

Families Reading

Together.



A Reading Celebration Guide
Growing Readers!



Hopa Mountain is a Bozeman, Montana based nonprofit organization that invests in rural and tribal citizen leaders, adults and youth, who are working to improve education, ecological health, and economic development.

A growing body of research confirms that a strong early learning home environment predicts children's success as readers and students. Success in school strongly predicts good health and economic self-sufficiency in adulthood. With relevant information and resources, parents and caregivers across the economic spectrum can provide their children with the early experiences that lead to their children's success. Hopa Mountain's *StoryMakers* program supports families of children with high-quality early learning resources and encouragement to shape home life for their children's long-term success. www.hopamountain.org

Benefits of reading with children every day:

- **Reading together builds stronger relationships.** As children grow more independent, having a positive routine together will allow parents and children to slow down and connect with each other. A child that has a strong relationship with at least one adult is more likely to feel safe and confident, do better in school, and lead a healthy and happy adult life.
- **Reading together improves communication skills.** The contact children get with parents while reading allows children to feel more comfortable expressing their own feelings. This can help children communicate in healthy, productive ways.
- **Reading together promotes concentration and memory retention.** Reading aloud together, even after children learn to read alone, encourages children to concentrate on the story to remember what was read. These skills will serve children well both in and out of school.
- **Reading together encourages children to think critically.** As parents and children talk together about the characters' actions and the plots of stories they are reading, children are learning how to apply logic and good judgment to their own lives.
- **Reading more supports academic success.** Research shows that daily reading helps children build the foundational skills they need to excel in many aspects of school. Reading often and having access to books over the summer can also help a child retain the information learned throughout the school year.
- **Reading together fosters a lifetime love of reading.** Children who are exposed to regular reading view themselves as "readers" and see reading as a pleasurable activity rather than a chore.
- **Reading supports math and science learning.** Reading enables children to ask questions and investigate new math and science concepts.

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Organizing a Family Reading Celebration at your school or community center can be simple and fun.

This guide contains everything you need to plan a successful event. It is designed to use picture books to excite children about math and science while encouraging families to create literacy and science rich home environments. Throughout the event, you will show parents ways to read, play, and talk with their children about math and science at home.



Two concepts will make this family reading celebration successful:

- **Modeling** storytelling for parents and introducing families to simple storytelling strategies allows them to use these tools to build literacy at home. Be sure to model reading books aloud during this event.
- **Intentional Dialogue** emphasizes conversation while reading aloud. Stop to ask questions to deepen children's understanding, check their comprehension, introduce new vocabulary, or make connections from the book to their lives.

In this guide, you will find:

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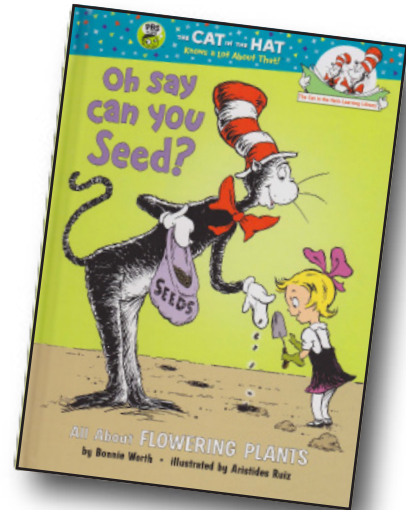
Getting Started

Recommended Books

- **Oh Say Can You Seed?** by Bonnie Worth
- **How to Grow a Seed** by Helene J. Jordan

Materials

- **Handouts**
 - Bean Plant Growth Chart* (page 8)
 - My Daily Summer Reading Log* (page 9)
 - Growing Readers All Summer Long* (page 10)
 - Summer Fun Activities for Families* (page 11)
- **Daily Summer Reading**
 - Stickers for Daily Summer Reading Logs
- **Bean Counting Activity**
 - Clear plastic cups
 - Potting soil
 - Lima beans
 - Spoons
 - Bean Plant Growth Charts
 - Black Sharpies
 - Hand washing station
- **Snacks or Meal**



Book Resources

You may choose to give away books during your event. Visit these websites to see if you qualify for books through their programs.

- **First Book** – A nonprofit providing new books at 50%-90% off retail price.
www.firstbook.org
- **Scholastic Literacy Partnerships** – A program that supports literacy efforts of organizations nationwide.
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/literacypartnerships/>
- **Book Drive** – Host a book drive in your community to gather gently used books to offer at your event. Here are a few tips for a successful book drive:
www.serve.gov/toolkits/book-drive/four.asp

Book Alternatives

- **The Tiny Seed** by Eric Carle
- **Yucky Worms** by Vivian French

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Reading Celebration Schedule

Welcome

5 Minutes
Everyone

Welcome families, introduce yourself, and quickly review the event schedule.



