

The Lit Kit

Helping Children Maintain Literacy Skills
and Positive Attitudes toward Reading



Ottawa **Child**
& **Youth** Initiative
Growing Up Great



Initiative pour les
enfants et les jeunes
Mieux grandir

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The Lit Kit

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Why Summer Literacy is Important

During summer vacation, when children are out of school, they typically read less. Often, they do not have access to a structured learning environment like they do during the school year. For these reasons, during the summer months, children are at a risk of losing some of their reading skills. This loss is referred to as the “**summer slide**”. This is particularly true among low-income children who often don’t have the same access to resources as their peersⁱ.

While the effects of the *summer slide* are more pronounced for low-income children, the summer slide **affects all children**. Children can lose over a month of skill or knowledge in math, reading and language arts each summerⁱⁱ! This loss of skill and knowledge, particularly in reading, plays a significant role in children’s future success in school and elsewhere. Ensuring that children are reading over the summer can go a long way towards reducing the risk of summer slide and setting children up for success!

You can help children maintain and improve their literacy skills during the summer by encouraging them to read.

The number of books a child reads over the summer can help to maintain their reading levels. ⁱⁱⁱ While studies indicate that by simply having books available can help, children are more likely to take advantage of these books, when an adult or leader encourages them to read.^{iv v}

The *Lit Kit* is designed for summer programs and camps to easily integrate literacy in their programs. By thinking outside the box (while using what’s in our box) on how to support literacy and reading, you can encourage a love of reading among all children.

We would like to thank Frontier College, Excellence in Literacy Foundation, and the Ottawa Public Library for their support, ideas, and resources which have been included in this Kit. A special thanks to the Community Foundation of Ottawa, all of our partners, the Critical Hours Task Group, and Shannel Watt-Charley, for their input and support in the creation of this program.

Contact Us

For more information, please contact info@growingupgreat.ca.

Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative

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Overview of the Lit Kit

The Lit Kit is an easy-to-use tool to help program staff integrate reading and literacy in new ways in summer programs.

This guidebook includes activities, crafts, suggested books and tips for program leaders to use in their existing programs to help children maintain or increase their reading skill and attitude toward reading.

What's included in the full Lit Kit?



- Lit Kit Guidebook – includes ideas for games, activities, and crafts geared to children ages 4-6 years and 7-12 years
- Templates of the activities and crafts for copying (also available on OCYI website, www.ocyi.ca under the Critical Hours Task Group section)
- Tips for overcoming challenges and supporting children struggling with reading
- Ottawa Public Library list of suggested books based on age, reading level and theme (found on website)
- Resources and materials required for some of the activities or crafts

The activities in this Guidebook are divided by suggested age groups.

All activities can be adapted to meet the needs of the group.

The Lit Kit is also available in French, contact info@growingupgreat.ca for information.

Using this Guidebook to Support Literacy

Use the guidebook to build literacy skills and encourage children to read! Research tells us that children need to develop five key literacy skills; reading, writing, decoding, vocabulary building and storytelling in order to achieve a high literacy level, in other words, to become a competent reader^{vi vii}.

Each activity in the guidebook supports at least one of the following key literacy skills.



Reading

- Fluency (reading quickly and accurately)
- Comprehension (understanding, retelling, and relating to the story)



Writing

- Grammar, Spelling & Punctuation
- Composition (clear message and correct word order)



Decoding

- Alphabet knowledge (ability to name letters alone or in groups)
- Phonological awareness (awareness of letter sounds and rhyming)



Vocabulary building

- Learning new vocabulary
- Practicing spelling
- Learning pronunciation



Storytelling

- Creating stories (oral and written stories with beginning, middle, and an end)
- Sharing stories

Other Symbols






Building literacy skills isn't all about reading. It can involve active play. Look for this symbol for the games and activities that encourage physical activity.



The print icon means there are additional materials and resources on the OCYI website for you to print and use. Starter templates are included in the kit.

COVID Safety Key

-  COVID Safe: no adaptation necessary
-  COVID Caution: may need to adapt to maintain a safe environment, like going outside
-  Not COVID Safe: not advised without significant safety measures in place

Reading with Children

This toolkit includes a number of fun games and crafts that integrate literacy in new ways. It's important to note that these activities should be used **with** books not instead of books. Ensuring access to books and reading with children can go a long way to ensuring that all children are given the opportunity to succeed.

The Ottawa Public Library has kindly provided a number of booklists that can be used throughout the summer. You can use the Ottawa Public Library's booklist and encourage a love of reading in your program in a variety of ways:

- **Read a book during circle time.** Build story time into your daily or weekly schedule so that children know when to expect this.
- **Use when transitioning from one activity to another.** Use a book where children can participate with words or actions to regain the children's attention.
- **Set up a reading nook** where children can read a book during free time.
- **Have a rotating book bar.** Keep children interested by rotating your collection of books on display.
- **Have a sign-out sheet** for children to bring a book home.
- **Hand out the suggested book list for the week** for children to take home to a parent. You can remind children and parents that all books are all available at the OPL.

Reading Tips

- **Read aloud to children of all ages.** Often we think reading aloud is something we only do with young children who cannot read by themselves. In fact, hearing an adult reading clearly and with expression can help to engage children and can be an effective method to encourage children to read on their own.
- **Keep in mind that books include novels, comics, factual texts and more!** Ensure that children have access to a variety of texts on different topics in different formats. Some children prefer learning and sharing facts while others enjoy immersing themselves in a world of fantasy!

