Dear Parent or Family Member,

Your child just brought home a book that he or she chose during an awesome RIF Reading Celebration! Our mission at RIF Pittsburgh is to provide children with the resources, motivation, and opportunities to develop a lifelong love of reading.

You can help simply by sharing this book with your child. Ask your child about the book he or she chose. Better yet, read the book together! The simple act of sharing this book with your child will make a huge impact in motivating your child to learn to love to read.

Prevent the “Summer Slide”

When school is out and summer starts, children know that it is time for fun-filled days packed with adventures! Unfortunately, in the midst of all the summer excitement, learning is often put on hold. Experts have found that children who do not continue to read during the summer months slide backwards with their educational progression. According to a November 2002 report from the National Association for Summer Learning, “A conservative estimate of lost instructional time is approximately two months or roughly 22 percent of the school year…It’s common for teachers to spend at least a month re-teaching material that students have forgotten over the summer. That month of re-teaching is a month that could have been spent on teaching new information and skills.”

When children discover the joy of reading, they find that summer adventures and reading books can go hand in hand!

Check out these great book picks to jump start your reading adventures!

**Where the Wild Things Are** by Maurice Sendak
Age Range: 4-8

In this classic story, the mischievous Max goes on an adventure into a magical world “where the wild things are.” Late at night, a forest grows inside Max’s room and he comes face to face with some scary, yet fascinating creatures that are beautifully illustrated by Sendak. At the end of this rhythmic, unforgettable tale, Max learns that there is no place like home.

**Boundless Grace** by Mary Hoffman
Age Range: 5-9

In this story, Grace is bothered when she finds that her family does not match those in her favorite stories; she has a Nana and Ma and cat named Paw-Paw, but where is her father? Grace’s mother arranges for Grace and Nana to visit Grace’s father and stepfamily in Africa. At first threatened by this “other” family that she feels excluded from, Grace connects with her step-siblings through stories and learns that family can be defined in many different ways.
Adventure Activity Ideas

Try out some of these entertaining activities and encourage your child to have fun with books! With a little effort and a lot of imagination, your child’s summer will be both enjoyable and enriching.

Follow in a Character’s Footsteps

Spend some time with your child reading a book out loud to each other. Have fun making silly voices for the characters, or acting out the scenes as you go along. After you finish the book, pretend that you are going on the same exciting adventure that the characters in the book did. Sail the high seas with a pirate captain, travel to a foreign country, or fly away to an unknown magical land full of mysterious creatures. While your imaginations run wild, have your child write a postcard to a friend or family member describing all the fun things you are discovering together!

Go on Your Own Journey!

To ensure that your child has plenty of memorable adventures this summer, check in frequently with the ultimate travel center—your local library! With books about every subject your child can imagine, each trip to the library brings the opportunity for new worlds to explore. Librarians are there to be your children’s personal tour guides and will help your children find books that will take them wherever they want to go!

Plan a Dream Adventure

Ask your child, “If you could go anywhere in the whole wide world, where would you go?” Brainstorm together what kinds of things that you would need to bring on such a trip. Have your child write a packing list for everything that he or she would need to be prepared for the adventure of a lifetime!

Scrapbook Your Family Adventures

Keep mementos or photos from each of your summer journeys and work as a family to compile them into a scrapbook. Have your child write captions for each section. The scrapbook that you create together will become a new book for you to read together and a great way for you to relive your adventures!

Want to learn more about how you can get involved in helping your child learn to love to read? Visit www.rifpittsburgh.org for more information.