Activity 1: Read Aloud & Model

15 Minutes
Everyone

Read aloud to families while you model asking questions and starting conversations.

Activity 2: Simultaneous Break-Out Sessions

20 Minutes

Children's Group

Bean Planting

Parent Group

Making Summer Reading Fun

Activity 3: Family Science Exploration and Summer Reading Pledge

10 Minutes
Everyone

Parents and children will complete a science activity together.

Activity 4: Book Distribution & Meal

25 Minutes
Everyone

Serve dinner or snacks, collect evaluations, and distribute books.

Wrap Up: Thank everybody for coming!

5 Minutes
Everyone

Encourage family reading at home.



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Guide to Activity 1: Read Aloud & Model

15 minutes

Everyone

Before the Activity

- You will need the *Oh Say Can You Seed* book.

During the Activity

- Introduce yourself and give a brief description of the event's purpose and schedule.
- Ask parents to listen as you read *Oh Say Can You Seed* to their children and ask them to notice the questions you use to engage the children.



Conversation-starters to use while reading aloud:

Before Reading

- Show the book to the children. "What do you think this book is about?"
- "Turn to your neighbor and tell them what you like about plants and gardens."
- Share what you heard.

Example:

"I heard Ben say he likes to plant carrots."

"Julie said she has a really big garden at home."

"Peyton doesn't like vegetables, but he has a rock garden."

While Reading

- "What happens when you plant a seed in the ground?"
- "Who remembers what a seed needs to grow?"
- "Does this part of the story remind you of a time when you grew a bean?"

After Reading

- "Turn to your neighbor and tell them three things a plant needs to thrive."
- Share those three things aloud to reinforce this knowledge.
- Thank them for being such good listeners.



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Guide to Activity 2: Bean Planting

20 Minutes

Children's Group

Before the Activity

- Soak the beans in water overnight before the event to encourage beans to sprout sooner.
- Set up a station with cups, spoons, and soil.
- Set up a station with beans.
- Set up a station with Sharpie pens.



During the Activity

- Gather children on the floor around you with a copy of *Oh Say Can You Seed?* and a few beans split open. Turn to page 14 of the book and review the inside of a bean with the children. Pass around the open beans.
- Ask children to see if they can find the embryo, cotyledon, and coat of their bean.
- Then turn to page 16 and ask the children if they remember what they would need to sprout a seed. Explain that they are going to plant a bean to take home and watch sprout.
- Model how children will fill their cups with soil using a spoon, plant their bean, and then write their name on the cup.
- Show children the Bean Plant Growth Chart and how to fill it out. Tell them that their parents will have a chart to take home. Encourage them to observe and record their observations every day and to transplant their plant at home if they have a garden.
- Dismiss children to move through the stations to plant their beans.
- Have children wash their hands.



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Guide to Activity 2: Making Summer Reading Fun

20 Minutes

Parent Group

Before the Activity

- Attach a sheet of small stickers to each of the Daily Summer Reading Logs.

During the Activity

- Distribute Parent Handouts
 - Growing Readers All Summer Long*
 - Summer Fun Activities for Families*
 - Bean Plant Growth Chart*
 - My Daily Summer Reading Log with stickers*
- Begin by thanking parents for coming.
- Explain that this event is an opportunity to share ideas and resources so that parents can support their child's academic, social and emotional growth.
- Use the parent handouts to guide you in sharing tips and ideas. Be sure to model examples for each point. Invite questions and suggestions from the parents.
- Ask parents to briefly review the practical and easy-to-use strategies on the handouts.
- Explain to the parents that their children have planted beans to connect the *Oh Say Can You Seed* book to the world around them.
- Using picture books to explore science concepts benefits children by providing an inviting way to expand their knowledge, while gaining the many benefits of reading.
- Hands-on learning paired with a book can be used with any topic their child shows interest in.
- Look at the Bean Plant Growth Charts and encourage families to help their children fill out the chart each day.
- Show parents the Daily Summer Reading Log. Encourage families to read books about science and math daily throughout the summer and find ways to explore the books' concepts through play. Invite parents to rejoin their children.



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Guide to Activity 3: Family Science Exploration

10 Minutes

Everyone

During the Activity

- Encourage the children to show their parents the planted beans, and look at the Bean Plant Growth Chart together.
- Walk around and model asking questions and starting conversations with the children for parents to hear and see. Ask children:
“How soon do you think you will see your bean plant? One week? Two weeks?”
“How fast will it grow? Will it grow one inch? Two inches? How can you tell?”
- Encourage families to track the growth of their bean plant every week.
- Summer is a great time to track the books children read, too. Have families look at the Daily Summer Reading Logs and stickers.
- Challenge the children to explore other science topics by reading books all summer. Have the children share other science topics they would like to read about.
- Explain the reading pledge and answer any questions families may have. Encourage the children to say the pledge to their parents before signing it.
- Invite the children to take their bean plants home.



