



## Ideas for Integrating Reading in Camp\*

If you are pleased with how reading opportunities are provided at your camp, keep it up! We are glad to know you are already involved in reducing summer learning loss. Consider the following ideas if you're looking for ways to expand the reading opportunities you provide.

1. Plan a book drive by reaching out to the parents and grandparents of your campers. Books can be donated on the first day of camp.
2. Provide access to books campers are likely to enjoy. Recommended book lists are available at [www.acacamps.org/content/explore-30-book-lists](http://www.acacamps.org/content/explore-30-book-lists).
3. If youth sleep overnight at your camp, use reading as a way to transition them from the active part of the day to the less active part of the day. Reading can be a way to prepare them for bed time whether they read individually or as a group (either campers taking turns reading or staff reading to campers).
4. Consider a "read aloud" approach. Campers can read aloud to a partner or to a group of campers.
5. Measure the results of your program. ACA provides a simple camper survey and an Excel analysis tool to support Explore 30 outcomes evaluation, available at [www.acacamps.org/content/explore-30-reading-resources](http://www.acacamps.org/content/explore-30-reading-resources).
6. Integrate the program during rest hour each day. Encourage campers to share a highlight of their reading with each other.
7. Schedule a children's book author to visit your camp. Camps can schedule books speakers and learn more about author visits at [www.acacamps.org/content/explore-30-author-visits](http://www.acacamps.org/content/explore-30-author-visits).

8. Identify a “Reading Champion”- a staff member who has been chosen to champion the importance of reading. This staff member can update your library, order new books, organize the book collection, and track down late returners. He/she could encourage other staff to read daily, and might provide reading rewards to campers and staff. These “Reading Champion” responsibilities may be added to the staff member’s regular duties.
9. Train staff to support camper reading. Staff can also read aloud to campers. ACA has developed a staff checklist for camper reading aloud and a reading scaffolding guide for staff available at [www.acacamps.org/content/explore-30-reading-resources](http://www.acacamps.org/content/explore-30-reading-resources). Remind staff to lead by example- not only does this encourage campers to read but it also provides an opportunity for staff to spend a few minutes for themselves which can help reduce burnout.
10. Create a camp library as a designated space for camp reading. Build a children’s book collection and a teen’s book collection. Staff, or even trained campers, can become camp “librarians.”
11. If you create a library, consider a color-coding system for books so that staff can quickly find age-appropriate books for their groups. For example, a 3-color system might look like this: green= 4-6 years old, yellow=7-10 years old, and red= 11 years and up. If you need help, ask your local library as many have color coded systems already in place.
12. Hire experienced teachers to work as camp staff to support your reading program.
13. Provide campers with incentives and/or awards for reading. Items such as stickers and bookmarks work well. An Explore 30 patch is also available. Learn more at [www.acacamps.org/content/explore-30-reading-incentives-and-awards](http://www.acacamps.org/content/explore-30-reading-incentives-and-awards).
14. Integrate reading into an existing camp program. (For example, campers can read instructions for paddling a canoe, guidelines for tree identification, or leadership principles...topics that may already be planned for existing camp classes.)
15. Focus on reading skills. Recommendations for developing reading comprehension skills can be found at [www.nationalgeographic.com/ngextremeexplorer/pdf/effectivepractices.pdf](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/ngextremeexplorer/pdf/effectivepractices.pdf).
16. Offer reading as a camp class or planned camp activity. Creative writing can be a natural flow activity from camper reading.

17. Create interesting reading space, for example, a reading area in the woods. One camp hung 20 hammocks in a circle so campers could sit in their hammocks and look up into the forest as their counselor read aloud to them. The same camp built a small stage next to the hammocks so that the campers could act out scenes from the books being read.
18. Solicit books from local business to support your book program. A letter of support template for requesting support from local businesses for your camp reading program is available from ACA at [www.acacamps.org/content/explore-30-reading-resources](http://www.acacamps.org/content/explore-30-reading-resources).
19. For resident camps, implement a program where the older campers read a bedtime story to the youngest campers. Some resident camps already have a Big Brother and/ or Big Sister program where the youngest of campers are assigned to young campers. This could become part of that program.
20. If you house books in a library or other central location, create a sign-in and sign-out process. Provide a waitlist.
21. Provide reading time at the end of meals when campers may be looking for something else to do before the next camp activity.
22. Find a way to connect reading with your camp session themes. For example, one camp used the theme, "Fun with Fiction." Staff dressed up and became wandering characters of the day, with campers challenged to guess who they were and from what book. If they guessed correctly, the staff characters played a game based on the character, book, etc.
23. Give campers a book and/or journal to take home at the end of camp.
24. When integrating your reading program into camp, allow the program time to find its best niche in camp. Try different approaches to find the right time in the day, the appropriate amount of time and the best time frame within your camp session.
25. Start a "Camp book club" where the campers read the same book by a certain date and then discuss the book. Visit <http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/18316705/ns/today-books/> for tips on starting a children's book club.