

Make time for “Reading Time”

- It's never too early to start reading to your child. Even infants enjoy the rhythm of your voice. Children who are read to early and often may develop their vocabulary quicker, understand more about their world, and develop a stronger interest in reading on their own.
- No child is too young for a good book. Although babies won't understand every word, they'll love the sounds and the attention that reading provides. Books with rhythm and rhyme are good choices, particularly ones that invite parent-and-child play – for example, pulling toes as you chant, “This little piggy...”
- The important thing is to establish a reading “ritual” – a quiet time when your youngster can relax and focus – at bedtime or first thing in the morning, for example
- When your child is late to bed but still begging for a story, read a poem instead. Try a humorous, contemporary poem or a soothing sleepytime rhyme. The poem will satisfy the child's craving for a quiet cuddle with you and a book, but it only takes a few minutes
- Although the experts say it's best to read to your child at least 20 minutes a day, parents know that it's often easier said than done. But it's the doing, not the time, that really matters. If you don't have 20 minutes, read for 10 or 5.
- Let your child see you read. This is one habit you want your child to pick up. If your child sees that you and other members of the family enjoy reading book, magazines, newspapers, or whatever, then s/he will be motivated to share that enjoyment.

Read “WITH” your child, not “AT” your child

- As you read to your little one, interject your own thoughts or emotions about the story as it unfolds. By sharing thoughts about the characters, the plot, the pictures, or even just “what might happen next,” you show your child that you are enthusiastic and thinking about what is being read.
- Encourage your child to talk about what was just read. Reading comprehension is as important as the actual ability to read. Ask questions. If your child is stumped, go back and reread part to the book.

Make it Fun

- Don't forget that playing is learning. Start with interesting books. Act out the different roles. Encourage your child to repeat the story in his own words
- In your daily activities, encourage your child to notice and identify letters, colours, numbers...read everything that he sees. Your child will learn that reading is important as well as fun.
- Puzzle and activity books, flash cards, newspapers, cookbooks, mail-order catalogs, letters, and even advertising brochures all offer good opportunities for reading fun. Let your child help you find, clip, and sort the product coupons in grocery store inserts.
- Think about subscribing to a children's magazine. Young children are always thrilled to get their own mail – and if that pleasure is connected to reading, so much the better
- Encourage your child to read everything – the bumper stickers, license plates, store signs, cereal boxes, greeting cards, calendars, and so on. He or she will learn that reading is important...and useful.
- Instead of buying a treat or a toy, why not reward a job well done or a red-letter day with a new book or a trip to the library. Think about giving your child a special book with a personal inscription inside for every birthday – make it a tradition or instead of sending cupcakes to school to mark the birthday, send a book to the school's library in your child's name.

Enjoy your time together

- There's nothing more rewarding than watching your youngster grow and learn.
- Be sure to praise your child for the knowledge gained from books...and for making the effort to read. The pride of being able to entertain parents by "reading to them" can go a long way toward developing a child's lifelong love of books
- Remember, if you maintain an excitement about learning and reading your child will mimic you as he grows