

Inspire your kids to read

BY BRIAN TRUITT



Beach reading isn't just for adults, says James Patterson, with son Jack, 13.

Mega-selling author James Patterson says that this summer, it's up to you to find books your kids will love.

notion that reading is a chore," he says. "Reading is really pretty cool."

Patterson is a big believer that the more kids read, the better they get at it — one impetus for writing *Middle School*, and the main reason behind ReadKiddoRead.com, his website dedicated to

giving parents and teachers a resource for turning children of any age on to great books.

But for Patterson, home is where the good habits start.

"It's the parents' job to find books for kids that they're gonna love," he says. "A lot of parents don't get that. One of my best friends' wife died when his boys were young, and he did a great job. But it didn't occur to him that it was his job to find books for the kids."

PARENTS, REJOICE! Even the planet's best-selling author didn't like to read when he was a kid. "I preferred to go out and run around and do sports," recalls author James Patterson.

He may not be as well known as J.K. Rowling or John Grisham, but Patterson is king of the "beach read," including the mega-selling Alex Cross thriller series, with more than 220 million books sold worldwide and, yes, a best-selling author of young-adult fiction.

Now, Patterson scores another publishing feat: a new adult thriller and a new children's book on the same day. *Now You See Her* and *Middle School: The Worst Years of My Life* are out June 27.

How did Patterson morph from rambunctious kid to titan of the

written tale? Something stirred him (though he wasn't shaken).

"One of my friends got into the James Bond stuff in grade school, but he was one of the only kids who read," recalls Patterson, who grew up in Newburgh, N.Y. It wasn't until his years at Manhattan College that he caught the reading bug.

"I worked my way through college at a mental hospital, and I worked a lot of night shifts," Patterson says. "I started reading like crazy."

Now, Patterson, 64, who has a 13-year-old son named Jack, deploys much of his sizable energy trying to change the reading habits of the world's children. In summer, "they've got time, they don't have two or three hours of homework, and we need to change this

'Change this notion that reading is a chore.'

Patterson picks 5

The Invention of Hugo Cabret by Brian Selznick (ages 9 and up): "Great writing and great illustrations. Worth re-reading and poring over all 554 pages. Can't wait for the Scorsese movie."

Hey Batta Batta Swing!: The Wild Old Days of Baseball by Sally Cook and James Charlton (ages 8 and up): "This is a charming and hilarious tale that fantasizes about the beginnings of baseball. A sure hit with boys."

Swindle by Gordon Korman (ages 9-12): "Sixth-grader Griffin finds an original Babe Ruth baseball card, and is swindled out of it by the owner of the local memorabilia shop. He and his pals aren't going to let the swindler get away with it."

Holes by Louis Sachar (ages 10 and up): "After you read *Sideways Stories From Wayside School*, pick up *Holes*. Summer is all about required laughter, if required anything."

Thirteen Reasons Why by Jay Asher (ages 13 and up): "I had to choose between this and *Hate List* by Jennifer Brown for a darker book choice. The death of a teenager is too hard for anyone to process, but these two books try to make some sense out of it." ❏

