

Getting to the Heart of Reading: Book recommendations for the summer

After a challenging winter, and a school year extending deep into June, there will be a summer!

Although students will be on an extended break from school and away from the routine of Open Circle meetings, there will be plenty of opportunities for children to reach into their Open Circle toolboxes to apply their communication, self-control and problem-solving skills. Problems don't take a vacation! One way to keep children's social and emotional awareness in focus over the summer is through children's literature.

Here are a few books that offer children a chance to compare their feelings, experiences, and beliefs to those of a wide variety of characters. Somewhere in this list children might find a book that makes them think: "That happened to me." "I have felt that way." "What would I do in that situation?"

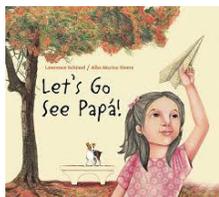
These books offer some memorable summer companions and a way to connect to the heart of reading.

Happy summer and happy reading from Open Circle!

PICTURE BOOKS

Pete the Cat: Pete at the Beach, by James Dean (grades K-1) Will Pete overcome his fear of the ocean?

The Dark, by Lemony Snicket (grades K-2) A little boy discovers that the dark has a light side.



Let's Go See Papa, by Lawrence Schimmel (grades 2-4) A little girl has mixed emotions when she moves to join her dad, but leaves her grandma.

Plant a Little Seed, by Bonnie Christiansen (grades K-1) Children cooperate to plant and tend a garden.

Little Dog Lost: The True Story of a Brave Dog Named Baltic, by Monica Carnesi (grades K-2) Based on a true story, a dog is rescued from a piece of ice floating in the ocean.

CHAPTER BOOKS

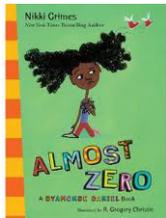
The Year of the Book, by Andrea Cheng (grades 3-4) Anna puts her books down long enough to discover what it takes to make and keep a friend.



Alvin Ho: Allergic to Camping, Hiking, and other Natural Disasters, by Lenore Look (grades 2-4) Alvin confronts new fears when he ventures into the world of camping.

Just Grace: Star on Stage, by Charise Mericle (grades 2-3) Grace doesn't get the role she wants in the play but that doesn't spoil her experience on the stage.

Bink and Gollie, Best Friends Forever, by Kate DiCamillo (grades 1-3) More adventures for a pair of unlikely friends.



Almost Zero: A Dyamonde Daniel Book, by Nikki Grimes (grades 2–4) Dyamonde’s desire for red high-top sneakers leads to a lesson in compassion.

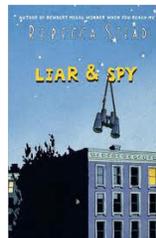
White Fur Flying, by Patricia MacLachlan (grades 4–5) Sometimes rescue dogs are the miracle workers.

NOVELS

The One and Only Ivan, by Katherine Applegate (grades 4–5) A gorilla changes the fate of a baby elephant—a fellow captive in a run-down animal exhibit.

Lemonade Crime, by Jacqueline Davies (grades 3–5) Guilty or innocent? Fourth-graders convene in a playground courtroom to decide whether a classmate has stolen some proceeds from a lemonade stand.

A Tangle of Knots, by Lisa Graff (grades 4–6) A story and a puzzle about a world where everyone has a “Talent.”



Liar and Spy, by Rebecca Stead (grades 4–5) Two children track down a mysterious Mr. X.

Wrinkle in Time: Graphic Novel, by Madeline L’Engle (grades 4–5) A beloved classic is presented in a graphic novel format.