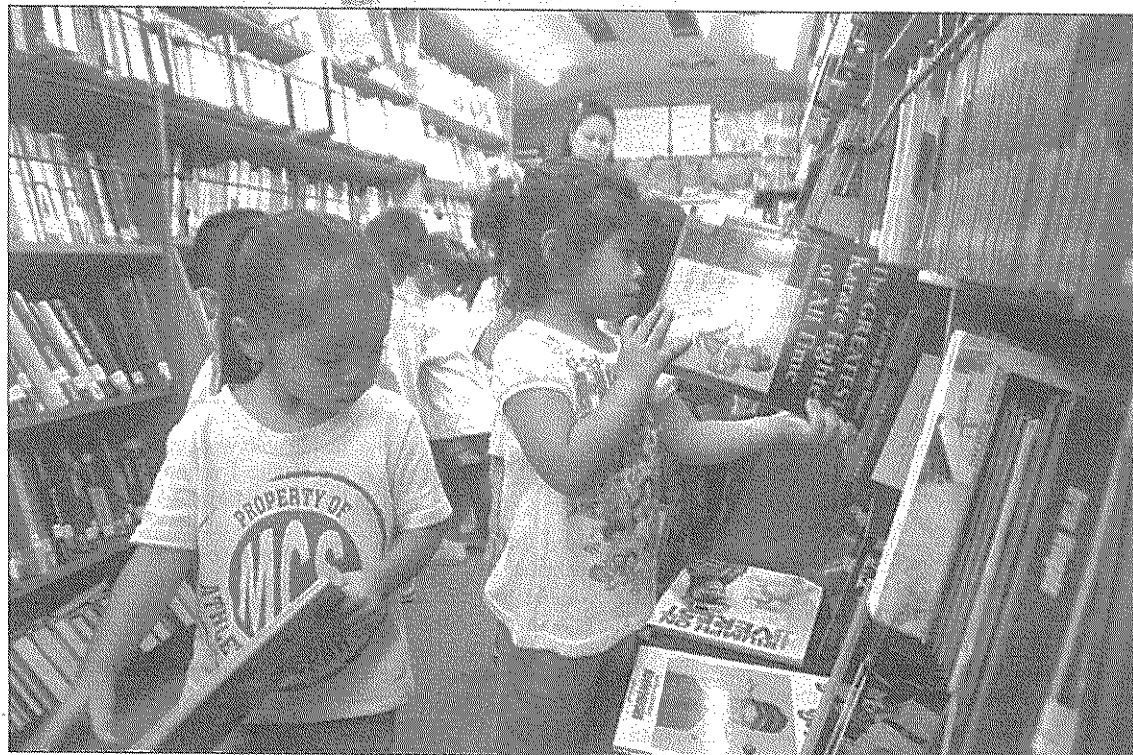


EDUCATION

Maximize your kids' reading habits



Pacific Daily News file photo

Good reads: Mount Carmel Catholic School students select books from the Bookmobile in this Nov. 6, 2008, file photo. The Bookmobile was making its bi-monthly visit to service kindergarteners and pre-K students at the Agat school.

Summer is ideal time to build literacy

By **Amritha Alladi**

Pacific Sunday News
aalladi@guampdn.com

The summer months provide an excellent opportunity for the entire family to explore the joy of reading.

There are some activities in which parents can involve each member of the family to cultivate good reading habits and excite their kids about even the "outdated" must-reads. For toddlers and very young children, summer is also an ideal time to build literacy.

Activities

The first way to get your children introduced to and interested in reading is by reading aloud to them regularly starting at an early age, according to Nora Cruz, a Guam Public Library System library technician.

"Even if it's 15 minutes a day, as long as it's routine, that's all it takes," she said. "Pick books that are too long or difficult for your child to read on his own (but) choose genres that your child prefers."

For babies and toddlers, starting by having them identify pictures is one way to introduce them to literacy, according to Rhonda Rekdahl, a parent mentor with the Parent Information Resource Center.

"They don't of course know how to say it, but they'll recognize it and they'll connect the object with the word," she said. "As they get older, 2 and 3, they learn to say the word, and slowly they recognize letters."

Cooking with your children can also develop literacy. By reading recipes together and reading off the ingredients on labels, young children can build their vocabulary and literacy, Cruz suggested.

As your children grow older, start

ON THE NET

▲ For a list of reading tips to try with your family, go to www.Guam-PDN.com.

asking them questions about what they're reading, have them underline words they don't know and have them look up those words in a dictionary. For older children, start focusing their attentions on character development and bigger themes.

"Explore the character's motivations and relate them to your family's life," Cruz said.

Finally, make sure there are ample reading materials within your home.

Cruz said having a "print-rich home" includes having books on tape, writing material, newspapers and child-oriented popular magazines like *Time for Kids* and *National Geographic for Kids*.

