

Top 10 Summer Reading Programs 2009 (6/5/09)

With summer already upon us, ProntoLessons scoured the Internet to find the top 10 summer reading programs. Now, we looked far and wide and I think this really is the most comprehensive summer reading programs list that you will find out on the good ole 'Net.

But before you get to the goodies, we want to share our approach in selecting the best programs. Namely, we followed 2 main criteria in our search: 1) Total freedom in selecting the reading list (so that the child can read whatever he/she wants) and 2) maximum incentives for completing the reading list.

The incentives you and your child can earn by fulfilling the reading programs below are: 1) a free book from Barnes & Noble, 2) \$24 worth of gift cards to buy (what else?) more books at Half Price Books, 3) one 50% off (at least) coupon good for selected items at Borders, 4) \$10 in cash deposited to your local TD Bank, 5) a free Kid's Meal at the Old Spaghetti Factory, 6) 10 free tokens at Chuck E. Cheese, 7) a free t-shirt at HE Buddy, 8) free admission to six 10AM showings of select movies on Wednesdays at participating movie theaters, and 9) much more.

Whew! I don't know about you but just off the top of my head, the bounty above is worth at least \$84!

And that's just a very conservative estimate.

The best thing is, knocking off the reading lists should be relatively simple since your child can write down the same book that she read on multiple reading programs.

Ok - I think I've stirred the pot enough.

Without further adieu, here is ProntoLessons' Top 10 Summer Reading Programs for 2009.

First 5 Picks

1. [Barnes & Noble Summer Reading](#)

Intended for grades 1-6, this program requires that your child read any 8 books between 5/26/09 and 9/7/09. The child will record the title, author, and favorite part of each book she read in her [Summer Reading Journal](#) along with her parent's signature. The child can then present her [Summer Reading Journal](#) to the nearest Barnes and Noble and she will be entitled to a free book among a pre-selected list of books, assuming availability.

2. [Half-Price Books Feed Your Brain Summer Reading Program](#)

Kids ages 12 and under can earn a \$3 gift card for each week that they read for at least 15 minutes a day. From 6/1/09 through 7/31/09 (first week already passed, but you can still take advantage of the next 8 weeks!), just ensure your child reads at least 15 minutes for at least 5 days of the week and fill out the [Feed Your Brain Weekly Reading Log](#). Once your child has read enough minutes and days for that week, bring the log to your nearest Half-Price Books and they will give you a gift card for \$3. Now I know that doesn't seem like that much, but this is a used book store where prices are cheap so your dollar will last longer. Also, your child can repeat this weekly reading cycle until 7/31/09 - that's eight weeks times \$3 gift card per week...\$24! And I KNOW you can buy a boatload of books with that much money...all free thanks to their most generous program.

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3. [Borders Kids Reading Challenge](#)
Not quite as generous as the last offers, but still a good offer – Kids 12 and under can read any 8 books and record the books they read in the [Reading Challenge Worksheet](#) along with a parent's signature. Just present the completed worksheet between 5/26/09 and 8/31/09 and receive a coupon worth at least 50% off on selected items in the store.
4. [TD Bank Summer Reading Program](#)
Want to develop your child's reading skills AND introduce her to banking? Read any 10 books and record them in the [Summer Reading Book Log Form](#). Once the form is complete, just take the form to your nearest TD Bank anytime between now and 9/30/09 and they will deposit \$10 into a Young Savers account in your child's name (note: there are no minimum balances for this account so no pesky fees!).
5. [Old Spaghetti Factory Rewards of Reading Program](#)
Intended for kids 10 and under, read 5 books and get a free Kid's Meal. I couldn't find any sort of form to list the 5 books, so I recommend just listing them on paper just in case they ask which books your child read. Also, I couldn't find any eligibility dates for this, so I would just make sure that this offer is on their website so you can print out and bring with you to the restaurant to redeem your child's prize. That last part about bringing the physical offer to the restaurant may be viewed as paranoia, but, to each his own, right?

