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New York State Board of Regents  
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**NEWS**  
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**NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND STATE LIBRARY  
LAUNCH 2021 SUMMER READING PROGRAM, "TAILS AND TALES "**

**Libraries Encourage Summer Reading to Reinforce Continuity of Learning,  
Help Reduce Summer Slide**

**[Summer Reading Kickoff Video Available](#)**

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 2021 [Summer Reading at New York Libraries](#) program, Commissioner Betty A. Rosa announced today. The free, annual program gives children and their families the opportunity to access the vast resources of New York's public libraries to support summer reading and learning.

This year's theme, "Tails and Tales," is a celebration of all aspects of animals, pets and animal stories. Local libraries are open and ready to welcome kids and families back to summer reading with exciting activities, fun and enriching programs – reading challenges, and more – throughout the summer months.

"For many families during the pandemic, their local library was a vital resource to keep them connected to information and services," said Chancellor Lester W. Young, Jr. "Now, as we enter the summer, I encourage all students to take advantage of free educational and cultural enrichment activities and programs that our public libraries offer."

"This year more than any, it is imperative that children continue learning during the summer months and our summer reading program offers a tremendous opportunity to keep them engaged," said Commissioner Rosa. "Children that read in the summer

enhance their reading skills, prevent summer learning loss and are better prepared for a successful school year.”

In addition to program support and resources, the State Library provides a fun, [online app called READSquared](#) where students and families can track their favorite books during the summer and all year long. [The Teen Video Challenge](#) is an annual competition open to all teens (librarian and teacher support is encouraged). It provides an opportunity to create a public service announcement style video, expressing individual interpretations of the 2021 Summer Reading Theme “Tails and Tales.”

Additionally, kids, teens and families can visit local public library websites to sign up for summer reading events and activities, register online to track recreational reading of books and e-books, and earn badges and prizes from their local library.

State Senator Shelley B. Mayer, Chair of the Education Committee, said, “Summer reading reinforces the skills our children learn throughout the year, and is a wonderful way for them to explore new ideas and stretch their imaginations. Throughout the pandemic, local libraries did a fantastic job of keeping us informed and entertained with new stories during a time when we were largely isolated from our communities. I’m pleased to support the New York State Library and State Education Department’s Summer Reading Program. This year’s summer reading theme, ‘Tails and Tales,’ is sure to pique the interest of children across our state. I encourage them to follow their curiosity, take advantage of the wonderful programs our libraries have to offer and lose themselves in books this summer.”

Assemblyman Michael R. Benedetto, Chair, Committee on Education, said, “Read, read, read! Don’t stop reading. This year’s theme, Tails and Tales, is sure to create an exciting and enjoyable summer adventure.”

Senator Sean Ryan, Chair of the Senate Libraries Committee, said, “Reading year-round is an important part of the educational process, and the annual Summer Reading Program is a great tool to keep kids throughout New York engaged between school years, especially after the challenging year our students have faced. New York’s libraries did an excellent job serving our communities virtually throughout the pandemic, including an all-virtual Summer Reading Program in 2020. This year’s edition will continue to provide useful online resources, but it will also be a wonderful opportunity for kids to reconnect with their libraries in person.”

Assemblywoman Kimberly Jean-Pierre, Chair, Committee on Libraries and Education Technology, said, “Summer reading is one of the best ways to help our children expand their horizons and keep their minds active, and I am so proud to support NYSL and NYSED’s Summer Reading Program this year. Reading is a simple, effective way to help children keep their academic levels up and be prepared for a new school year all while having some fun in the process, and this program will help foster a lifelong love of reading while encouraging our kids to explore our local libraries and learn about the vast amount of programs and services they offer.”

In addition to partnering with local libraries and the State's 23 public library systems to offer [Summer Reading at New York Libraries](#), the State Education Department and the State Library partner with the New York State Senate and Assembly, Hunger Solutions New York, the New York State Reading Association, the New York Library Association, the School Library Systems Association of New York State, 4-H, the New York Council for the Humanities to bring summer reading to communities throughout the state.

The New York State Library is a program of the State Education Department's Office of Cultural Education. Further information can be obtained by [visiting the Library's website](#).

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