General Activities



Create a Weekly Wall

Encourage children to read a variety of texts – including articles, facts, jokes and more!

Materials needed: Bulletin board, news clippings, jokes, magazine articles

Instructions:

1. Gather interesting newspaper, magazine or blog articles, jokes and other facts.
2. Create a weekly wall. Make a colourful bulletin board and fill it with the interesting clippings and facts.
3. Encourage children to read the weekly wall whenever they want and bring in materials to post.
4. Remember it's a weekly wall, so remember to update it weekly! This will help keep kids interested!

Tips:

- Children may add to the wall if they come across an article or interesting fact
- Include the source (website, book or paper where you found the information) to encourage children to follow up on their own. If you have a book on the topic, be sure to include the book in the display.

Skills taught:



Host a Book Party

Hosting a book party is a great way to get children excited about reading.

Materials needed: Books, snacks, themed games, themed crafts

Included in the Kit: Ottawa Public Library Suggested Book List (*on the OCYI website*)

Instructions:

1. Choose a theme for your book party: themes could be as broad as rhyming or as specific as an author.
2. Choose your theme based on the interest and age of your group – you could do a poll to find out what they like!
3. Consult the suggested book lists by the OPL for ideas.
4. Plan themed foods, crafts and other activities for your event.
5. Set up a reading area, with comfy blankets and pillows for children to sit as they listen to a story.
6. Read some themed books during your party; choose the length and number of books you'd like to get through depending on the age and size of your group.
7. Display themed books during the party and encourage children to read these on their own.

Skills taught:





Alphabet Hunt

In this word hunt, children are able to practice vocabulary, phonological awareness and reading skills while being active. This activity can be adapted to suit the age and level of the children.

Materials needed: Paper, markers

Included in the Kit: Large alphabet letters

Instructions:

1. Depending on the group of children, you may choose to either use letters or words.
2. Hide the large alphabet letters around the room or yard. You may also write words on paper and hide these.
3. In teams or individually, have children search for as many letters or words that they can find.
4. When the letters are found, have them read the letters or words.

Tips:

- Make this a group activity by creating teams.
- Use words of varying difficulties and lengths to match the skill level of your group.

Skills taught:





Hoop that Letter

Children practice reading and alphabet knowledge while playing an active game with hula hoops.

Materials needed: Hula hoops, paper, markers, tape

Included in the Kit: Large alphabet letters

Instructions:

1. Create a starting line with tape or a skipping rope.
2. Lay out the large alphabet letters at different distances from the starting line. You can also write out words on paper.
3. Have children toss the hoops and try to get a hoop land on a letter (or word).
4. Once hooped, have them read aloud their letter (or word) and the sound it makes.

Tips:

- Use words of varying difficulties and lengths to match the skill level of your group.
- Create a point system for the letters depending on the distance away from the starting line.

Skills taught:



Once Upon A Time

Children practice reading and alphabet knowledge while telling a story

Materials needed: None

Instructions:

1. Have children to sit in a circle.
2. Begin the story by saying "Once upon a time..."
3. Each child can add one or two words or a sentence to the story.
4. The group takes turns to complete the story.
5. The pattern continues until you can no longer remember the story or until you reach the last child in the circle.

Tips:

- Write down the story on a large piece of paper or whiteboard as it develops.

Skills taught:



Waterchalk Art

Children use their imaginations to tell a story through chalk in this outdoor activity. This activity allows children to practice writing, spelling and storytelling.

Materials needed: Chalk, paintbrushes, cup of water

Instructions:


1. Find a clean (and safe) space on the sidewalk or pavement for chalk drawing.
2. Encourage children to use words and pictures to tell a story with different colours of chalk. The closer the colours are together, the better the results
3. Dip a paintbrush in water and trace the brush over the chalk words and pictures to make waterchalk art!

Tips:

- Write words or letters in advance for children to trace.

Skills taught:



Puppet Show Puppets are a great way to practice storytelling and building literacy skills.	
Materials needed: Use your regular craft time puppets and pictures in this activity.	
Instructions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pick a theme for the puppet show. It can be a book or movie, their favourite day of camp or program, or a special event. 2. Have children make puppets and pictures for the “show”. 3. Have children work in groups to come up with a short puppet show around the topic. 4. Make a stage for your puppets (use cardboard, paint and spare fabric). 5. Put on a puppet show production! Set up chairs for the group to watch and have the groups tell their stories. 	Skills taught: 
Tips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model storytelling with children: try using a puppet as you read a story or explain instructions. You may select a few children to help act out the story. 	



Sing Along

Encourage active listening, practice pronunciation and build vocabulary through song and action.

Included in the Kit: Song Cards



Instructions:

1. Choose a song card and go through the actions with the children.
2. Have the group sing and do the actions.

Tips:

- Repeat, repeat, repeat until the kids catch on!

Skills taught:



Picture Bingo

Children use listening skills and a visual cue to mark down the corresponding word on their bingo card.

Materials needed: Pencil, marker or bingo dabber

Included in the Kit: Bingo cards templates



Instructions:

1. Prepare the BINGO cards and Calling card pictures.
2. Give each child a bingo card and a marker.
3. Pick one square at a time and call it out. Show the children the picture.
4. Children mark the square if they have the corresponding picture on their bingo card.
5. The first person to complete a line shouts BINGO!

