

Rutgers Center for Literacy Development Newsletter Summer/Fall 2020 Edition

Volume XI, No. 2



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

With this newsletter we finish the academic year of 2019-20. Now we must look ahead to 20-21. This newsletter is divided into three sections. In the first section two articles discuss summer reading activities. The next piece deals with family literacy. We frequently have articles for families at the end of the school year to promote reading during the summer. Based on comments expressed by teachers, online school has made many of them aware of just how important parents are in the literacy development of their children. In this newsletter we present some ideas for the beginning of the school year to have parents as partners in literacy development. These articles assume that schools will be face to face in the fall. Finally, the last section includes teachers' comments about teaching during the Pandemic. Many expressed that it wasn't easy but that it became a time to learn more about technology. Following is a teacher's comments about the pandemic. I think her words really describe the commitment, ingenuity, and hard work teachers are willing to do for their children at any time.

Tiffany Kane

Teacher, PS 16 School, Jersey City

As we find ourselves in the midst of a historic event, I've found myself taking more time to reflect. I think back to times when I was stressed over lesson planning, grading, managing behaviors and so on and I can't help but chuckle a bit. The educational world as we knew it changed in the blink of an eye and all of those troubles seemed to not matter so much. I found myself learning right alongside my students as we navigated online learning platforms, work load and even which video chat worked best for us. I'd like to think that I get to know my students and their learning styles well during the year, but this took it to another level. My amazing class and I had a bumpy first week but we quickly found our flow. We are now a well-oiled machine of whole group, small group and one-on-one Zoom lessons, of independent and collaborative work and we've mastered writing via Google Docs. Teachers have always had to be flexible and learn to go with the flow of the class or lesson, but I believe this experience has taught me so much about planning with the student in mind. I know that teachers will come out of this pandemic with a new sense of resiliency and a renewed sense of love for their profession. To end my comments I am using Dr. Seuss's book *Green Eggs and Ham*, as a mentor text.

I will teach in a room
I will teach on zoom
I will teach here or there
I will teach because I care

Lesley Mandel Morrow, Ph.D.

Distinguished Professor

Director of the Center for Literacy Development

Rutgers Graduate School of Education

Maintaining Reading Momentum All Summer Long

By Jill Mills

Every year we worry about the summer slide, when students lose about one third of what they've learned. What does that look like this year when students already missed one third of the school year itself? Many of our students are discovering new ways to learn and process information. For the most part, they now are more proficient at navigating digital environments to find content.

When schools, libraries and bookstores are closed, we all lose access to books. Until family economies are strong, books are not where money will be spent. What can we offer our students?

I have heard that some schools are eliminating their summer reading lists. There's pressure on families to find very specific titles when schools share summer reading lists, and often it's the public library that keeps multiple copies in the collection just for that purpose. A specific summer reading list would only add to the stress. So, what do we offer as an alternative? I suggest some summer reading guidelines.

Throughout the school year, I give passports to my students to start them on a reading journey. I have a nonfiction passport, a genre passport, and a cultural passport. In each passport, I list twelve choices and encourage students to read at least eight selections in each. The passports are a fun introduction to new literature, with very little pressure. I want them to try something fresh, and I want it to be their choice. My job is to provide them options based on readers' advisory. The library is a space for students to explore - to discover something new or to read what their friend is reading and build a social community from a discussion of a book, whether it's above or below their level.

[Recent articles](#)⁽¹⁾ have called attention to the way levels limit readers. Summer should be the time students taste a little freedom, even in what they are reading. As we encourage students to continue reading over the summer, we need to encourage them to find what excites them. We know that [choice is a motivator for reading](#),⁽²⁾ and I use that knowledge to spur my students to find what interests and inspires them. This summer, I have asked teachers to request that students keep up their reading, but share with them a broad scope of reading options, along with a variety of resources where students can continue to find books they love and books they wonder about. It's going to take some effort to make sure our students are aware of the many places they can locate them, but here are some great places to start.*

[Libraries](#)⁽³⁾ - The New Jersey Library Association and the New Jersey Association for School Librarians have partnered to create a one-stop shop for digital access to hundreds of library resources across the state. In addition to these geolocation links, encourage students to find their own public library sites to see what they are offering, perhaps in place of summer reading programs. These links will be maintained all summer with updates to access to ebooks and audiobooks (including Epic!, Hoopla, Libby and Overdrive).

