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## **Boredom is Out! Summer Days at the Local Library with Your Kids**

The children have been out of school for a few weeks and already it seems they've run out of things to do.

If it's a rainy day...or if you've already heard, "I'm bored!" at your house—try your local library.

That's right, your library: for many parents at wit's end, the library can be an oasis of fun activities that can entertain children of all ages, all summer long.

The libraries of New York State are well prepared for children's summer visits, and your local librarians have lots of entertaining projects up their sleeves.

This summer, most public libraries in New York State are participating in the Statewide Summer Reading program known as "Be Creative @ Your Library"—a program that encourages voluntary reading by your kids and brings even more fun to the local town library. By pairing appropriate books with lots of new summer activities, public libraries create a culture of reading and play that is vital, involving, and provocative to the imagination.

Take a look at some of these free programs for kids of all ages, available at most of your local libraries.

- Toddlers can delight in the many activities going on in the library. Parents with real savvy bring their kids to the library to learn the benefits of moving, dancing, and making music. Other activities, from sculpting and painting, to classic reading circles, stimulate the mind and promote social cooperation. These kids receive individual attention, encouragement, and a summer of fun and games.
- For early readers getting accustomed to trips to the library with their parents, great surprises are in store this summer. Who needs theme parks? The library is right down the street and is hopping with age-appropriate fun for children already in school. Children can enjoy a great vacation *plus* better school performance in the fall. And librarians are experts in what works for kids this age. Video games may be compelling, but interaction with real people, most parents agree, is a better choice.

Instead, visit your library and engage in creative projects such as “make and take” crafts, puppet shows and dress up parties! This summer, New York State libraries are more than just welcoming reading centers, they are true play destinations.

- And there’s much more: if you have kids in the ‘tween age group, expect the library to be ready for them, too. Some libraries with special programs will be offering kids night out, workshops and field trips to local businesses, such as the Humane Society, a local farm or museum.
- Although they may be drenched in pop culture minutia, older kids can learn context and content for favorite out-of-school subjects. Check with your local library for special program schedules, such as open-mic and karaoke night! Or your child may want to participate in a hip-hop dance contest! And for the fashion forward set, an opportunity to create and model their own designs! Going to the library with friends becomes a true alternative summer activity for kids thanks to “Be Creative @ Your Library”.

Activities from the worlds of music, dance and movement, to the visual arts and the literary and dramatic arts, New York State Libraries are raising the bar to offer much more and much livelier fun right in your own neighborhood.

“People don’t often think of their local libraries as places for kids to be creative and have fun,” says Karen Balsen, coordinator of the New York State Library’s Statewide Summer Reading Program. “Our Statewide Summer Reading program at our local library is changing that perception. We’re giving parents—and their kids of all ages—lots of reasons to think of the library as a fun, engaging destination in the summer.”

Don’t wait until camp is over; don’t wait for your family vacation time to slip away; don’t wait another day. Get your kids to the local library for more summer fun and activities than you can dream up by yourself.

Resources for parents, including lots of examples of summer fun activities, can be found on the Summer Reading program’s “Be Creative @ Your Library” website, [www.summerreadingnys.org](http://www.summerreadingnys.org).

Last year more than 1.5 million young people participated in the New York Statewide Summer Reading Program, a program of the New York State Library in the Office of Cultural Education in the New York State Education Department funded through the Federal Library Services and Technology Act, with funds awarded to the New York State Library by the Federal Institute of Museum and Library Services.