



The Timeless Gift of Reading

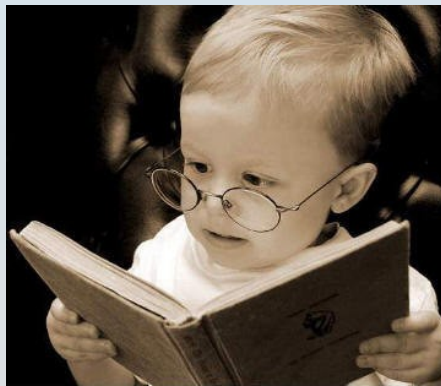
Reading with your child is the best way to prepare him for learning to read and to keep him reading as he grows. Reading aloud together creates a special time for you to bond with your child. This priceless gift offers your precious one what he cherishes most: your attention. The reward to you: it gives you a chance to rediscover favorite stories and find new ones. And the added bonus is that it doesn't have to cost a penny.

Somehow we think we should magically know how to read with our child. If you were fortunate enough to have memories of similar experiences with your own parent, it will come naturally. Just tap into your fondest memories of that activity. If not, don't fret. We've got some tips for you to use today.

Reading with Infants and Toddlers

Reading to infants and toddlers promotes language achievement and literacy development. Later on, it will reap achievement in reading comprehension and overall success in school.

- At this age, it technically doesn't matter if you are reading a cookbook or magazine article. What does matter is exposing your little one to vocabulary and a connection to print. Your Infant and toddler responds to the colorful illustrations, the fluctuation in your voice and especially rhyming words.
- Cuddle together in a comfortable setting, place the book in front of her, and read aloud the title and author. As you read through the book, let her touch the pages, encouraging respect for the written word by instructing her not to bite or tear it.
- Talk with your baby about what you are reading. Put yourself into the story by using funny voices, stopping to point out things in the illustrations and allowing him to touch pictures as you go.
- Remember that your child's attention span is short, so it's okay to stop reading if he becomes



distracted or fussy. Don't be afraid to start the story and finish it later.

Reading with Young Children

As your child gets older and more exposed to books, let him choose the title he wants you to read. You may find that he wants to read the same book over and over, even if he's outgrown it. While this might be boring for you, the repetition and familiarity of the story, including the child helping tell it or "read" it as he gets older, is part of the magic.

- Let your child hold the book. As you look at the cover, ask her what she thinks the story is about.
- As you read, discuss things that your child may have in common with the characters or setting of the story.
- Change your voice to fit the mood or action. Move your finger under the words as you read them.
- Talk about the pictures. Ask him to describe the illustrations. Explain words and phrases as you read. Allow him to ask questions or make comments.
- Let your child "read" the book to you. It may be a short story or a long imaginative tale. Listen and ask questions to encourage creativity.



*Some material used by permission and adapted from **The Tradition of Reading During the Holidays** by Cathy P. Miller, President, TLA, Inc. Home of the Literacy Ambassador® 256-883-7005 cathymiller@comcast.net www.readingisforeveryone.org*

*Some material adapted from **Reading is Fundamental** at www.rif.org*

Choosing Books for Children of All Ages

Try out different books to see which one appeals to your child.

As soon as your child starts showing preference for one over another, let him choose his own book.

Guide your child to books that are related to his own interests.

Visit the library frequently and get to know the librarian, who can be a great resource.

Unless requested by her teacher, if your child does not like a book, put it away. Reading is a fun time to share, not a time to fight.

Reading with Tweens and Teens

Today's tweens and teens are over-stimulated by video games and TV and the thought of reading a book for pleasure might leave them disinterested. This doesn't mean they have to stop reading altogether. There are plenty of ways to keep reading beyond the books.

- Tune into the interests your child has. If he loves a particular sport, provide ways for him to learn more about it through articles, brochures, tip sheets and reviews. Magazines and newspapers often have sections geared toward your child and are generally written from a kid's point of view. He can identify with the tone and subject matter of magazines that you consider "fluffy."
- With all of the immediate access, kids are more in tune with music than ever. Let a music-obsessed child read lyrics to her favorite music. Many CD liners provide the lyrics or she can search online. While there, she can also read about the artist, songwriter and behind the scene info on the video.
- Tweens and Teens are striving for independence, yet still want to be connected to their families. Let her see you reading your favorite book and explain why it's important to you. Create a tradition of exchanging books with each other (sharing only books that are appropriate reading for her). This will give you insight into her world while nurturing her desire for connection.
- Trends are revealing an increased interest in local and national events among this age. Share editorials and newspaper articles, discussing them after.
- Tweens and teens are thinking about what they will do in their lives-college, careers, their future families. Lead him to books that introduce a wide range of opportunities and experiences.
- Rather than picking a movie based on its packaging, take your child to the rental store and read the story description on the back. Challenge her to find a good story based on the plot rather than the marketing.

If you begin reading to your child when he is young, he is much more likely to become a reader himself. If you missed out on reading to your child when he was young, it's not too late. One way to encourage any age child to read, is to let him see you reading for pleasure often. By reading with your child, not only will you give him a bright future in his education, but you'll create connections that will last a lifetime.