[Wonderopolis](#)⁽⁴⁾ - for a daily dose of curiosity and discovery, this site is rich with topics of discussion. Teachers become part of the Wonderground and find lessons and many other classroom resources.

[Biblionasium](#)⁽⁵⁾ - Teachers and parents can create accounts where students can connect with other readers about books they've enjoyed and find new suggestions. Teachers can create reading goals for students. Finally, in an effort to do something about the lack of access to books in my neighborhood, I opened my town's first Little Free Library in April. It was something I had always hoped to do, but I felt the need was never greater. To get it up and running quickly, I registered as a mobile unit and offer my books in a Radio Flyer wagon that I wheel out whenever the weather permits. Through generous donations from family and friends, I immediately established a broad collection of books and the reception has been great. There are libraries like this all over New Jersey. Check out the [map](#)⁽⁶⁾ to find one near you.



*Please note, many publishers have been providing free ebook access through June 30. Check the Libraries link I've provided below for continued updates as we move through the summer.

Reference Links to Copy and Paste in Browser:

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=Where-did-Leveling-Go-Wrong-leveled-reading-lexiles-AR-libraries-books-fountas-pinnell>

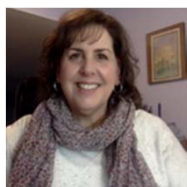
⁽²⁾ <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/reading-motivation-what-research-says>

⁽³⁾ <https://unlockstudentpotential.org/index.php/library-is-open/#page-content>

⁽⁴⁾ <https://wonderopolis.org/>

⁽⁵⁾ <https://www.biblionasium.com/#tab/content-spring-picks>

⁽⁶⁾ <https://littlefreelibrary.org/>



Jill Mills is an elementary librarian in Chatham, NJ. In addition, Jill is the current president of NJASL, the New Jersey Association of School Librarians.

How Parents Can Help to Prevent the Summer Slide

By Dana Casian

Teachers know the importance of reading, especially when it comes to the summer slide. Even if your school does not have required summer reading, here are some tips you can provide to parents to encourage their children to read in the summer.

Before the summer begins invite parents to a Zoom meeting or meet with them in person if you can and discuss activities they can do to help their children maintain the gains they made during the school year. This list assumes that libraries will be open this summer.

Parents and guardians should:

- Take your children to their public library. Libraries host events catered to different age groups. Many public libraries have social media pages that list events.
- Read alongside your child at the same time that they are reading.
- Allow your child to pick a book in which he/she is interested. Choice is important and makes reading more meaningful.
- Parents/guardians can read the same book as their child. This will enhance the conversations they can have about their books.
- Traveling this summer? Borrow a book from the public library or purchase a new book to read while traveling.
- Allow children to listen to books on Audible. The Libby app provides access to eBooks and audiobooks for free via the local library.
- Avoid discussing labels such as children's guided reading levels or Lexile levels. These labels can take the joy out of reading.
- Enjoy the sunshine and read outside.

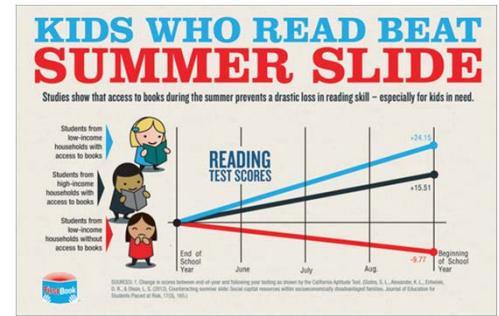
Check out these interesting statistics that outline the power of summer reading.

Encouraging students to read in the summer will help them be successful!

Source - <https://i0.wp.com/www.readyreaders.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Summer-Slide.jpg?ssl=1>



Dana Casian is the K-12 Supervisor of ELA, Social Studies, and World Languages for Kenilworth Public Schools in Kenilworth, NJ. Previously, Ms. Casian taught Kindergarten and middle school ELA for Carteret Public Schools. Ms. Casian was also a K-5 reading specialist. Ms. Casian holds the belief that literacy should be accessible for all. Ms. Casian's recent initiatives have included implementing Orton Gillingham word study for all students in grades K-2 and adding the workshop model to all K-6 classrooms.



where great stories begin™

The Rutgers Center for Literacy Development has partnered with the Reach Out and Read National Center, Eric B. Chandler Pediatric Health Center to help put books into the hands of every child. Your book donations at our events go to this clinic and have made family literacy possible for these children. The Center will collect new or gently-used books at each of our events.