Tips:

- Call out the word, wait a couple of seconds then show the children the picture so that they have the opportunity to make a word-picture association
- Print off new bingo sets online based on your program's theme, the season or upcoming holidays.
- Laminate the bingo cards for multi-use and use washable markers.

Skills taught:





Rhyme Time

Children are assigned a word and complete an action when a word that rhymes with theirs is called.

Included in the Kit: Rhyme time words and pictures



Instructions:

1. Cut out the squares of rhyming words.
2. Hand each child a word and keep its rhyming word in another pile.
3. Call out “If your word rhymes with...” then pull a card, read it aloud, and name an action.
4. For example, “If your word rhymes with *cat*, do a jumping jack”
5. The child with the rhyming word must name their word and complete the action.

Tips:

- Call out actions like: Hop on one foot, Touch your toes, Rub your belly, and Clap your hands.

Skills taught:



Ages 4-6 ●

Alphabet Soup

Children reach into the “soup” and pull out letters to make a word.

Materials needed: Bucket or bag

Included in the Kit: Large alphabet letters

Instructions:

1. Place the alphabet letters into a bucket or bag.
2. Have the children work in pairs; ask each pair to pull out a handful of letters (about 5 to 7).
3. Next, have them try and make a word with some of the letters they chose.

Tips:

- Some children may need more support with this activity at first; pairing the child with a more advanced child is one way to help.
- To use this activity with a more advanced group, set a timer for 3 minutes and have them create as many words as they can with the letters pulled.

Skills taught:



Pictionary

Encourage children to read and learn new vocabulary in this adaptation of Pictionary.

Materials needed: Pencil, paper, scissors, hat or bucket, timer

Instructions:

1. Make a list of words that children can draw.
2. Cut out the words and place them into the bucket.
3. Divide children into teams and give each a pencil and paper.
4. Children take turns pulling a word from the bucket.
5. Once they have read their word, they begin drawing the item.
6. Both teams guess what is being drawn.
7. The first team to guess correctly the item being drawn earns a point.
8. After a couple rounds, add up the points to see who won.

Skills taught:



What's That Word?

Children create a definition for an unfamiliar word.

Materials needed: Paper, pencil

Included in the Kit: Wordlist



Instructions:

1. Divide children into teams and give each team a piece of paper and a pencil.
2. Read one of the unfamiliar words.
3. Ask the groups to write down what they think the word means. Remind them to look for clues (i.e. Are there big words in the small words? Is there a prefix? Is it similar to another word?)
4. After each team has written their answers, they can fold the paper and place it in the center.
5. A staff member will then read aloud the answers.
6. Groups vote on who they think answered correctly.
7. Any group that guessed correctly receives a point.

Tips:

- Provide hints if children are struggling.
- Select words that are appropriate for your group and their skill level.

Skills taught:



Written Telephone

Children write a secret message and pass it on.

Materials needed: Paper, pencil

Instructions:

1. Have children sit in a circle. Give each child a blank sheet of paper and pencil.
2. Choose one child to begin the game by writing a secret message on their sheet of paper.
3. Take the secret message and show the next child for 30 seconds.
4. This child will now write down what they remember of the message.
5. Take this paper, with the new message and show the next child.
6. The pattern continues until the last child. They read aloud the message.
7. Compare to the original message. Do they match?

Tips:

- Change the difficulty of the game by making long or shorter messages

Skills taught:



Categories

Choose a category and go through the alphabet, finding words that fit for each letter.

Materials needed: None

Instructions:

1. Have children form a circle and choose a category.
2. Ask each child to think of a word that fits in the category, beginning with the letter A.
3. The next child will name a word that fits in the category and begins with B.
4. The pattern continues (passing when you cannot think of one) until you've reached the end of the alphabet.
5. Were you able to find one for every letter?

Tips:

- Use categories like fruits, vegetables, names, countries or sports.

Skills taught:



Shh That's Taboo!

Children answer questions without using words that begin with the secret letter.

Materials needed: Beanbag or ball, bag

Included in the Kit: Large alphabet letters

Instructions:

1. Instruct children to sit in a circle.
2. Place the alphabet letters in a bag in the centre of the circle.
3. Choose one letter from the bag and place in the center of the circle for everyone to say. This will be the “secret letter” during the round.
4. The first person begins by holding the ball/beanbag. They are the question master and must toss someone the ball/beanbag and ask them a question.
5. The child who receives the object must answer the question without using any words that begin with the secret letter.
6. They are now the question master and can ask someone else a question.
7. The pattern is repeated.
8. If someone uses a secret letter in their response, they are out.
9. Continue until there is one winner or just play for fun.

Tips:

- Play different rounds with different letters.
- Do not use uncommon letters from the set such as X, Y, and Z.

Skills taught:



Adapted from Maksimowski (n.d.), *Taboo*, Games and Activities for Reading Circles



Park Bench

An improvisation game where children must act out new stories.

Materials needed: None

Instructions:

1. Choose two children to begin the story. Instruct one to position themselves on their hands and knees, they are the park bench. The other child will (gently) sit on the other child; they are the child at the park.
2. They can begin acting act out a scenario.
3. After a while, call out “freeze”. The children freeze in their position.
4. Add another child into the story and call out “unfreeze”. Children unfreeze in their position but change the scenario.
 - For example, instead of a park bench the child might be a horse, and the child sitting could be a horseback rider. The new child might be the coach.
5. Continue playing and calling out “freeze”. You may add children or take away children from the story.

