

Parent Tips for Creating Lifelong Readers

I. Gateway to Success

Reading is a vital skill that every child needs to develop and grow. It provides a critical foundation for success in school and the world beyond. Studies show that students who read well are more likely to succeed in other subjects by providing skills in vocabulary, comprehension, creativity and writing.

Reading with your child is an important step towards building a lifelong reader. Reading together helps promote your child's interest in reading and also allows your child to continue developing critical reading skills introduced in school. In addition to reading with your child, you can help by creating a home environment that encourages reading.

Whether your child is reading below or above grade level, the information in this section will provide ideas on how to promote and foster a love of reading.

II. Finding Appropriate Reading Materials

One of the most important steps to encourage reading is to make sure that your child is reading materials that are of interest and at the appropriate reading level.

Find out what your child is interested in and find books on that topic.

For example, if your child likes to swim, look for books about going to the beach or pool. Younger readers enjoy looking at colorful pictures. Point to pictures on the cover and in the book and ask your child to describe what is happening. For an older reader, you may want to look for a biography on an Olympic swimmer.

Help your child find books that are at the appropriate reading level.

When your child is reading independently try to select books that are at the appropriate reading level. Books that are too easy may not hold your reader's interest and books that are too difficult may frustrate your child. Ask your child's teacher or a librarian to help you create a reading list that is suitable.

Read book reviews or find out what some of the best selling children's books are.

Award-winning books are a good indicator of quality and best sellers may be a guide to gauge interest. However, make sure that the subject matter and reading level are also appropriate. Remember children have different interests and experiences!

Choose one of your childhood favorites.

Point out books that you enjoyed as a child and tell your youngster why you liked the book. This may peak your child's interest in reading the book too.

For more information:

- Read “Choosing The Best Books For Your Child” for more information.
<http://www.scholastic.com/familymatters/rightstuff/oldbooks.htm>
- New York Times Children’s Best Seller List:
<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/16/books/bestseller/0316bestchildren.html>

III. Promoting Reading in Your Home

By adding a few changes to your family’s daily routine, you can transform you child from a non-reader to an avid reader.

Encourage 20 Minutes of Reading Everyday From a Book of Your Child’s Choice.

Set a goal of having your child read 20 minutes everyday. Initially, the time spent may be less than 20 minutes but gradually increase the period. If you are not able to read for 20 minutes in a single sitting, try reading in several sessions such as reading at breakfast or before sleeping. You can also have your child read to you while you prepare dinner or fix the car.

Create a Reading Environment

Show that you value reading by filling your home with books, magazines, and newspapers. Cut-out articles that your child may enjoy, write notes or send e-mails to your child. Also, make sure you have an appropriate dictionary at home.

Get the Whole Family Involved

Institute ‘reading time’ for the whole family. Turn off the TV and show your child that you also read for pleasure. Occasionally, the whole family can discuss the books they are reading. Also, have older children read to younger siblings.

For more information, read *Family Involvement: A Key Ingredient in Children’s Reading Success*
http://www.rifnet.org/403/403_article.htm

Show Interest in What Your Child is Reading

Let your child know that you are interested in what they are reading. Ask questions about the book such as:

- How did you like the book?
- What was your favorite part?
- Who was your favorite character?
- Who was your least favorite character?
- What would you have done?
- Can you think of another ending?
- How did the books make you feel (e.g. cheerful, scared, sad)?

Subscribe to a Children's Magazine

Let your child subscribe to a children's magazine such as Scholastic News or National Geographic Kids. Children are often excited to receive their personal copy in the mail and it motivates them to read.

Reading and Writing

Encourage your child to write letters or postcards – or perhaps your child might be interested in keeping a journal. Another option is to suggest that your child find a pen-pal. Your child will be excited to read and write letters.

Games and Other Fun

Play word games with your child such as who can find the most words in a word.

Write flashcards with new vocabulary words with your child. In addition to writing the definition of the word, younger children many also want to add a colorful picture describing the word.

Celebrate Success

Set a goal as to the number of books your child might be able to read over a period of time.

Celebrate the successful completion of that goal with a favorite meal, book, or another prize.

IV. Encouraging Reading Throughout the Day

Promoting reading throughout the day not only helps your child develop reading skills but also shows your child that reading is an important and useful skill.

Point Out Printed Words Found in and Outside of Your Home

Talk about mail, advertisements, recipes, cereal boxes, and food labels. While you are out, have your child read street signs, restaurant and shop names, and billboards.

Talk About Words

Show your child that adults also learn new words. Create a list of new words that you want to learn together.

