

ideas for parents

Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

FAST FACTS

ASSET #25: Reading for Pleasure

Youth are more likely to grow up healthy when they read for pleasure three or more hours per week.

23% of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.*

What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed.

"Reading for pleasure" is one of five commitment-to-learning assets.

* Based on Search Institute surveys of 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States during the 1999-2000 school year.

The Realities of Reading

"Reading is a basic skill," says the Commission on Reading in *Becoming a Nation of Readers*.

"It is a cornerstone for a child's success in school and, indeed, throughout life."

While we understand the importance of literacy, why is it important for young people—in fact, all people—to read for pleasure?

The Commission on Reading contends that reading for fun teaches young people how to become strategic, skilled readers. When researchers D. L. Forrest and T. G. Wallace asked 3rd and 6th graders to read two stories, one for fun and one as a preparation for a test, they found that skilled readers read the two stories differently than the unskilled readers. The skilled readers remembered more of the story that was to be read for the test than the unskilled readers.

What was different? Skilled readers know there are different reasons for reading. They know they must change the way they read, depending on the circumstances. For example, skilled readers know that reading for pleasure



does not require an understanding of all the details, whereas reading for a test may.

Skilled readers also were more likely to ask questions when they didn't understand something they read, go to a dictionary for words they didn't know, and take notes on what they were reading. Skilled readers also were more likely to say that reading was fun.

According to Search Institute, those who have the reading asset in their lives read for pleasure three or more hours per week. That equals about 26 minutes a day. How can you encourage your child—and each family member—to take the time to read for pleasure?

Helpful Hints

Tips that encourage reading for pleasure:

- **Keep comic books, newspapers, and magazines lying around the house.**
- **Set aside a family reading time once a week. With younger children, read aloud together. With older children, read different books while hanging out together.**
- **Read something yourself. Explain how it gives you pleasure while helping you learn about life and the world.**
- **For birthdays and holidays, give each other books and magazine subscriptions as gifts.**

time together

Three ways to help your child read for pleasure:

1. Visit the library together on a regular basis. If your child doesn't have a library card, help her or him apply for one.
2. Start a home library. If you don't have room, encourage all family members to start a personal library in their bedrooms.
3. Create a book-a-month club. Have everyone in the family read the same book. Then discuss it.

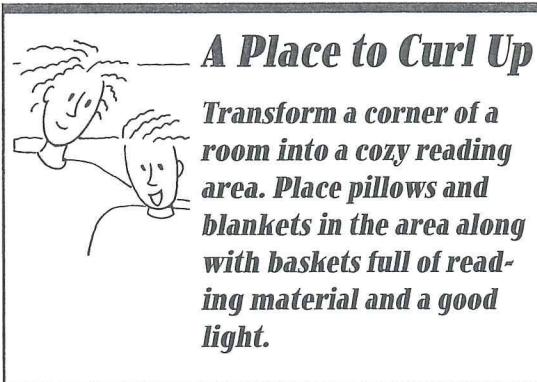
Make Reading Fun

- Have a monthly author celebration. Write to the marketing department of the author's publisher and request biographies, photos, and other things they might have. Find out more about different authors in *Something about the Author*, published by Gale Research and found in the reference section at your local library.
- When your family wants to see a movie based on a book, read the book first, then see the movie. Afterward you can compare the two.
- Read books aloud to children in your neighborhood, school, congregation, or child care.
- Turn off the TV and curl up on the couch together to read a good book.

Quick Tip:
Read the same book your child is assigned.

talk together

- Questions to discuss with your child:
- What are you currently reading for fun? Why? What do you like best about it?
 - What is your all-time favorite book? Why?
 - What do you like best about reading?



More Help for Parents

Free Reading Brochures. Check out the International Reading Association's Web site at www.reading.org.

The Reading Environment: How Adults Help Children Enjoy Books by Aidan Chambers. This handbook provides a checklist of practices to create and nurture a reading environment for children. (Published by Stenhouse Publishers.)

Final Word

**"I never got an A in more than one class in a semester.
But I loved reading nonfiction because it made me feel smart."**

—Tom Hanks

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