Tips:

- Suggest the next situation if children are having difficulty.

Skills taught:



Themed Activities

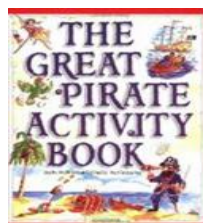
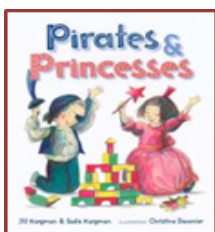


Pirates! Theme

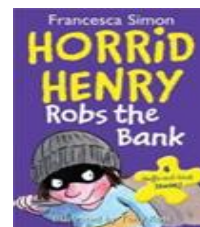
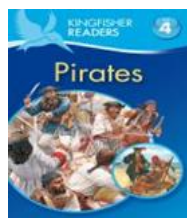
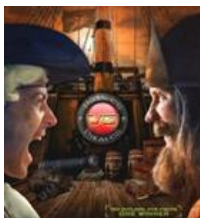
Stock your shelves with pirate themed books! Remember that you can use books in a fun and different of ways anytime during the program. Use books during circle time, transitions between activities or free time. Have a variety of interesting books available for children to use during free time or when they need a break. Contact your local neighbourhood library for more ideas.

Pirate stories suggested by Ottawa Public Library

Ages 4-6



Ages 7-12



Telescope - craft

This is a fun way to promote literacy skills, by asking children to look for letters and words with their telescope.

Materials needed: Plastic cup, gems, toilet paper roll/cardstock, stickers, scissors, tape

Instructions:

1. Help the children roll cardstock into a cylinder and tape into place
2. Holding the cylinder or toilet paper roll on the base of the plastic cup, trace a circle.
3. Cut out the circle.
4. Slide the cylinder into the hole in the base of the cup. Tape into place if necessary.
5. Next, decorate the telescope with gems and stickers.
6. Once complete, children may use their telescope to find letters and words.

Tips:

- You may hide letters around the room for children to find with their telescopes.
- Use toilet paper rolls instead of making your own.
- Use the telescopes for the “Looking for treasure” song.

Skills taught:



Captain Says!

Children learn new vocabulary and pronunciation in this adaptation of Simon says.

Included in the Lit: Pirate terms

Instructions:

1. Read pirate terms to children. Show the word and demonstrate the action that goes with it.
2. Begin the game by saying either "Captain says..." and a pirate term or simply the pirate term.
3. When you say "Captain says" the children must complete the action, however when you state only the pirate term, they must remain still.
4. Those who do the action when the leader does not say "Captain says" are out.
5. The game continues until only one child remains.

Skills taught:



Treasure Map – craft

Promote storytelling and build literacy skills by making a map.

Materials needed: Cup, paper, pencils, paintbrush

Included in the Kit: Tea bags

Instructions:

1. Ask children to draw a treasure map and label important details like the name of the ocean, the island and the cove.
2. Next, place a teabag into a cup of water.
3. Have the children dip a paintbrush into the tea water and paint their map.
4. Let the map air dry for two hours.
5. The treasure map is complete.

Tips:

- Children could also make a map of their backyard, school, or park, marking X for a favourite spot.

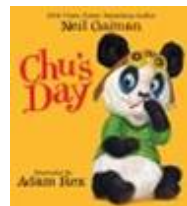
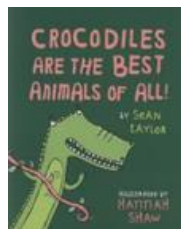
Skills taught:

Animals and Insects Theme

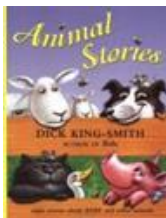
Animal and insect stories galore! You can use books in a fun and different of ways anytime during the program. Use books during circle time, transitions between activities or free time. Have a variety of interesting books available for children to use during free time or when they need a break. Contact your local neighbourhood library for more ideas.

Animal and insect stories suggested by Ottawa Public Library

Ages 4-6



Ages 7-12



ABC Animals - craft

This craft builds preliminary literacy skills like letter and sound recognition.

Materials needed: Paper, crayons or markers

Included in the Kit: Large alphabet letters

**Instructions:**

1. Lay the letters out and have each child choose one.
2. Have them choose an animal that begins with their letter.
3. Then, write the letter at the top of their page and draw their animal below.

Tips:

- You may need to help the children choose their animal. You may consult the *Animal Flashcards* for examples.

Skills taught:



Zookeeper

In this activity, children practice reading and get creative thinking of the actions that different animals do.

Included in the Kit: Animal & Insect flashcards



Print

Instructions:

1. Practice by reading the animal or insect flashcards with the children.
2. You are the zookeeper and must check on your animals. Call out one animal or insect from the flashcard and a child's name.
 - For example, *Tiger Caleb*
3. The child must do an action that the animal or insect does.
4. Continue calling out animals and children's names.
5. Play for fun or have children sit out when they cannot think of an action.

Tips:

- Encourage children to be creative and think of new actions each time.

Skills taught:



Superheroes theme

Get your cape and mask ready for these activities! You can use comics and books in fun and different ways anytime during your day.

Use books during circle time, transitions between activities or free time. Have a variety of interesting books available for children to use during free time or when they need a break. Encourage children to make their own stories or comics.

Contact your local neighbourhood library for more ideas.



Create Your Own Superhero Name!

Children learn about words, sounds and grammar as they create their own name.