Books Everywhere

Carry books with you often such as on family vacations, during doctor visits, or when you are running errands. Also, listen to books on tape while you are driving or as a pastime at home.

V. Parent Reading Aloud

Reading aloud to your child allows your child to hear examples of how more experienced readers read. Hearing patterns of language and change in expression will build fluency skills. Also, by reading together you may be able to help your child read a book that is slightly difficult for him/her to read independently. Having fun and being enthusiastic will motivate your child to read with you and alone.

Read Short, High-Interest Stories To Your Child To Get Your Child Excited About Reading.

Initially, it may be easier to start this process by selecting short, high-interest stories that you believe your child will respond to. Read enthusiastically, change the tone of your voice as appropriate, and ask your child questions about what is happening in the story. Find out what aspects of the story your child liked or did not like. Use this information as you both select materials to read in the future. For example, if your child liked the story, find out if the author has written other stories or books.

Alternate Reading Aloud

Depending on your child's reading ability try to alternate reading aloud by page, character, sentence, or paragraph. Be patient as your child reads to you and do not criticize. You may want to try reading a sentence or section and have your child re-read it to you.

Read Sections of the Newspaper

Try to regularly read the newspaper with your child, focusing on articles that may be of interest such as sports, fashion or current events.

Re-Read Favorite Books

Younger children, in particular, enjoy re-reading books they like. Re-read your child's favorite book and encourage your child to tell you what happens next. This will reinforce comprehension skills.

Activities After Finishing a Book

After reading a book, ask your child to write a review using words and/or pictures. You can do the same and share your thoughts with your child. Another activity is to have your child create another ending either by writing it down or having you transcribe.

VI. Using Your Library

In addition to providing a large selection of books for readers at all levels and with multiple interests, many libraries offer other resources as well such as Internet access, special classes and events, librarian support, and research resource materials.

Tips:

- Make sure your child has a library card.
- Go to the library with your child and help select some suitable books for you to read together. You can also ask the librarian for recommendations.

- Select a topic that you are both interested in learning more about and research that topic using library resources including catalogs, encyclopedias, magazines and the Internet.
- Use the library yourself, showing your child that it is a valuable resource.
- Attend a story hour if your library offers one.

Other Resources:

Browse the American Library Association website for other ideas <http://www.ala.org/parentspage/>

VII. Other Fun Activities

There are many activities that you and your child can do together to make reading an enjoyable experience. Be creative and use your knowledge of what your child enjoys doing to find an activity that is most suitable. Most importantly, have fun!

Making a Treat

Find a food/snack that your child likes to eat such as cookies. Together, find a recipe that your child wants to try. Have your child read the recipe to you and let your child read any text found on the ingredients. Go to your library and take out a book about cookies and read it together while you are snacking on some tasty treats!

Getting Down to Music

Help your child write the lyrics to a favorite song and then have your child read the lyrics (or sing!) while listening to the song.

Reading Club

Start a reading club with your child with students from your child's school and their parents. Each child-parent pair can take turns to select a book for the group to read on a monthly basis.

Book and a Movie

Rent or go to a movie that your child wants to see that is based on a book. Have your child read the book and compare the similarities and differences. Ask your child if he/she preferred the book or movie version. Another option, is to rent videos on a topic that your child is interested in and then finding books to read on a similar topic.

Summer Reading

Enroll your child in a summer reading program. Your child will continue to retain and develop reading skills learned during the school year. Your school, local library or faith-based organization may be able to help you find a reading program in your area.

VIII. Helpful Sites

The below sites offer additional information to help you raise successful readers.

Reading is Fundamental

<http://www.rif.org/>

It's Never Too Early to Read to Your Child

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/authorsandbooks/bestbooks/tips.htm>

Reading Tips For Parents

<http://www.ohea.org/new/reading.htm>

School Days

<http://www.ala.org/parentspage/tp2.html>

Create an Academic Environment at Home

http://www.scholastic.com/schoolage/middleschool/homework/ms_acadenvhome.htm

Becoming a Real Reader

http://www.scholastic.com/schoolage/grade2/atschool/2_realreader.htm

How Can I Help My Child Be Ready to Read and Ready to Learn?

<http://www.nclb.gov/parents/reading/read1.html>

Simple Strategies for Creating Strong Readers

<http://www.nclb.gov/parents/reading/read3.html>

Reading Tips

http://www.readcalifornia.org/parents_tips.html

Raising a Reader

<http://www.tlsbooks.com/readingtips.htm>

Summer Reading

http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/parenting/readingtips.html

Every Child Reading: An Action Plan; Top Ten Tips for Parents

http://www.learningfirst.org/reading_tips.html