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Development

Donuts and Dads in the Fall

By Kelly Saconne

The Kindergarten teachers at Red Bank Primary School seek opportunities to invite families to interact with the literacy development of their children throughout the school year. Teachers schedule several events for parents to come into the classrooms to both listen to their children read and to read to their children. We host reading events for Valentine's Day, Read Across America, Mother's Day and Father's Day. The Father's Day event, is called "Donuts with Dad."

We have had Donuts for Dads in the summer in the past. This year it will not be possible.

We decided to start our parent involvement first thing in the fall. We carry out Donuts and Dads by working with the school nurse and the Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction. They help us to secure book donations and additional funding to gift every student with several age-appropriate books at the event. The school nurse was able to work with the Bridge of Books organization to secure gently used books for the students. The Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction was able to secure funding to purchase some new books for the students as well. The school PTO provided the teachers with the funding necessary for donuts, juice and paper goods.

In September Dads (or other special guests) are invited to read with the students in our classrooms. Almost every child had a special guest to participate. Teachers were available to read with any children who did not. Each child had the opportunity to read several books to their special guest. The children were all smiles while reading to their special guests in a classroom transformed with balloons, tablecloths and snacks. Everyone had the opportunity to sit at the snack table and enjoy donuts.

At the conclusion of the event the teacher made a short presentation focused on the importance of daily reading. There were handouts, including a list of book suggestions, a reading contest log, and a library card application. In keeping with the theme, every child left the classroom with a several new books, including a brand new copy of *If You Give a Dog a Donut* to get them started on their reading adventure.



Kelly Saconne is a Kindergarten teacher at the Red Bank Primary School for over ten years. Kelly continues her own professional development by studying the progression of reading skills on her own time and attending classes outside of her work hours.

How can we get student and their families excited about reading? Throw a Fall Family Reading Party!

By Ilanit Kaplan

I work tirelessly to instill a love of reading in my first grade students. I spend a great deal of time reading to them and modeling what good readers do. I encourage students to read at home and with their parents. We know that it is so important for parents to be involved with their child's literacy development. Reading with a parent is important, however this can be difficult for English Language Learners (ELL). Their parents may not be able to read English and/or they don't have books in their primary language (Spanish). How do I get kids and parents excited about reading at home?

I threw a fall reading party to get students and their families excited for the new school year. I purchased new books with Scholastic points and secured a small grant to purchase books in Spanish to give out at the party.

Leading up to the reading party, I made sure to personally invite each parent and created lively invitations in both English and Spanish which advertised free books and snacks. This way, I communicated to my Spanish speaking parents that the event was inclusive of Spanish speakers.

I decorated the room in fall colors with tablecloths and decorations from the Dollar Store. The event begins with a short interactive read aloud. This allows me to model how to read to children. Next, the families have snacks. During snack time groups of parents and children select a new book to take home. When everyone has their new book, the teacher assigns parents and children to one of three centers. The groups move from one center to another at the sound of a bell.

One center has oversized pillows, where parents and children read their new book. Another center consists of large ziplock bags and stickers for children to make their own book baggies. In the third center parents and children create a book cover for their book.

The kids were really proud to show our classroom to their parents. Most of my students had never "shopped" for a book with their parents before, so they really enjoyed the experience. Parents were also appreciative to have books they were able to read to their children. This event can start the new school year with a focus on family literacy. It created a bond with the school, teacher, parents and children.



Ilanit is a Reading and ELL teacher in NJ. Before moving to New Jersey, Ilanit taught high school ESL and Social Studies in Manhattan. She received a Master's in Reading Education from Rutgers University as well as a Master's in TESOL from NYU. She holds certificates as a Reading Specialist, Orton Gillingham Teacher and IDA Dyslexia Interventionist.

Cheryl Selden

6th Grade Reading Teacher, Bergen Arts and Science Charter Middle School, Garfield, NJ

One thing that I realized during distance learning is that I can give my students a little space to try things. In the classroom, I was always there. I could literally run over and answer any questions instantly. I had been trying to give them the opportunity to try and work through their questions on their own before I explained, and I did to a degree. Distance learning kind of pushed me (and them) to let them have time to think and make an attempt on their own. As much as I miss them it has been eye opening to see what they are capable of on their own. This distance learning has been like removing the training wheels, and I am so proud of my students and how well they are doing.