Included in the Lit: Superhero names and nametags

**Instructions:**

1. Begin by talking about names. Many superhero names are made of two words like "Bat/man", "Super/man" or "Dark/Knight". The first word describes the superhero.
2. Spread the descriptive words into one pile and the nouns (person, animal, planet, etc.) into another.
3. Help the children choose one descriptive word and one noun.
4. This will be their superhero name for the day!
5. Have them write the superhero name on a nametag and wear it for the day.

Tips:

- Ask the children to explain what superpower they might have and share their ideas with the group

Skills taught:

Superhero Masks - craft

Promote storytelling by assisting the children to create a short play once they have created their superhero masks.

Materials needed: String, feathers, cardstock, sequins, glitter, glue, markers, scissors

Included: Mask template

**Instructions:**

1. Have children choose a mask template and cut it out
2. Use a hole punch to make 2 small holes on either end of their mask.
3. Cut 2 pieces of string and thread it through the holes. Tie a knot on either end to hold it in place.
4. The children can decorate their mask using glitters, sequins, feathers or markers.
5. Once the mask is complete, tie both strings together so that the mask sits snug on their head.

Tips:

- Cardstock or thin cardboard from cereal boxes works best for this activity.

Skills taught:

**Power Charades!**

This adaptation of charades allows children to practice reading, build new vocabulary and tell a story.

Materials needed: Bag or hat

Included in the Kit: Superpower Cards

**Instructions:**

1. Divide the group into 2 teams.
2. Place the superpower names into a bag and ask one child to pull a card from the bag. The child must act out the superhero power while the team guesses.
3. If they guess right, the team earns a point.
4. Now, it is the other team's turn.
5. The team with the most points at the end wins.

Tips:

- Ask children to think of other superhero powers and add these into the bag.

Skills taught:

Comic Strip

Comic books are a great way to interest children in books. Children can create their own comic book in this activity.

Materials needed: Pencil, markers or pencil crayons

Included in the Kit: Comic Strip Template

**Instructions:**

1. Give each child a template.
2. Instruct them to draw a superhero comic and include speech bubbles to help tell the story.

Tips:

- Read a comic book together so that children are familiar with the structure

Skills taught:

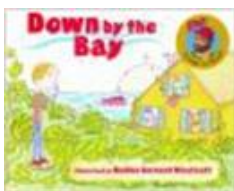
Water theme

Water books and activities are a great way to cool off in the summer. Don't forget to use books during circle time, transitions between activities or free time. Have a variety of interesting books available for children to use during free time or when they need a break.

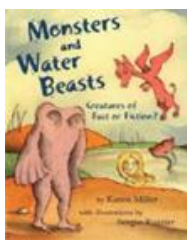
Contact your local neighbourhood library for more ideas.

Water stories suggested by Ottawa Public Library

Ages 4-6



Ages 7-12



Sea Foam

Encourage storytelling with this sea foam activity

Materials needed: For sea foam (2 tbsp. dish soap, 2/3 cup water, electric mixer or whisk, 2 drops gel or liquid food colouring), bath toys.

Instructions:

1. Create sea foam by mixing dish soap, water and food colouring with an electric mixer or whisk.
2. Pour into a large container along with bath toys such as rubber animals, dolls, toy boats, etc.
3. Encourage children to tell a story as they play with the sea foam and toys.
4. Prompt the children with questions to have they tell you their story. "Who is that? Where are they going? What are they doing?"

**Skills taught:****Tips:**

- Consider individual bins for each child for extra COVID safety

Citro, A. (2013). *Rainbow Foam Soap Bubbles Sensory Play*. Retrieved from <http://www.funathomewithkids.com>

Create a Seashell Fossil - craft

Promote literacy (and numeracy) by having children follow along with the recipe and read the measurements.

Materials needed: Flour, coffee grounds, salt, sand, water, small bowls or bags, measuring cups

Included in the Kit: Seashells and Recipe Card

Instructions:

1. Divide the children into groups. Give each group a measuring cup, the recipe and the ingredients in bowls/bags.
2. Have them follow the recipe and practice measuring the correct amount.
3. Next, they can lift the dough out of the bowl and flatten it on the table.
4. Give each group a seashell to press into the dough. Lift and let dry.

Skills**taught:**

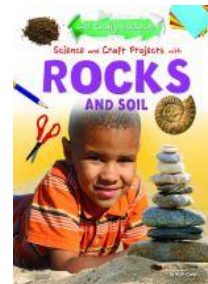
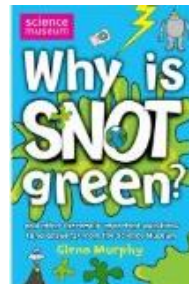
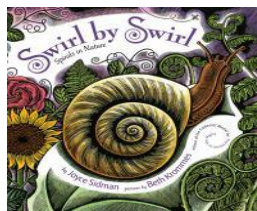
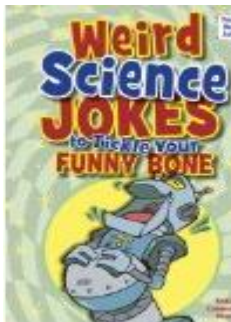
Science theme

Fact and science books are packed with jokes, facts and hands on science experiments for children to try. Use these books in a variety of ways to run experiments or activities during the week.

Use books during circle time, transitions between activities or free time. Have a variety of interesting books available for children to use during free time or when they need a break. Contact your local neighbourhood library for more ideas.

