Summer Reading: Or, How To Avoid the Summer Slide

Did you know? Kids who do not continue reading over the summer can lose up to **two months** of the reading gains they achieved during the school year. This especially affects low-income children. Almost all Idaho libraries and branches offer some type of summer reading program to help keep the children in their communities reading during the summer months.

Currently Idaho does not have a statewide summer reading program. Each library designs, implements, and funds its own program to meet the needs of its community. Summer reading programs are often referred to as “SRP” in ICfL communications.

Important Links:

- For program support offered by ICfL see [http://libraries.idaho.gov/landing/summer-reading](http://libraries.idaho.gov/landing/summer-reading).
- For best practices, resources, research, templates, planning timelines and more see [http://libraries.idaho.gov/page/summer-reading-resources](http://libraries.idaho.gov/page/summer-reading-resources).
- Currently the contact person for Summer Reading at the ICfL is Staci Shaw, staci.shaw@libraries.idaho.gov.

Nuts and Bolts:

- Idaho is part of the Collaborative Summer Library Programs (CSLP), a national collaborative of states that design and provide low-cost/high-quality programs, resources, promotional materials, and incentives. **ICfL provides membership** to all Idaho public libraries each year. Though there is a theme and slogan each year, libraries are not required to use them. See the summer reading website for more information about CSLP.

- In October or November **ICfL sends a CSLP program manual** and incentive catalog to each library that submitted the previous year’s summer reading report (see Evaluation below). Libraries can request the format of the manual in the spring or just automatically receive the traditional package containing a paper copy and 3 identical DVDs. The manual includes programming ideas and artwork for early literacy, children, teens, and adults.

- **ICfL offers opt-in outreach programs** that libraries can apply for separately. These are called “Bright Futures” outreach opportunities and currently include School Visits, School Partnerships, Reaching Underserved Children, and Little Libraries. Applications generally open January 1 and close March 20 each year. See the summer reading website for more details and application links. Look for this logo:
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- In January or February ICFL sends three posters with the CSLP slogan and artwork to each library that submitted the previous year’s summer reading report. You can use these to begin promoting summer reading.

- Prizes and incentives: ICFL cannot provide prizes and incentives with federal dollars; however, we do apply for a Fred Meyer Corporation grant each year, and if we receive those funds we purchase a small amount of paperback books for each library that submitted the previous year’s summer reading report. These are referred to as “Fred Meyer Books,” and libraries do not need to apply for them separately. ICFL is typically notified about the grant in the spring. The grant award is not guaranteed and libraries should not rely on these books for prizes.

- Summer reading funds: ICFL does not provide summer reading funds. Libraries use budgeted funds, additional funds from Friends groups, and solicited donations to fund programs. The earlier you begin assembling your budget the better.

- All libraries must submit a final report at the conclusion of its summer reading program, even if your library does not host a SRP. See Evaluation below.

**Evaluation:**

The summer reading support provided by ICFL is funded with LSTA dollars, and ICFL is required to report about how the funds were used and the impact that was made. Therefore we ask each library to submit a report about its SRP.

- **Reports are due by September 15** and the link to the report can be found on our summer reading website.

- **If your library did not host a SRP you still need to submit a report.** You only fill out the first question, “Did your library host a summer reading program this year?” with Yes or No.

- Because we pay CSLP membership and provide a program manual for each branch, each branch must submit a separate report. Check with the other branch managers to determine how participation will be tracked and reported.

- You can see a preview of the summer reading report on our summer reading website. This will tell you what information to collect as you’re planning your SRP.

- One of the questions on the report ask whether your participation outputs increased, decreased, or stayed the same. You may need to
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search for the participation information from the previous year so begin early.

- A spreadsheet to keep track of your participation outputs each year is available on our summer reading resources website, along with additional information about evaluation and a template to survey your patrons.

- If you fail to submit a SRP report your library will not be eligible for the upcoming year’s program manual, posters, or Fred Meyer books, and may affect your eligibility to apply for Bright Futures programs.

Timeline:

October/November: Programs manuals are shipped to each library/branch that submitted a report. Open immediately, begin planning!

December 1: First order deadline for CSLP incentive catalog (receive materials by March 1).

December – February: contact schools to discuss SRP promotion and partnerships. Don’t wait until March or April!

January 1: Applications open for Bright Futures Outreach Opportunities (see website).

January – March: Continue planning, securing presenters, etc.

March 20: Bright Futures applications close

April – May: Promotion in schools and community, finalize programs and presenters

June – August: Summer Reading Programs (varies)

September 15: Summer Reading Report Due (see summer reading website)