Christine Urbanczyk

McManus and Soehl Middle Schools, Linden School District

As an instructional coach, I feel that my relationships with teachers have improved during this time away from our buildings. The incredible transformation to virtual instruction has been the direct result of collaboration. My district has focused on collective teacher efficacy over the last few years, and this time apart has highlighted our shared belief of working together to achieve positive student outcomes in Linden.

Eileen Bancalari

2nd Grade Teacher, Thomas B. Conley Elementary School, Bethlehem Township School District

"One thing that is really helping me to teach remotely is "Class Dojo." More specifically, the "portfolio" portion which allows the parents to upload their child's work directly to their own private portfolio. From there, I can grade, give immediate feedback, and it helps me to keep track of all of their work. I was going to say "Zoom" but I am sure everyone will say that!"

Lisa Pizzuta

Teacher Coach, English Language Arts, Newark Public Schools

"Homeschooling is difficult. I'm a teacher and working from home. I have 3 children. My 9th grader and 7th grader are pretty self-sufficient and they take their virtual classes all day long. I read their papers and labs before they submit. This way I know what they are working on. I did not get to read the in school work before online teaching. It's my 1st grader that is the most time-consuming because of having to get her connected to platforms and helping her learn isn't easy."

Jenny Ahn

3rd Grade Teacher, Cliffside Park School #3, Cliffside Park School District

"During this pandemic I have become quite proficient with Google Meets, Google Classroom, and use of Google Docs. Although nothing can replace the daily interactions I have with my students in the classroom, I love that I am getting more comfortable using different technology websites and resources that are available. Through the use of these programs I get to still smile and laugh as I interact with my students virtually. In addition, I'm thinking about how I can take what I have learned during this situation and apply it into the classroom in the future. I appreciate how so many companies have been gracious to offer their programs for free and to try to help teachers and parents out during this pandemic. In addition, starting next year I will be more diligent in my communication with parents. I have realized that it is super important that parents be involved with their child's learning.

Shari Tave

5th Grade Inclusion Teacher, Dr. Maya Angelou Elementary School, Jersey City School District

One thing that I learned during this Pandemic is that teaching remotely is very challenging, and it necessitates that I explore new ways to address my students' needs. I also learned that my fifth graders are very capable and computer savvy. Not only do they adapt quickly to using new programs but are also proficient in explaining and teaching their classmates (and me) how to use them well.

Giuliana Gervasio

5th Grade Teacher, Borough School, Morris Plains, NJ

Over the past 8 weeks I've been keeping fairly busy. To keep busy I learned how to bake and cook a lot of new foods! I made banana chocolate muffins, chocolate chip cookies, banana pudding, soft pretzels, cheesy biscuits, and a dessert pizza. My favorite new recipe is the desert pizza because it's a mix of healthy berries and sweet cannoli dip with a drizzle of nutella. I'm in the process of writing my first cookbook of all the new recipes I've made during this pandemic!

Gini Luraschi

Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach, Cliffside Park Public Schools

With schools across the country closed and fears about the virus on the rise, it's hard to find something positive to write about. However after taking a closer look, there is much good to write about and it is found in our classrooms. Although they may not look like traditional classrooms, teachers are playing an even greater role in the education of our children. Educators are being called upon to do almost the unimaginable. They are being asked to be moms, dads, caregivers of the elderly and more, all while teaching their students remotely from their homes. Teachers have always been role models, yet during these challenging times they are being asked to meet new standards. And to no one's surprise, they are managing it all! Yes, there is much good to be found during this time and it all starts and ends with our extraordinary teachers.



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**The Center for Literacy Development
Presents
2020 Summer Series Webinar**



Doug Fisher
July 14, 2020

Part 1

4:00 PM - 5:15 PM EST
1:00 PM - 2:15 PM PST



Nancy Frey
August 12, 2020

Part 2

4:00 PM - 5:15 PM EST
1:00 PM - 2:15 PM PST

The series will focus on

**Teacher Credibility and Collective Teacher
Efficacy**

Registration for one session is \$25, or \$35 for both.

There will be door prizes at the webinar. They are 3 registrations to one of the CLD events in the 2020-2021 academic year. These prizes will be randomly drawn from our registration pool and announced at the webinar meeting.