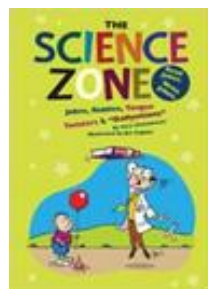
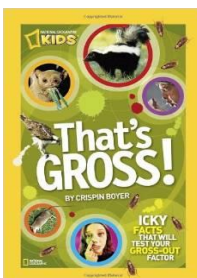
Science stories suggested by Ottawa Public Library

Ages 4-6



Suggested Stories by the OPL

Ages 7-12



Chemist for a Day – Making Crystals

Included is a simple recipe that children can read and follow along with in order to grow their own crystal.

Materials needed: Water, paper towel, empty jar, microwave , measuring spoon, measuring cup, spoon

Included in the Kit: Alum powder, recipe card

Instructions:

1. Divide the children into teams or prepare for each child to make their own
2. Give each team/child the required materials as well as the recipe.
3. Have them following along with the recipe to complete the craft.

Tips:

- You may need to supervise with the microwave
- Try adding food colouring to make the crystals colourful!

Skills taught:

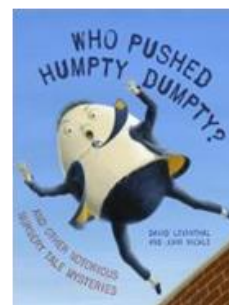
CSI and Mystery Theme

Have you ever wanted to solve a crime? Try choosing a longer crime book from the list and read a chapter each day with older children. Have children guess who they think is the culprit at the end of each section.

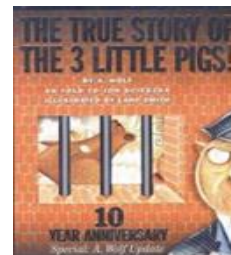
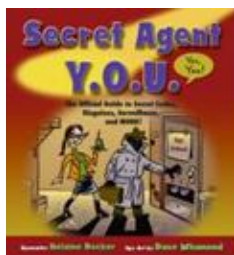
Use books during circle time, transitions between activities or free time. Have a variety of interesting books available for children to use during free time or when they need a break. Contact your local neighbourhood library for more ideas.

Mystery and detective stories suggested by Ottawa Public Library

Ages 4-6



Ages 7-12



I Spy ABC's

Children find and identify letters and objects in their rice shaker.

Materials needed: Rice, empty water bottle, cardstock, tape, small objects (optional)

Included in the Kit: Small alphabet beads

Instructions:

1. Begin by rolling cardstock and taping into place to make a funnel.
2. Help children hold the funnel in place and pour rice and alphabet beads into their bottle.
3. Other small objects can also be added like loose change, dice, or beads.
4. Screw the lid and shake the bottle to find the letters and objects.

Tips:

- Note which objects and letters go into the bottles and see if they can find them all.

Skills taught:

Invisible Ink - craft

Encourage children to write a word or letter then watch it disappear and reappear before their very eyes!

Materials needed: Cup, lemon juice, water, paper, lamp

Included in the Kit: Cotton swabs

Instructions:

1. Add a few drops of water and lemon juice into a cup.
2. Give each child a cotton swab and a piece of paper.
3. Ask them to dip their swab into the cup and write a word on paper (using the swab as a pencil)
4. Let it dry until invisible.
5. To uncover the word, hold the paper up to a lamp (the heat from the light will allow you to see the hidden word).

Tips:

- Depending on your group's age and literacy level, children can simply write a letter, their name or a secret message.

Skills taught:

Code Master

Children create and use a cipher disk to encode a message, their partner decodes the message.

Materials needed: Tacks, cardstock, scissors

Included in the Kit: Cipher disk template

**Instructions:**

1. Ask children to cut out the template and use a tack to fasten disks together.
2. To “encode” or create a code, ask one child to think of a secret message.
3. He/she should turn the small ring to find the first letter of their secret word, inside the rectangle cut-out. Now, instead of writing down this letter, they should write down the letter on the small ring.
4. He/she continues until their message is complete.
5. They can invite someone to decode their message, by finding the code letter on the inside ring, and the correct letter in the rectangle.

Tips:

- The template will work best on cardstock, or glued to cardboard.

Skills taught:

Kids Make Stuff (n.d.) The KidsMakeStuff Cipher Dis. Retrieved from <http://www.kidsmakestuff.com/articles/show/18hm>

My Print

Children learn about forensic evidence while examining their own fingerprint

Materials needed: Transparent tape, white paper, pencil

Included in the Kit: Fingerprint tip sheet



Print

Instructions:

1. Give each child white paper. Ask them to fold their paper in half so that they have two rectangles.
2. The first rectangle will be their inkpad. They must press firmly with their pencil to shade in the rectangle.
3. Then, they can place their thumb on the shaded area and lift.
4. Using a piece of tape, they may gently lift the thumbprint. The tape (with the print) is now placed in the other rectangle for observation.

Tips:

- Ask them to refer to the Fingerprint Tip Sheet to examine the arches, loops & whorls in their print.
- Compare to others and examine how each print is different.

Skills taught:

Around the World

It is summer vacation, so take a trip around the world!

Ages 7-12 ●

Around the World



Restaurant

Teach children about foods from around the world, by asking them to create and present a commercial for their international restaurant.