Next 5 Picks

6. [Chuck E Cheese Reading Rewards](#)
Did you know that Chuck E Cheese offers free tokens for other stuff such as good manners, sleeping all night, tooth fairy, etc.? Anyway, for their reading program, all the child has to do is just read (since there're no guidelines on how long, I would just assume at least 15 minutes) each day for two weeks (14 days). Complete the [Reading Rewards Calendar](#) as your child reads and bring it to the nearest Chuck E Cheese. They will then give you 10 free tokens with the completed calendar and a food purchase. This offer lasts until 12/31/09.
7. [HE Buddy Reading Club](#)
I have to admit, HE Buddy is new to me. Apparently, this site promotes healthy eating for children. Anyway, from now until 8/9/09, just have your child read 10 books and fill out the [form](#) along with the parent's initials after each book. Then mail the form per the form instructions (must be postmarked by 8/9/09) and get a free nifty T-shirt – oh, don't forget to mark your child's t-shirt size in the form before sending it.
8. [National Amusements Bookworm Wednesdays](#)
National Amusements is a movie theater chain that owns Cinema de lux, thebridge, Showcase Cinemas, and Multiplex Cinemas. The child must read a book and write a simple book report using their [Book Report Form](#). Just present the completed Book Report Form each Wednesday at 10AM at participating theaters from 7/8/09 through 8/12/09 and that book report will be good for one free admission to the selected movie for that showing – that's 6 free movies.

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Sound good? There's more. Any parents accompanying the child that submitted the book report AND children under 6 years old also get to get in for free!

What's that you say? Sounds like a great deal, but unfortunately there are no such theaters near you? Well, I've got a better deal. [Regal Entertainment Group](#), which owns Regal Cinemas and Edwards Cinemas is offering 9 weeks of free select G and PG each Tuesday and Wednesday at 10AM during its Free Family Film Festival – that's 18 free movies. This is first-come first-serve so give yourself plenty of time to arrive at the theater. Just click on the link above and select the 9-week schedule for your state and a list should appear for all participating theaters in your state. I know I know – this one doesn't have anything to do with reading, but I thought I'd throw it in for some EXTRA fun!

9. Your Local Library's Summer Reading Program

Go to Google and enter "[Your City] Library Summer Reading Program" and you'll find that more often than not, your local library will have some cool stuff for your children's reading enjoyment.

10. Your Own Summer Reading Program

Not satisfied with any of the above? Then create your own reading program. You know your kids the best so I'm sure you can think of the best incentive that will motivate them to read this summer. Designed right, I think that this one will be the best summer reading program of them all.

Strategy

Ok. Now that you have the 411 on the top reading programs this summer, let's talk strategy on how to best scoop up the incentives above.

I recommend that your child reads 10 books this summer starting as soon as possible AFTER she's had some time to relax – let her enjoy the fruits of her accomplishments. Now, try to have your child read all 10 books by 8/9/09. I like to call this my "8/9/10" strategy (by 8/9, read 10 books!).

If your child can read 10 books by 8/9/09, then she will be entitled to incentives listed in 1, 3, 4, 5 (assuming the offer is still good – again, go to the website to make sure the offer is there), and 7.

Next, in her efforts to read the 10 books, if your child read for 15 minutes 5 days per week until 7/31/09, she will also be eligible for the \$3 gift card each week until 7/31/09 at Half-Price Books – just make sure to redeem the gift card each week by going there and presenting the reading log. So that takes care of incentive #2 above.

As for the free movies in incentive #8, as your child is reading her 10 books, just have her complete book reports for her books that she reads starting from 7/8/09 and if she is able to complete a book report form for each, great. If not, remember you can always take advantage of the Regal Entertainment deal.

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The last incentive is #6 and since that expiration is not until 12/31/09, your child doesn't have to pursue this until after summer is over, if you should want that. So there's plenty of time to earn this incentive.

And of course, the incentives offered by the local library and maybe even yourself depends on their own programs and schedules so try to see how you can fit them in to my "8/9/10" strategy.

Now, if you're having trouble remembering all the details of the programs above, I've created a nifty chart that summarizes the 10 programs:

ID	Sponsor	Ages/Gr.	Start Date	End Date	Effort	Incentive
1	Barnes & Noble	Grades 1-6	5/26/09	9/7/09	8 books	Free book
2	Half-Price Books	Ages 12 and Under	6/1/09	7/31/09	15 min/day/week	\$3 gift card each week
3	Borders	Ages 12 and Under	5/26/09	8/31/09	8 books	50% off select items
4	TD Bank	Must be a "kid"	5/4/09	9/30/09	10 books	\$10 deposit
5	Old Spaghetti Factory	Ages 10 and Under	None stated	None stated	5 books	Free Kid's Meal
6	Chuck E Cheese	Must be a "kid"	Now	12/31/09	2 weeks	10 free tokens with food purchase
7	HE Buddy	Must be a "kid"	Now	8/9/09	10 books	Free T-shirt
8	National Amusements	Must be a "kid"	7/8/09	8/12/09	Book report	Each Wed 10AM free movie ticket
9	Local Library					
10	Custom					

Wow...so many incentives for encouraging kids to read these days...

I guess this leaves me wondering, "Hey everyone, where's MY summer reading program?!"

See you next time!

- Sun