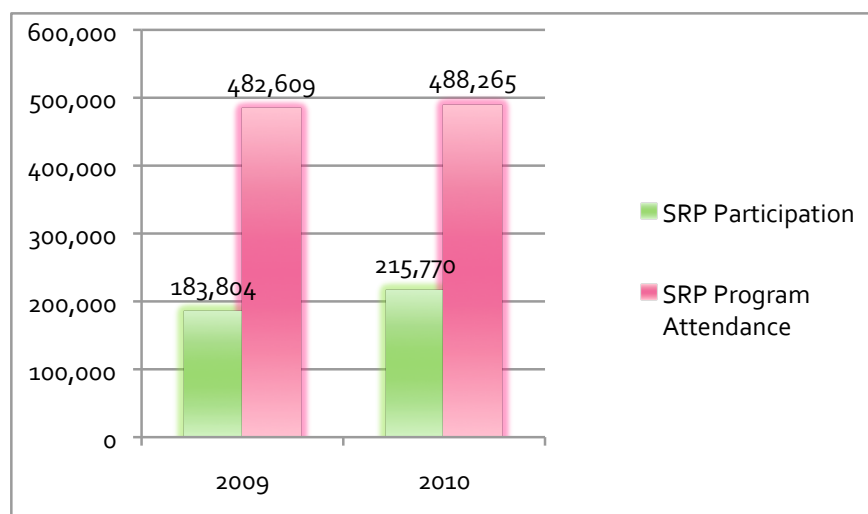
"About two-thirds of the ninth-grade academic achievement gap between disadvantaged youngsters and their more advantaged peers can be explained by what happens over the summer during the elementary school years."

Alexander, K.L. (2009). *Summer Can Set Kids on the Right—or Wrong—Course* (Research in Brief). Retrieved from National Summer Learning Association

The Public Library Division of the Department of Public Instruction reported in 2010:

- 215,770 children and teens participated in public library summer reading programs
- 488,265 individuals attended summer reading program events and activities at the public library

Wisconsin Summer Reading Participation in 2009 and 2010



Summer Reading Research Indicates...

“The ABCs of Improved Reading:

- **Access to books. It’s critical that kids have access to a wide variety of books over the summer months, but we know that access alone doesn’t make a strong impact.**
- **Books that match readers’ ability levels and interests. For young people’s reading skills to improve, they need to read books that align with their own reading levels. Reading books that are too easy or too hard won’t help!**
- **Comprehension, as monitored and guided by an adult, teacher or parent. The most important piece to making summer reading effective is the help of an adult who can ask questions and guide kids to better understand what they are reading.”**

(2009, November 24). *How to make summer reading effective*. Retrieved July 16, 2010, from National Summer Learning Association:

http://www.summerlearning.org/resource/collection/CB94AEC5-9C97-496F-B230-1BECDFC2DF8B/Research_Brief_03_-_Kim.pdf

“If children have the opportunity to listen to, discuss, and read books on topics that they select, they will develop extensive background information which can serve as a platform from which to engage in their own independent reading.”

McGill-Franzen, A. & Allington R. (2003, May/June). Bridging the summer reading gap. *Instructor*, 112, 17-20.

“Low-income families are less likely to read books; go to the library, museum or theater; take music lessons; or do organized sports activities. Yet these experiences make a difference, with a visit to the library being the most discriminating factor of all.”

Alexander, K. (April 2009). Hopkins Study—public libraries determinative in school success. *ODE*, 72.

“People who say they read more read better, therefore the primary purpose of the program is to encourage students to read more.”

Krashen, S. (2004). *The power of reading: Insights from the research*, 2nd ed. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.

I started my job as children’s librarian of the Waterford Public Library in fall of 2004. That summer, there were 775 children enrolled in the summer reading program with 1,499 attending 25 programs during a 6-week period. I felt we could increase those already-impressive numbers by concentrating on promotion and diversifying programs. We wrote our own promotional scripts that included costumes and humor, visited more schools and child care centers promoting the program, surveyed families and kids asking what kinds of programs they would like to see offered during the summer, and offered volunteer opportunities for teens. Over the last 7 years, we have made small adjustments each year and as of last summer, had 897 kids registered and participating. In addition, an impressive 3,069 people attended 30 programs and 2,440 weekly prizes were given for reading. Not bad for a library with a service population of 20,000 in of town of just over 5,000. We look forward to reaching our long-time goal of 1,000 children actively participating.

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