If English isn't the only language you speak, also have reading materials available in the language you speak at home.

"Let your child see you reading and writing in the language(s) which are most comfortable to you," Cruz said. "Let your child read at home for fun in whichever language she prefers."

If resources are limited, check out your local library, the bookmobile or your child's school library.

Library on wheels

The library is a free and easily-accessible resource, so use it, Rekdahl said.

In her family, trips to toy stores are often replaced with trips to the library, she said. Unlike a toy store, children can walk away with as many items (books) as they like, and when they finish, they can return

them, and get a whole new set of books, she said.

"In a library there's no limit as to how many books you can get, and mom can't say, 'I can't afford that right now,'" the mother of three added.

If you can't make it to the library, check out the Bookmobile, or Library on Wheels.

Aimed to serve communities that don't have a library, the Bookmobile travels to different sites on the island allowing parents and adults to check out reading materials at no cost. Currently, the bookmobile serves four public schools, one private school, two daycares and 33 community routes, according to Cruz. She said the bookmobile serves about 300 patrons a month.

When you make your visit, take advantage of library programs such as family book clubs, Cruz suggested.

Guam's Public Library hosts a two-hour family reading program every Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon, Cruz said. The first hour is for family reading, and the second hour features arts and crafts to get children and families to interact, she said.

She also suggested finding out who your child's favorite authors and genres are to help him/her make a selection.

Appreciating the classics

So your daughter enjoys romance novels and your son the suspenseful bestsellers, but what about classic literature?

Rekdahl said when it's time to go to the library and choose reading materials, she doesn't limit what her children can bring home as long as its age appropriate.

Kids are already exposed to the

BOOKMOBILE

SCHEDULE

The Guam Public Library System May Bookmobile schedule is subject to change:

Tomorrow

▲ Agana Heights: GHURA housing, 11:15 a.m.-noon.

▲ Sinajana: Sinajana mayor's office/GHURA office, 1:15-1:45 p.m.

▲ Asan: Veterans Affairs Office, 2-2:45 p.m.

▲ Asan: Mayor's office, 3-3:30 p.m.

▲ Piti: Nimitz Towers Condos, 3:45-4:30 p.m.

May 18

▲ Inarajan: Mayor's office, 1-1:45 p.m.

▲ Inarajan: GHURA housing, 2-2:45 p.m.

▲ Umatac: GHURA housing, 3:15-4 p.m.

▲ Umatac: Umatac Bay Park/mayor's office, 4:15-4:45 p.m.

May 19

▲ Yona: GHURA housing, 1:15-2 p.m.

▲ Yona: Windward Hills Estates (Laguina Court), 2:15-3 p.m.

▲ Talofofo: Mayor's office, 3:15-4 p.m.

▲ Talofofo: Ipan Village Store, Route 4, 4:15-4:45 p.m.

May 20

▲ Agat: Mount Carmel Catholic School, 9:30-11 a.m.

▲ Santa Rita: Santa Rosa Avenue, 1:15-2 p.m.

▲ Santa Rita: Mayor's office, 2:15-2:45 p.m.

▲ Agat: Inn on the Bay, 3-3:30 p.m.

▲ Agat: Pagacho Subdivision/DYA Learning Center, 3:45-4:15 p.m.

May 24

▲ Dededo: Wettengel Elementary School, 9:30-11 a.m.

▲ Dededo: Kiddy Land Daycare Center, 11:15-11:45 a.m.

▲ Yigo: Marianas Terrace (Katsadan Pauuma)/D.L. Perez Elementary School, 2-2:45 p.m.

▲ Yigo: Santa Bernadita Chapel, Machananao, 3-3:45 p.m.

▲ Dededo: Fern Terrace, 4-4:30 p.m.

To book a "tour" call 475-4751/52 or e-mail: gpls@gpls.guam.gov.

great works of literature through school, she said, so going to the library can be their fun release from school. Plus, allowing kids to choose what they read will at least keep them reading and enjoying it.

"With my kids, to get a book is a treat," she said.

But if you're trying to pull their noses out of the leisure reading and delve into the school assigned summer reading list, Rekdahl suggests the following.

Give your kids a preview of the classics your children will be reading in class, so they get "psyched out" about it before their teachers even assign it, she said.

For example, she narrated the story of Hamlet to her 10-year-old son by giving him a Star Wars version of the plot complete with light-saber fights in the place of Shakespeare's 16th-century sword fights.

"So when he gets to high school he doesn't say, 'Ugh, Shakespeare's boring. I want to go read a comic book,' but 'Oh, Hamlet's cool, my mom told me about it,'" Rekdahl said. "It's like teaching them an appreciation for the classics and where these modern type adventures and trips come from."