

# Families and Literacy

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Wisconsin State Reading Association [www.wsra.org](http://www.wsra.org)



The goal of the Families and Literacy Committee of the WSRA is to develop and carry out plans which convey to parents the value of involvement in reading activities with children.

Members:

Amy Sippert – chair

Nicole Cilley

Teresa Prus

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Deb Stensen

Nancy Schumacher

Mary Pohlman

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## Family Reading Fun



In Todd's TV by James Proimos, the character Todd spends so much time with his TV that the TV begins to take over his life. When his parents realize the TV does more with Todd than they do, they finally decide to pull the plug. The message in this silly tale is that for too many children television is their life. Don't let your child become "Todd" this summer. Follow some of these simple ideas to keep your child "unplugged" all summer long!

Steve and Ruth Bennett's book, 365 TV-Free Activities You Can Do with Your Child, is filled with simple and fun family activities. Some ideas include playing balloon volleyball, creating

an alphabet zoo, making a city out of cereal boxes or "adopting" a neighborhood tree to care for and observe throughout the year, not just for the summer. There are instructions on how to make a simple birdfeeder, wind chimes, or sand paintings. There are even some experiments with carrot tops and celery to keep your child busy through those dog days of summer.

Getting out in the fresh air is a great way to keep your child's mind off of TV. Fifteen Minutes Outside: 365 Ways to Get Out of the House and Connect with Your Kids by Rebecca Cohen is another great resource for how to stay

"unplugged" this summer. Some of her suggestions include attend a strawberry festival, sleep under the stars, use ice cubes to draw on the sidewalk (add food coloring to give it some color), make homemade ice-cream or search for a monarch caterpillar. The activities are sorted by month and season so you could stay "unplugged" all year long!

Don't forget community resources also. Local libraries have summer reading programs for kids. YMCA's and Rec. Departments offer summer classes and sports leagues as well.

Get up, get out and get moving this summer. Don't let the TV take over your child's life.

## Literacy Tips

**For the young reader:** Use a good book as a springboard to a fun family activity. Lois Ehlert has several books that lend themselves nicely to follow up activities that will get you and your young ones outside this summer. In Planting a Rainbow, Ehlert writes about how to plant bulbs, seeds or seedlings and nurture them to growth. Your child will be motivated to plant a butterfly garden after reading Waiting for Wings. Children will want to get their hands dirty and plant some vegetables to make their own vegetable soup after reading Ehlert's Growing Vegetable Soup. You never know what ideas might "grow" from a good book.

**For the teen reader:** Encourage your teen to take what they've read in a good book to the next level. For example, after reading a nonfiction book about sea turtles your child may have learned that there are many threats to sea turtles. If he or she seems interested or passionate about this topic, encourage your child to do something about it. Join in clean-up efforts at a local beach, talk to friends about not polluting our lakes and rivers, do more research on line to find an organization to join. If you know your child is interested in, or wondering about a certain topic, encourage him or her to read more about that topic. After he or she has gained more knowledge, challenge him or her to share that knowledge somehow. Maybe he or she can even teach you a thing or two!

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## Meet the Authors



Doreen Cronin

This attorney turned children's author has published several award winning books including Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type. In this hilarious barnyard adventure, the farm animals demand certain things if the farmer wants them to continue to do their jobs. In her Diary of a Spider, Worm and Fly books, readers learn first-hand what life as an animal would be like. This summer check out one of these animal themed books. Then observe a fly or spider or take a trip to the farm and see for yourself if animals can take on the traits of humans!

Gary Paulsen

If your child loves the outdoors, nature and adventure pick up one of the more than 175 books by author Gary Paulsen. Running away from home at the age of 14 and traveling with a carnival helped Paulsen to develop a taste for adventure. This sense of adventure comes through in his novels for children that are centered on the themes of nature, survival and endurance. Hatchet, Dogsong and The Winter Room are three of Paulsen's Newberry Honor award winning books. Paulsen developed his passion for reading after being given a book and a library card. Maybe one of his books can do the same for your child.



## Website Spotlight

Looking for ways to keep your children busy all summer long? Check out <http://kidsactivitiesblog.com> for great outdoor, literacy, coloring and craft activities. You can even sign up for a free monthly activities calendar.

There's bound to be something for everyone!