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New York State Board of Regents  
MaryEllen Elia  
Commissioner of Education  
The State Education Department  
The University of the State of New York / Albany, NY 12234  
Office of Communications

## NEWS

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### **NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND STATE LIBRARY LAUNCH 2019 SUMMER READING PROGRAM, “A UNIVERSE OF STORIES”**

The New York State Education Department and the New York State Library are partnering with 1,100 public libraries and neighborhood branches statewide to launch the 2019 [Summer Reading at New York Libraries](#) program, Commissioner MaryEllen Elia announced today. The free, annual program gives children the opportunity to access the vast resources of New York’s public libraries to support their summer reading.

“Public libraries are cornerstones of communities – families rely on libraries to provide free educational resources and programs for their children, especially during the summer when school is out of session,” said Board of Regents Chancellor Betty A. Rosa. “More than 2.4 million students participated in the program last year and we hope to grow that number this summer by encouraging parents, caregivers and teachers to bring their children and students to the library and participate in a free summer reading program.”

“It’s so important for children to continue learning during the summer and our summer reading program helps them stay engaged and prevent the summer slide,” said State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia. “Whether it’s print books, e-books or audio books, there’s something for everyone to read and enjoy at their local library. I encourage children and families to visit their local library and sign up for a summertime of free reading, learning and fun.”

This year’s summer reading program slogan is “A Universe of Stories”. Children and teens participating in the program receive book recommendations and engage in creative and fun educational activities at their local libraries. Library staff help children select reading materials and provide literacy-enhancing programs such as storytelling,

music, creative arts and performances. At the end of the program, participants receive formal recognition and celebrate their summer reading goals and achievements at special public library events.

NYSED and the State Library partner with various organizations such as the New York State Senate and Assembly, Hunger Solutions New York, the New York State Reading Association, the School Library Systems Association of New York State, 4-H and the New York Council for the Humanities to bring summer reading to communities throughout the state. For the second year, NYSED is partnering with myON by Renaissance to provide thousands of enhanced digital books to children from birth to 12<sup>th</sup> grade and their families all around the state. Readers can log into myON via one statewide login to access a digital library of more than 6,000 e-books using any web-enabled device. There's an option to download up to 20 books at a time through a free app for reading offline, as well as resources and tips for parents and educators, including on-demand videos, tip sheets, strategies and more to support meaningful family literacy experiences. This [access to free digital children's books](#) is available for New York state students and families through September 30.

In addition to free access to the myON by Renaissance digital library, local libraries offer families free access to thousands of age-appropriate e-books with a local library card. Families with young children can also access fun daily reading activities all summer – including songs, poems, crafts, PBS videos and a free E-book of the day – with the [State Library's DayByDayNY](#) online early literacy calendar (also [available in Spanish](#)).

State Senator Shelley B. Mayer, Chair of the Education Committee, said, “Summer reading is essential for students to retain the academic skills learned in the previous school year, to avoid the ‘summer slide,’ and to find joy in books and texts. I am pleased to support NYSL & NYSED’s Summer Reading Program to help our students thrive in school year after year. In so many of our towns and cities, our public libraries are community hubs for residents of all ages, and one of my top priorities is to ensure libraries have the necessary resources to offer the programs their communities need. The Summer Reading Program brings children and families to our local libraries to read books and explore ideas that shape and expand young minds.”

The New York State Library is a program of the State Education Department’s Office of Cultural Education. Located at 222 Madison Avenue in Albany, the Library is open Monday through Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. except on legal holidays. Further information can be obtained by calling (518) 474-5355 or [visiting the Library's website](#).

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