

Reading Campaigns

FROM THE RIF MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITIES HANDBOOK

Since its founding, RIF has emphasized the importance of motivation in becoming a reader. Show young readers how much fun reading can be with these RIF volunteer field-tested activity ideas! Reading campaigns help motivate young readers by helping them visualize their progress toward a goal. Ideally, keeping track of progress will be its own reward, providing that special satisfaction that comes with achieving a goal. This may be completing a puzzle, linking a chain, or filling a reading passport. For younger or more reluctant readers, however, you may want to provide more tangible rewards. Some theme-related rewards are suggested below. As always, giving away books as prizes is the best reward.

ACTIVITIES

Reading Is Mm-Mm Good

Children are given a large cardboard cutout of a cookie; for each book, page, or time amount read they put a paper M&M (or chocolate chip or candy sprinkle) on their cookie. Celebrate full cookies by having a cookies and milk party.

Race Across the Rainbow

Divide the children into seven teams, one for each color of the rainbow. As a team meets reading goals, move the corresponding color along a stripe of the rainbow. One school made a huge chicken wire arc in the lobby and attached rolls of colored netting to one end of the arc. They raced to see which team could span the arc first.

Making Tracks for Reading

Divide children into teams and assign each team a different animal paw print. As kids read, track progress along corridors and hallways with corresponding team prints. You might script a story that will guide the path the tracks take. Maybe all will end somehow in the school library, or let the children's tracks decide as each adds a new print. Perhaps the path will take five loops around the water fountain.

Choo-Choo-Choose to Read

Children or classes or teams add cars to a long train around the school for progress made in reading. Each car may include the name of the book read and/or the name of the reader.

Reading Passports

Make a passport-like book for each child, complete with a photograph and "authorization" stamp. Track each child's progress as they read stories from around the world. Children can design stamps representing different countries to mark their entry and exit from that country.

Make Friends with Books

As children finish their books, they write the book name, their name, and whether they would recommend the book to a friend on a cutout paper hand print. Join the hand prints together on a wall and encourage the children to see what their friends are reading. Whenever they read books recommended by a classmate, they sign their name to that hand print.



THE PRINCIPAL CHALLENGE

This is a subgenre of the reading campaign. With it, students set a reading goal and if they meet it, the school principal (or some other official) performs a silly act. Students should be frequently reminded how close they are to the goal and how funny it will be to see the deed performed. Below are a few examples:

- **Shave It or Save It:** A principal let students vote on whether he would shave his head. For each book read, students received one vote. Another principal agreed to have his hair cut in the style voted most popular by students if students met his reading challenge.
- **Hit the Road:** A Utah principal agreed to walk to school from his home. He set out for his 20-mile journey and made it to school before the day was over.
- **Make a Splash for Reading:** Not at all faint of heart, a Wisconsin principal promised to plunge into Lake Michigan (in early spring).
- **Other ideas:** Spend a day on the roof, clothes backward, do the latest dance craze at an assembly.