The Agenda for Each Meeting is:
Introduction, Presentation, Q and A

The sessions will be recorded and available to registrant
after the live session.

Registration website is: <https://cvent.me/ebmOaw>



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CENTER FOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT 2020-2021 SPEAKER SERIES WORKSHOPS



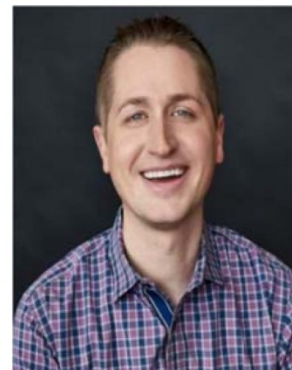
Cornelius Minor
*We Got This: Equity, Access,
and the Quest to Be Who Our
Students Need Us to Be*
December 10, 2020



Lucy Calkins
Teaching Writing
February 26, 2021
National Writing Project at Rutgers



Kate Roberts
A Novel Approach
April 28, 2021



John Schumacher
"Mr. Schu"
Ambassador of Books
June 3, 2021

Register at

<http://rutgerscenterforliteracydevelopment.cvent.com/d/6nqx9m/6X>



Rutgers Graduate School of Education
Center for Literacy Development



Center Events for 2020-2021

[click here to read entire booklet](#)

- 53rd Annual Conference on Reading and Writing
Friday, October 23, 2020 - **REGISTER NOW!**
- Speaker Series Workshops
- National Writing Project Conference

Register at

<http://rutgerscenterforliteracydevelopment.cvent.com/d/6nqx9m>

We will be holding our Conference on Friday October 23, 2020.
We will provide a safe environment for those who attend.

The conference could be virtual with live-remote presentations
to bring these outstanding presenters to you.

We might be live in person and virtual at the same time
since we may only be able to have a limited number of
people we can have together.

THEREFORE REGISTER NOW since live seating will be limited.

The cost of the conference will be adjusted and less if we are virtual.

Thank you for your attendance.



The Center for Literacy Development Rutgers Reading Club

An After and Before School Literacy Program For Struggling Readers

Center for Literacy Development Rutgers Reading Club

Instruction focuses on the child's needs however the basic teaching plan includes the integration of the language arts with developing: word work, comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, and writing.

Along with enhancing literacy development, motivation is a major goal in each teaching session. For example the child can choose a book for the teacher to read to them that is too difficult for the child to read themselves. Literacy games are also played.

Each child is taught twice a week for 12 weeks for 45 minutes to an hour by a teacher who is certified. In addition to literacy development, teachers work on building a relationship with the child.



Rutgers Reading Club Cheer

Rutgers Reading!
Rutgers Writing!
Hoo-Rah!
Hoo-Rah!
Rutgers Reading
Reading Red team!
Writing Red team!
Rah! Rah!

Research based practices that make the Reading Club successful:

- Motivating and Engaging children
- Building Self-esteem
- Creating time for socializing and snacking
- Building relationships between teacher and student
- Allowing for success
- Differentiating instruction
- Providing additional literacy instruction
- Allowing for practice

For more information
Lesley Mandel Morrow, Ph.D.

Treatment Group

DEC	JAN	MAR	DEC	JAN	MAR	DEC	JAN	MAR
Sight Words	Sight Words	Sight Words	Running Record	Running Record	Running Record	Phonics Inventory	Phonics Inventory	Phonics Inventory
128	171	255	E	H	J	42/74	63/74	68/74

Control Group

DEC	JAN	MAR	DEC	JAN	MAR	DEC	JAN	MAR
Sight Words	Sight Words	Sight Words	Running Record	Running Record	Running Record	Phonics Inventory	Phonics Inventory	Phonics Inventory
134	144	170	E	E	F	42/74	44/74	50/74



CENTER FOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT COACHING IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT



The center provides experienced coaches to do workshops, coaching, and modeling strategies to enhance teacher performance and student achievement. Professional development is tailored to your school's needs.



Over
50
Districts Served

COACHING TOPICS

- Reading workshop
- Guided Reading
- Writing Workshop
- Standards
- Use of Informational Text
- Assessment
- Project Based Learning
- Close Reading
- Differentiated Instruction
- Dyslexia
- Mentoring New Teachers
- Literacy and technology
- Struggling Readers
- Parent Involvement Programs
- Evaluations of Language Arts Programs
- Evaluation of your curriculum and how it's implemented

AND MORE



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