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Guide to Activity 4: Book Distribution & Meal

25 Minutes

Everyone

- **Invite** families to dinner or snacks if you have chosen to offer them. Thank everyone for coming.
- **Food:** Offering a light dinner, such as soup, pizza, or spaghetti, is a good way to build community and draw in families. Popcorn, hot cocoa, or cookies and milk, are easy treats to serve as a dessert.
- **Book Giveaway:** We have included tips for collecting and distributing books to give away at your event.
- **Raffle:** A raffle drawing while families are enjoying their dinner or snacks can also be fun for families and a way to thank families for coming.
- **Announcements:** Announce your next family reading event and any other important information you have for family literacy activities.
- **Evaluations:** We encourage you to have families fill out evaluations before they leave for the evening. Pass them out with pens during dinner, and ask parents to fill them out and leave them on the table for you. Walk around and collect them as you see families finish them.
- **Closing:** Be sure to take the time to thank families for coming while they are eating dinner as some may leave before others.



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Growing Readers All Summer Long

Parent Handout

You can encourage a love of learning and reading in your home over the summer months. Research shows that reading throughout the summer helps children retain the knowledge they have gained throughout the school year.



Read every day.

Parents can help avoid any setbacks in reading achievement by encouraging their children to read at least 20 minutes each day. Reading can be done any where and any time: at breakfast, a favorite place outside, and before bed. Offer a variety of materials to your child, like newspapers, maps, recipes, books, and poetry.

Read in volume.

Children who read more books tend to be better readers, spellers, and have larger vocabularies. Regularly swap books and magazines with other families. A variety of books will expose your child to different ideas and new vocabulary.

Buddy up.

Read with your children, even if they can read on their own. Take turns reading a page or a chapter out loud. Talk about the books you have read and ask open-ended questions about the story.

Find books everywhere.

Having access to books is crucial. With these free websites, you will always have a good book to read with your child.

www.freekidsbook.org
www.gigglepoetry.com
www.wegivebooks.org

Visit a library.

Look for your nearest library and plan weekly or monthly visits. Library cards are free and children love having their own books. Children also read more when they choose their own books. Some libraries even offer summer reading programs.



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Summer Fun Activities for Families

Parent Handout

- **Book Picnic**

Pack a few books and a picnic lunch. Find someplace shady to have lunch and share books.

- **Lemonade Stand**

Set up a lemonade stand and practice writing, counting, measuring, talking and listening skills while sneaking in a summer treat. Buy a new book with all your earnings.

- **Alphabet Garden**

From asparagus to zucchini, see if you can plant seeds that begin with each letter of the alphabet.

- **Pizza Garden**

Plant tomatoes, basil, rosemary, thyme and other tastes your family loves on a pizza.

- **Mini Museum**

Collect items from nature to create a mini home museum. Help your child make labels and descriptions of found objects. Practice giving a tour, then invite friends and neighbors to visit the museum.

- **Family Reading Challenge**

Keep a list of the books each family member reads over the summer on the refrigerator. Have everyone count their books at the end of the summer and have an end of the summer celebration in honor of everyone's successes.

- **Knock-Knock Game**

If your child comes across a difficult word while reading, he or she knocks on the table and you offer your help. You may find that your child remembers the word the next time it comes up in the story.

- **Three Meals A Day**

Read aloud at each meal: morning poem, an afternoon joke or a dinner blessing. Take turns finding something to read and share.

- **Hide and Seek**

Hide something small in your pocket. Write or tell a story about it. Can friends or family guess what you are hiding?



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How was this Reading Celebration?

Evaluation for Parents: Please rate the following items by circling one number in each row on this scale: **5 - Excellent 4 - Good 3 - Adequate 2 - Fair 1 - Poor**

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Fair	Poor
A Registration & Pre-event Information	5	4	3	2	1
B Parent Workshop Session	5	4	3	2	1
C Parent and Child Workshop	5	4	3	2	1
D Parent Resource Materials	5	4	3	2	1

Comments & Suggestions:

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Fair	Poor
A As a result of this event, my knowledge of how I can support my child with science learning activities at home has increased.	5	4	3	2	1
B As a result of this event, I have increased knowledge about how to use books and reading with my child at home.	5	4	3	2	1

Comments & suggestions for future family events:

