

Tips for Parents: Encouraging Reading

Encourage the love of reading

Read aloud. Children love to hear a parent read aloud. Allow your child to select a favorite story and don't be surprised if you find yourself reading the same story over and over. Preschoolers, in particular, love to hear familiar stories. You may also want to select books or magazines about topics that you enjoy, such as a favorite sport or a new science discovery. Your own enthusiasm will help your child realize that reading is an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Even after your child learns how to read, don't stop reading aloud. The time you share together not only encourages reading development, it also creates an important bond.

Allow children to select their own books. Take trips to the library or bookstore and let your kids hunt for books that interest them. If your children aren't sure where to look, introduce them to the children's librarian. Librarians can tell you the most popular books for kids of all ages. Once your children select a book, support their decisions. Don't push your child into selecting challenging material. In fact, if a book is too difficult, your child may lose interest in reading.

Listen to your child. Once children learn how to read, it's important for parents and children to read aloud together. This gives children an opportunity to share new skills and gives parents the opportunity to praise their progress. Provide plenty of approval and avoid making corrections. .

Family activities that encourage reading

Have a family reading night. Show your children that you value reading by reading yourself. Spend time together reading silently or aloud. Read the newspaper, magazines, or a novel in front of your children while your children read their own books. Every week, select a night when everyone will be involved in reading and make it something that your children look forward to.

Broaden your children's horizons. Whether you live in a small town or a big city, your surroundings can provide rich experiences that help develop children's knowledge. The more knowledge your children have, the more success they'll have in reading. Take a walk around the neighborhood together and allow your children to explore. Spend a day in the park, at the zoo, or at a museum and share the experience as a family.

Talk about experiences. While you're on an outing, talk to your children about what they see. These discussions will build a good vocabulary and enhance children's understanding of concepts. Ask questions that inspire creative or critical thinking. For example, "Why do elephants have trunks?" or "What makes trees grow?" By doing so, you help to stimulate their curiosity—a necessary factor in successful reading.

Make reading fun

Use reading as a reward. For example, allow an extra half hour of reading at bedtime as a special treat. Many libraries and bookstores offer programs that allow children to meet the authors of children's books. If your child has a favorite books, meeting the author could be a wonderful and memorable experience.

Use library reading programs. Look into reading programs at your local library. Most of these programs take place during the summer and help keep children in the habit of reading while school is not in session. Your kids will enjoy spending time with other children their own age and their reading skills will improve.

Plug into television. If your children enjoy watching television, you may want to tie this pastime to reading. Many programs are associated with books, and you can encourage your children to read those books. For example, if a favorite animated production is based on a children's story, you can suggest that your child read this book.

Stay involved

Show interest. Monitor your child's reading progress by discussing school and helping with homework. Meet with your children's teachers and get involved in school activities. By demonstrating your concern and interest, you send a powerful message to your kids that you care about school, learning, and reading—and most importantly, about them.

For more information:

www.ed.gov

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A Child Becomes A Reader: Birth Through Preschool

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A Child Becomes A Reader: Kindergarten Through Grade 3

“Give Reading a Boost: Ideas for Parents”

“Parents and Children: Reading TOGETHER”

“Reading to Kids: It's a GUY Thing!”

“When It Comes to Reading, Make the Connections!”

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