

4. How to Run a Successful TD Summer Reading Club

Be Prepared to Have Fun

When library staff shows enthusiasm for the program, it is infectious. The children will have a great time.

Why Run a Summer Reading Program?

For years, studies have shown that school-age children lose many of their reading skills over the summer months if they do not continue to read while they are out of school. Summer reading clubs first started when library staff realized that they could make a difference. When further studies demonstrated that children who do not learn to read fluently in fourth grade will likely never feel totally comfortable with the printed word, our job was clear. Keep those children reading and make sure they have fun doing so!

Getting Ready

Hosting a successful summer program takes careful planning. Children will be anxious to come to the library if they know that something exciting is happening. Library staff can build enthusiasm prior to the summer using displays; but the most effective method is to get children to tell their friends about the club. Each child and parent who visits the library should be reminded that the library is planning a summer of fun. When children are at the circulation desk taking out books, remind them to join the program.

Contacting Schools

Invitations

Invitations will be sent to participating libraries. Staff can contact local schools to drop off the invitations and request that they be distributed with the children's report cards. Since this may require a lengthy approval process in some schools, the request should be made as soon as possible.

Class Visits

Statistics from previous years show a strong connection between classroom visits and enrolment in the summer reading program. Library staff will notice an increase in program participation if they schedule visits with the appropriate grades in local schools. Bring along a copy of the poster with the stickers and the

activity booklet. Tell children when they can come to get their own poster at the library. A quick “book talk” on a fun subject will demonstrate that summer reading can be light and easy. The artist for the program has some books that are appropriate for this year’s theme, so bring one along.

Displays

Included in this manual is a collection of the artist’s clip art. A photocopier can assist staff with the enlargement of the images to create interesting displays. This year’s program poster can serve as a focal point for the display. The theme was chosen to allow staff to be as creative as possible. Let your imagination run wild. Why not have downloaded drawings from the poster placed all over a notice board? Children often enjoy seeing their names displayed on a board, so incorporating their names or the books they have read into the display is always effective.

Wall of Fame

This manual also includes two sheets that can be turned into a wall of fame display. Place the two sheets together and add blank paper underneath so that children’s names can be listed when they finish the program or when they register.

Book Displays

This year’s theme provides ample opportunity to make displays with your current collection. A booklist of recommended titles is included in this manual, but these are only suggestions. Use similar books from your own bookshelves. This is also a good time to pull out copies of prize-winning books or books which have been nominated for awards. Remember, children are likely to be attracted to books which are displayed face-out.

Posters

The full-colour poster designed by this year’s illustrator can be mounted on foam core and put on an easel at the circulation desk. Display this fun poster throughout the library; do not limit it to the children’s department.

Plan a Launch

An excellent way to bring attention to the TD Summer Reading Club program is to host a media launch. If this event occurs in June then classes can be invited. Invite the mayor or a local celebrity to kick-off the program to ensure publicity in the local newspaper. Be sure that the CEO and upper management of the local TD Bank are invited so that they can support the program. If the local newspaper

does not send a photographer, take a photograph and send it with the story to the paper. July and August are often slow months for local news. Please make sure to save a copy of any media clippings to be included with your Statistics and Evaluation Form to your main library. A library can put all the new books on display and then seal the display with ribbon or tape until the launch of the TD Summer Reading Club. This is an effective way to build excitement.

Advertise in Your Local Newspaper

Send the local paper a copy of the invitation, the poster and the activity booklet along with information about the program. Explain how the program is unique for your library. The paper might be willing to run a story about the program, interviewing a staff member with expertise in children's services. Consider buying space in the paper, the invitation can be easily adapted to become an ad.

Local Television

Be sure to let your local cable station know about the program. Suggest coming to talk about the summer of fun that the library has planned. Take the poster and stickers and explain how the stickers reveal secrets hidden in the poster. Have a few of the artist's books on hand to talk about. Take lots of other books to remind viewers that reading is a great summertime activity.

Running the Program

Planning the TD Summer Reading Club demands that library staff decide what approach works best for the library and the local children. The program has been designed to be used in virtually any fashion. Children only need to receive the poster, the stickers and the activity booklet. Meetings can be established or children can simply be told to keep track of their reading in the activity booklet. The following are just a few of the methods that can be used.

