

Helping Reluctant Readers: How Parents Can Overcome 4 Common Objections

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Helping your child fall in love with reading can lead to academic payoffs for years to come! But, reading doesn't always come naturally; every child faces roadblocks while learning to read, and for some, the challenges are significant enough to hinder them from even wanting to open a book. Do you have a reluctant reader on your hands? We've put together four common complaints children have about reading, as well as simple tips to overcome them and cultivate long-lasting reading habits.

1. Reading isn't interesting

If your child's experience of reading is primarily assigned texts at school, the problem may be that reading simply feels boring. Perhaps the topics the class has read about haven't aligned with his or her interests, or he or she hasn't been exposed to enough types of reading material. Expand your child's view of reading by introducing different periodical formats, such as magazines, newspapers, and online publications, as well as books (both fiction and nonfiction) that focus on topics he or she gets excited about—whether that's sports, animals, space, superheroes, the outdoors, or anything else. Dramatized audiobooks are also a great tool to encourage your child to get caught up in a story, and they'll help your child capture the tones, mood, and drama of a story which he or she might struggle with alone.

2. Reading is too hard

If your child struggles with core reading skills like fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension, he or she may feel too discouraged to try reading. When this is the case, it's key to work with your child's teacher to pinpoint areas of weakness that you can practice with your child at home. Online tools like **Study Island for Home** can be great resources to provide targeted practice in a fun, game-centered environment. Equally important is encouraging your child when he or she does experience success and enjoyment in reading. The type or complexity of reading material your child gravitates toward shouldn't be the focus in this type of situation—even comic books are a completely acceptable option as long as it gets him or her practicing reading! The most important thing is to focus on helping your child see reading as a pleasant and useful everyday skill instead of a task he or she is being graded on.

3. There's no time to read

Between school, extracurricular activities, homework, household chores, and time spent with friends, children have a lot on their calendars. For some, reading is at the bottom of the priority list, and they feel like their schedules just don't allow time to even think about it. Here, it's up to you to help your child manage his or her schedule and create opportunities to read. If your child is truly overbooked, relieve him or her of a chore or two or consider having him or her dropping an extracurricular activity. If, instead, it's more of a time-management issue and your child is used to retreating to the television or computer during spare minutes, establish days to "unplug" and replace that time with reading. Even setting aside 15 minutes a day of quiet reading together can go a long way to help your child build a regular habit and encourage a genuine love of reading.

4. Reading doesn't matter.

Some children just don't see the point in reading. To help your child see the importance of reading, it's important for you to talk about it and demonstrate it in your own life. Talk about the things you've read recently—both for necessity and enjoyment. The dinner you made a couple nights ago that your child loved? Point out the recipe you read and followed to make it. The next time you're trying to decide on a family movie? Read the film descriptions along with your child. The novel you just finished? Tell your child how caught up in the story you became, how it helped you "visit" a new place, or how interesting the characters were. **Make reading an integral part of your family's day-to-day life**, keep plenty of reading material in your home, and consider setting up a comfy reading nook or two so that your child has ample opportunity to practice. You are your child's primary role model; if you prioritize reading and share a genuine love of it with your child, they're likely to develop the same strong reading habits.