



## YOUTH SERVICES

Youth Services at Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) provides myriad services to improve the quality of children's and families' lives. GPLS plans and implements statewide family literacy programs like 1,000 Books B4 Kindergarten, Every Child Ready to Read®, summer reading and PRIME TIME FAMILY READING TIME™. The latest research in family and early literacy is compiled and disseminated to libraries across the state. Children's services staff incorporate this research into storytimes and other library programming for all ages. Research shows that development of pre-literacy skills through participation in library programs can help children begin school with the increased competence needed for learning how to read at or above grade level. These programs also help build a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Georgia's statewide Summer Reading Program enjoyed attendance of 616,364 in 2017, and more than 2.13 million children and young adults attended one of the 57,610 programs designed for and offered to them by Georgia's public libraries during FY2017. Circulation of children's materials again topped 16 million items for the year. Studies have shown that participation in public library summer reading programs leads to academic success with summer reading participants outscoring their peers who did not participate on reading achievement tests given at the start of the new school year.

[From the Executive Summary of: Roman, S., Carran, D.T., & Fiore, C.D. (2010). "The Dominican Study: Public Library Summer Reading Programs Close the Reading Gap." Dominican University Graduate School of Library & Information Science 1-103. Retrieved from [http://www.dom.edu/academics/gslis/downloads/DOM\\_JMLS\\_research\\_in\\_brief\\_FINALweb.pdf](http://www.dom.edu/academics/gslis/downloads/DOM_JMLS_research_in_brief_FINALweb.pdf)]

The benefits of youth services are numerous. From providing quality, literature-based programs for children and families to assisting teens with their informational needs, Georgia's public libraries strive to develop lifelong readers and learners. Through the services offered across the state, a community of support and advocacy is created for library personnel working with children, families and teens. Working in tandem, GPLS and library systems provide parents and caregivers with the best tools to help prepare their children for life and introduce them to a lifelong love of reading.

GPLS acts as a consultant for systems developing new youth services initiatives and/or for systems continuing service for parents and children. GPLS oversees several statewide

training opportunities each year for professional development both virtually and at convenient locations across the state on topics of interest to staff working with children, teens and families. Library staff have the opportunity to meet colleagues, exchange information, discuss ideas and discover new ways to reach parents and children. GPLS helps to promote other training initiatives available such as children's literature conferences, GLA conference and other training of interest to children's and teen services staff. GPLS also hosts the Children's Services (CHLIB-I) listserv and Young Adult (YASVS-I) listserv. These electronic listservs post messages to and from people working in Georgia's public libraries with children, families and teens.

Examples of direct services provided by public libraries to public school systems may include:

- Summer Reading Programs for all ages to prevent the "summer slide" in reading skills
- Permanent and revolving collections to support curriculum
- Extended loan periods for school personnel
- Library hours when school is out — nights, weekends and summer
- Scheduled monthly visits to each school's media specialist and media center
- Work with parent-teacher organizations to support family literacy; present programs for various meetings; and provide information booths at school functions
- Provide access to self-selected materials throughout the year
- Programs targeted to age groups in library branch locations
- Storytimes at school locations
- Homework support online or in person
- Purchase materials on Accelerated Reader and other reading lists
- Library tours
- Select and deliver books for individual teachers at the elementary and middle schools in the county
- Overdue fine forgiveness for school personnel

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