Registration of Participants

Librarians should encourage children to register for the program; however, registration should not be mandatory for children to receive the summer reading club materials. In fact, children might be more willing to participate after familiarizing themselves with the reading kit.

The staff manual provides samples of Registration Forms designed to collect statistics on participation, including the sex and age of each participant. The form also includes a tally on how children first hear about the program. Collecting this information is mandatory on the Statistics and Evaluation Form to be filled out at the end of the summer.

Record Children's Progress on the Reading Log Page

Remind children that they should record all the books that they read in their reading log page of the activity booklet. A template of the reading log is included in this staff manual, so that you can photocopy extra pages for avid readers.

Reading Options

Keep track of the number of books read. This is a standard method of making sure that children read throughout the summer. For every book read, the child gets a sticker. Some libraries vary this by asking younger children to read more books, while older children can get a reward for finishing one long book. Others count the minutes spent reading in a day. Thirty minutes a day for older children, or 15 minutes of being read to for younger children. If you choose the latter consider giving the children a calendar on which they can mark their minutes. This calendar can also advertise your summer reading activities.

Book Reporting Options

Anytime the Library is Open

Past practice in many libraries has been to allow children to come to the library at any time and discuss, with library staff, the books that they have read. This encourages children to read extensively and provides the opportunity for staff to promote a wide variety of books. The stickers can be used in this type of program as an incentive for each book read.

Weekly Meetings (e.g., two hours reporting each Tuesday and Thursday)

Locations may identify a specific time each week when children can come to the library to report on the books that they have read. This allows the library to staff accordingly. Pages might be brought into the library to help cover the circulation desk while the staff listens to children discuss the books that they have read. Included in this manual is a list of questions for staff to ask children about the books. This can be turned into a game by using the dice (template included). The children can roll the dice to decide which question will be asked. Alternatively you can enlarge the questions and put them on cards to be chosen from, or use a numbered spinner.

Club Meetings (one afternoon a week)

Library branches may decide to have a weekly meeting where children come as a group and discuss the books that they read during the previous week. An advantage to this option is that children hear from other children about books they think are good. Peer promotion is always a good way to build interest in

books. During these meetings a variety of other activities can be planned. Staff may decide to give out the stickers at each meeting as an attendance incentive.

As a Family Event

This method allows the family to set their own goals and come whenever the goals are met. The parents judge whether the books read are appropriate and this eliminates the need for staff to ask the children questions.

Maintaining Interest

Special Events

Special events are an excellent way to build excitement throughout the summer. Contests, plays, puppetry workshops and storytelling are just a few of the many events that can be planned during July and August.

Author/Illustrator Readings

Many children's authors and illustrators make excellent presentations to children. Hosting a reading during the summer means that the children in attendance are the children who want to come – not children who are there because their class came to the library. If you bring in an illustrator, make sure that you have paper and an easel for them to demonstrate their illustration techniques.

Community Friends and Leaders

The local bookstore owner, the fire chief, the mayor and the school crossing guard are people the children recognize. Invite them to the library to share their favourite children's books.

Other Things to Do

Keep Statistics

Individual library branches are asked to provide their evaluation responses to their main branch so that each library system fills out a unique online Statistics and Evaluation Form. Before starting the program, please review the form to find out what information is requested (see pg.186 or <http://www.td-club-td.ca>). Also, please use the designated Registration Forms designed to collect the mandatory statistics.

These statistics are useful not only to show how many children participated in the program, but also to highlight the great work being done in Canadian public libraries.

Write a Letter to the Sponsor

Towards the end of the summer, get the children to write a letter, either individually or as a club to TD Bank Financial Group. The letter can describe their summer of reading fun. Include any pictures, drawings or book reports that you think would be of interest. Please send all material to your main library branch.

Using this Manual

More Than You Will Ever Need!

The manual has been created to give you many ideas to choose from. The book suggestions are just that—suggestions. If you own the books listed, that's great! But feel free to substitute books from your collection. The crafts or other activities can also be adapted to your supplies, or space, or number of kids attending.

Pick and Choose What You Will Use

If you started at the beginning of the manual and did every program right to the end, you would probably still be doing summer programming in December! Instead, figure out which activities get you excited about the theme and concentrate on those.