

Begin with a Plan

A question you need to ask as you look ahead to this summer's activities is just why your library is sponsoring a summer reading program. Are you concerned with

- Stimulating community awareness of your library?
- Promoting the library as a source for recreational reading, listening, and viewing materials?
- Introducing preschoolers to library resources?
- Enhancing school/public library relationships?

Reaching children and families who have not been regular library users?

After examining these and other motivating factors on your own, or together with coworkers, volunteers, other librarians and staff members in your system, you will have clarified the underlying philosophy of your program. The process will lead to a definition of what you want to accomplish, and you will be able to articulate your goals (general statements) and objectives (specific targets.) You may come up with statements such as these examples.

Goal:

The summer library program will encourage children of all ages to use the library during school vacation.

Objectives:

- Registration for the program will increase 10 percent over last year.
- Children's circulation figures for June through August will increase 10 percent over last year.

Goal:

The summer library program will encourage parents to read aloud with their children at home.

Objectives:

- Attendance at Family Night programs for parents and preschoolers will increase 5 percent over last year.
- Seventy-five percent of preschoolers who attend spring storyhours will be enrolled in the summer program.

Once your aims and priorities have been defined, you will be ready to plan how you will achieve them. Depending on your objectives, your strategies for action might include some of those listed here:

- More school visits
- Distributing different kinds of printed publicity materials
- Making more personal contacts with child-care centers
- Initiating a young adult volunteer group
- Working with school staff members to identify and contact children with visual, hearing and other physical and developmental disabilities
- Simplifying the way records are kept
- Seeking funds for special guest performers

A review process will strengthen your summer library program even if the program has operated smoothly and successfully for numerous years. The decisions you reach and the actions you take will depend on your local circumstances. The availability of staff members and space, your library's financial resources, and your own criteria for successful programs are key factors in the design of your activities.

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Rock 'n' Read 1994 Summer Reading Program Manual

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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