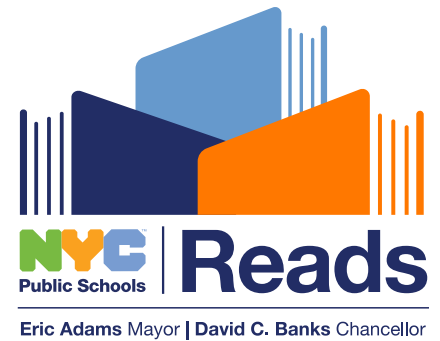


# Keep Your Child Growing as a Reader Over School Breaks—At Home and In Your Community



## Guidance for Families and Caregivers (K-5)

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Dear Families,

During school breaks, our students likely find themselves with some free time.

Below, we provide some guidance on free ways to help your child keep growing as a reader during school vacations, both at home and out in your community. Please reach out to your child's teacher, librarian, or our parent coordinator if you want to learn more.

With gratitude,

**New York City Public Schools**

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### Keep Growing at Home

During school breaks, some of your child's free time will likely take place at home. Here are some ways to help your child keep growing as a reader during those blocks of time:

- 1. Maintain your reading routine.** School vacations are a nice time to break from your routine, and to make sure your child gets chances to make choices about how to play or use their time. But, try to stick to the reading routine you have while school is in session. Whether you read a book together before bedtime, listen to audiobooks while in the car or on the train, or sing songs as you get ready for your day, maintaining any shared literacy-related routines will help your child continue to grow as a reader over the Break.
  - As a reminder, you can check out hard-copy books in many languages for FREE at the New York Public Library ([nypl.org](http://nypl.org)) (serving the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island), Brooklyn Public Library ([bklynlibrary.org](http://bklynlibrary.org)), and/or Queens Public Library ([queenslibrary.org](http://queenslibrary.org)) in your neighborhood. Librarians can help you find books in your language.
  - Sora ([on.nyc.gov/sora](http://on.nyc.gov/sora)) is a FREE reading app for NYCPS students with e-books in 20 languages. It also offers free audiobooks.

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2. **Try cooking together as an opportunity to promote reading.** This can be as simple as asking your child to read the directions on a packet of instant oatmeal to help you prepare breakfast. Or as you prepare a meal, talk to your child about what ingredients you're adding and how you're cooking them. You might ask them to find spices or other ingredients that require a bit of reading.
  3. **Write to a friend or family member.** Got a family birthday coming up? A friend who did something kind? Have your child write and decorate a card, letter, or thank you note. They don't need special materials, just paper and pen or a computer, tablet, or smartphone.
  4. **Make the most of screen time.** In moderation, tech use and media can support your child's literacy.
    - If your child sits down with a computer, tablet, or smartphone:
      - Help them engage with fun, free content that helps support reading skills like Khan Academy Kids ([khankids.org](http://khankids.org)), PBS Kids ([pbskids.org](http://pbskids.org)), or Starfall ([starfall.com](http://starfall.com)).
      - Even for content that does not seem educational, you can still talk with your child about it to encourage comprehension skills and critical thinking. Ask: What did you learn about \_\_\_\_? If you made that video, what would you do differently and why?
- Talk about TV shows and or movies to support your child's comprehension skills. Ask:
    - Who were the characters in the show or movie? Which one was your favorite and why?
    - What was the main problem in the show or movie? How did the problem get resolved?
    - What do you think was the main idea or the message of the show or movie?
    - Did the show or movie remind you of others you've watched, or books you've read? Why?

## Keep Growing in Your Community

If a caregiver or older sibling is available to supervise, there are also lots of free ways to support your child as a reader out in your community during the vacation.

1. **Encourage independent, outdoor play.** Though it might not seem tied to reading, self-directed play is incredibly important for your child's cognitive development (and it's fun!). If your child has a caregiver or older sibling who can play the role of a hands-off supervisor, get to your local park. Free structured events for kids are available on the NYC Parks website ([nycgovparks.org/events/kids](http://nycgovparks.org/events/kids)). Use the filters to find events near you on the days you're available.
2. Read and talk while you run errands. Busy families have lots of places to be, and even everyday errands can be opportunities for reading and learning. For example:
  - When you're at the grocery store, ask your child to read the names of items on the shelf, or to predict where you might be able to find certain items.
  - When waiting in line—anywhere!—play "I spy" to encourage your child to notice and wonder about the world around them.
3. Go to your local library. If your child has a caregiver or older sibling who can accompany them, there are lots of free events taking place at your local library during school breaks.
  - If you live in Brooklyn, look at Brooklyn Public Library's events website ([bit.ly/bklibrarykidsevents](http://bit.ly/bklibrarykidsevents)). Use the filters to find events near you on the days you're available.
  - If you live in the Bronx, Manhattan, or Staten Island, look at New York Public Library's events website ([nypl.org/events/calendar](http://nypl.org/events/calendar)). Use the filters to find events near you on the days you're available.
  - If you live in Queens, look at Queens Public Library's events website ([bit.ly/queenslibrarykidsevents](http://bit.ly/queenslibrarykidsevents)). Use the filters to find events near you on the days you're available.