Material needed: Table, chairs, any props, pencil

Included in the Kit: International Food Cards



Instructions:

1. Ask children to choose groups. Each group will create a commercial for their restaurant.
2. They must think of a name and make a menu with at least 3 foods from the cards.
3. Hand out paper, pencils and markers for the menus.
4. Set up a table and chairs. Use props if available, such as tablecloth, dishes and food.
5. Have the children act out their commercials.

Skills taught:



Personal Passport - craft

Ask children to share where they have travelled and where they would like to travel.

Materials needed: Markers, pencils, glue, scissors

Included in the Kit: Passport template

**Instructions:**

1. Print out “passports” so every child has a copy.
2. Have the children to cut out the passport template.
3. Fold and glue the pages so that it reads like a book
4. Now they can fill in the page with their name and information.
5. On the blank page, children can write the names of the countries where they have visited or would like to visit.
6. Decorate!

Skills taught:

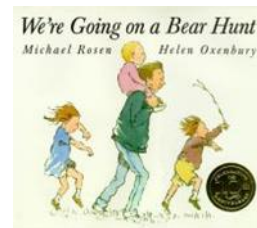
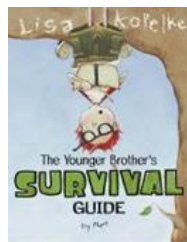
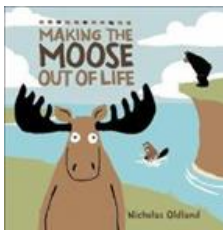
Survival

It's summer and it's time to get outside! Camping, survival, and outdoor stories are great for both young and older children as they explore the great outdoors and nature. Try to encourage children to take a book outside or take your group on a "*bear hunt*" to make the books come to life.

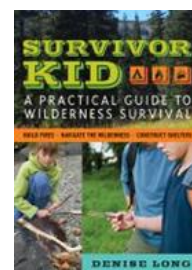
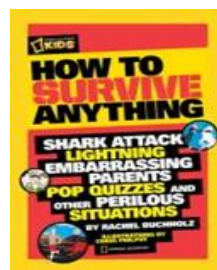
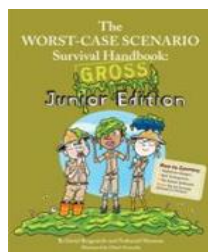
Use books during circle time, transitions between activities or free time. Have a variety of interesting books available for children to use during free time or when they need a break. Contact your local neighbourhood library for more ideas.

Survival stories suggested by Ottawa Public Library

Ages 4 – 6



Ages 7-12





Nature Scavenger Hunt

Have children do an outdoor picture word scavenger hunt to practice making word associations.

Materials needed: Paper bags, pencil

Included in the Kit: Scavenger Hunt Cards



Instructions:

1. Give each child/group a bag and scavenger hunt card.
2. Have each child or group write their name on a bag.
3. Ask them to find as many things on the list as they can and place it in the bag.

Skills taught:



Treehouse Storybook - craft

Ask children to create a short story about their ultimate treehouse

Materials needed: Paper, markers, crayons or pencils, string, hole punch

Instructions:

1. Ask children to create a picture of their ultimate treehouse
2. Next, create a short story around this.
3. Once they've finished their story, they can hole punch the side of their storybook and use string to tie it together.

Skills taught:

Talent Show

What skills does everyone have to share!

Ages 4-6 ●

Talent Show

Book Show and Tell

Let the kids be the star of their own show! Each child can present their favourite book.

Materials needed: Favourite book

Instructions:

1. At the beginning of the week, ask children to bring a favourite book on the specified day.
2. Ask children to present:
 - a. The title
 - b. What the book was about
 - c. Who was in the book
 - d. Why they liked the story

Skills taught:





Camp's Got Talent

Get children involved in preparing for a talent show – integrate literacy in a variety of ways.

Materials needed: None

Instructions:

1. Get children involved in organizing a talent show. They can design posters advertising the event, and create invitations for guests and parents, and even design the stage.
2. They may also make posters or signs advertising their talent that they are going to showcase.
3. Have one or a couple of children emcee the event and guide them in creating their emcee notes.
4. Finally, encourage children to integrate literacy in their talent; prepare songs, poems, jokes, or a skit for the talent show.
5. Let the talent show begin! Invite parents, grandparents and other guests.

Skills taught:



Sports

Literacy gets sporty with these activities

All Ages ●

Sports



Name Game

This adaptation of HORSE gets children spelling while being active.

Materials needed: Tennis ball, wall

Instructions:

1. Toss a tennis ball against the wall.
2. Children must try and catch the tennis ball and throw it against the wall again.
3. If a child tries to catch a tennis ball and does not, they receive a letter.
4. The first time, they receive the first letter of their name. The next time this happens, they receive the second letter of their name.
5. Once they have spelled their whole name, they are out.
6. Play until there is one winner or just for fun.

Tips:

- Try reversing the game: each time a child catches the ball without dropping it they earn a letter. The first person to spell their name wins!

Skills taught:





Water Balloon Basketball

This active spelling game is best played outdoors on a hot day.

Materials needed: Water, balloon

Instructions:

1. Fill up balloons with water.
2. Divide the children into 2 teams and ask them to make 2 lines, facing each other.
3. One group is the hoop and holds their hand in a circle in front of their body. The hoops do not move.
4. The other group is the basketball players. They each begin with one water balloon.
5. One at a time in the line, the players toss their water balloon into the hoop.
6. Each time one of the players misses, the group earns a letter in the word “water”.
7. Once they have spelled “water”, the teams switch. The hoops are now the basketball players.

Tips:

- You may change the word they have to spell depending on group size and creativity!

Skills taught:



Teaching Tips



Teaching Tips

It can sometimes be a challenge to bring reading and literacy into your daily summer camp activities. Here are a few ideas to help.

1. **Integrate literacy in different ways.** Literacy is more than just reading books. Interest children in literacy through active games and play. The Lit Kit offers ideas that you can build on and make programs and learning fun.
2. **Adapt the activities to suit your needs.** Pick and choose the activities that you think will work best for your group. If you don't have all the needed materials but think of a different item to use instead, go ahead. Adapt!
3. **Create a text-rich environment.** Post signs and posters around the room. Have books or articles available for children to read. Exposure to reading and literacy is important at every age.
4. **Create a rotating book bar.** Display new books each week or month. Choose from your own collection or borrow from the library to keep the children interested.
5. **Have fun with literacy!** Did you know you can create a whole theme around one book? Sing themed songs, eat themed treats, create plays, and create appropriate decorations. Bring the books to life.
6. **Keep kids focused.** All children are different. Some children may enjoy spending quiet time reading a book, while others may find sitting still a challenge. Literacy can be taught both through calm and active games and crafts. When using calm literacy activities, reduce distractions by finding a quiet room or playing some soft music.
7. **Involve all children.** The Lit Kit is a flexible program. The activities can and should be adjusted to meet the needs of the children you work with.

Remember, not every child has to do the activity the same way.

Celebrate success, no matter how big or small.

Identifying and working with struggling readers

How to identify a struggling reader:

It's important to recognize that children learn at different paces and through different techniques. Group activities that promote literacy skills can be adjusted to meet the different needs and levels of each child.

There are some developmental milestones in reading and literacy that children should be to developing. If a child has not begun to acquire these skills by a certain developmental age, this could be an indication that the child is struggling with literacy and needs some additional support.

Stages of Reading Development^{viii}:

Stage 1: Kindergarten to Grade 2

- Ability to *decode* or recognize symbols & letters

Stage 2: Grade 3 to Grade 4

- Ability to read *fluently* or quickly and with ease

Stage 3: Grade 4 to Grade 8

- Ability to read and find main points & facts
- Expanding vocabulary

Supporting a Struggling Reader:

All children learn at a different pace. Here are some helpful tips to help support children that may be struggling with reading and literacy.

1. **Read aloud together:** Reading aloud helps children improve fluency by reinforcing words they already know, learning words they don't know and develop an interest in reading^{ix}.
2. **Use fill-in-the blanks:** You can practice sentence structure and formulation with a child by writing a sentence and leaving fill-in-the blanks for the child to complete with a word that fits or by writing a sentence and cutting the sentence into words. Ask the child to put the sentence back in order.
3. **Talk about the 4 R's of Reading:** After reading a story, check comprehension by asking the child to retell, reflect, relate and rewrite^x.

- **Retell:** Ask the child to tell you about the story: Who? What? Why? When? Where?
- **Reflect:** Interpret the story together, i.e. why was a decision made?
- **Relate:** Ask the child to think of how the story or characters are similar to their life.
- **Rewrite:** Ask the child to think of a new ending for the story. What would they change?

Remember to...

Praise-Correct-Praise^{xi}: Follow this simple guideline when working with a struggling reader. You can always find something to praise! Praise ideas, effort, spelling, punctuation, etc. Correct any mistakes. Have the child try again with the correction. Acknowledge their effort.

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- ⁱ Alexander, K.L., Entwisle, D.R., & Olson, L.S (2001). Schools, achievement, and inequality: A seasonal perspective. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 23, 171-191.
- ⁱⁱ Cooper, H., Nye, B., Charlton, K., Lindsay, J., & Greathouse, S. (1996). The effects of summer vacation on achievement test scores: A narrative and meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research*, 66, 227-268.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Pagan, S., & Sénéchal, M. (2012). *Involving parents in a summer book reading program to promote reading fluency, comprehension and vocabulary in grade 3 and 5 children*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- ^{iv} Allington, R.L., & McGill-Franzen, A.M., Camilli, G., Williams, L., Graff, J., Zeig, J., Zmach, C., & Nowak, R. (2010). Addressing summer reading setback among economically disadvantaged elementary students. *Reading Psychology*, 31, 411-427.
- ^v Kim, J.S. (2007) The effects of a voluntary summer reading intervention on reading activities and reading achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99, 505-515.
- ^{vi} Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat- Government of Ontario. (2012). *Reading and Writing with Your Child, Kindergarten to Grade 6*, 1-24.
- ^{vii} Cherry-Cruz, T. (2001). *Enhancing Literacy Through the Techniques of Storytelling*. The American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA) Leader. Retrieved from <http://www.asha.org>
- ^{viii} Chall, J. as cited in Frontier College. (2007). *A Frontier College Trainer's Guide: How to Train Homework Club Volunteers*. Toronto: Frontier College Press.
- ^{ix} Frontier College. (2007). *A Frontier College Trainer's Guide: How to Train Homework Club Volunteers*. Toronto: Frontier College Press.
- ^x Frontier College. (2007). *A Frontier College Trainer's Guide: How to Train Homework Club Volunteers*. Toronto: Frontier College Press.
- ^{xi} Excellence in Literacy Foundation. (2011) *Excellence in Literacy Foundation: Workbooks*. Richmond: Sage Youth