

# Secrets for Making Children *Want* to Read



**R**eadng is the foundation of a successful education. Children improve this all-important ability by reading, reading and reading some more.

Children who enjoy reading achieve at higher levels in school and on standardized tests. Yet many children spend fewer than two hours a week reading. And at the same time, many are averaging six to nine hours of screen time per day.

Experts say that kids who spend just 30 minutes a day reading books, articles and other materials are more likely to become good readers and do better in school. Here are some tips that can help you motivate your child to *want* to read.

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## Keep Track!

**D**o you know how much time you and your child read each week? Keep track of your activities for a week, then talk about what you've charted. Is your family watching more television than you'd like? Is your child spending a lot of time online? Does reading seem to be a lower priority than other activities?

Many families have reading time every day. Sometimes, everyone can read silently. Other times, you can read aloud with your child. Or your child can read aloud to you.



## You Set the Example

**C**hildren who see their parents reading usually grow up to be readers themselves. This is one of those times when actions really *do* speak louder than words. Talk with your child about *why* you're reading—for information, to check out something you think you know—or just for fun.

## Make Reading Easy, Fun

**I**f a digital device is easy to reach, but books are on a high shelf, you can guess how your kids will spend their time. Make sure reading materials are easy to grab.

Reading in unusual places also adds to the fun. Look for unusual places children can read. You might consider:

- **Outside, under a shady tree.** In a sandbox or hammock. At a nearby park.
- **Under a tent** made by tossing a sheet over a clothesline or table.
- **In the car** during road trips or traffic delays. Keep books and audiobooks in your car.
- **Sitting on a blanket** spread on the floor for an indoor reading picnic.



## 5 Tips on Reading Aloud

**R**eadng aloud to children of all ages is one of the best ways to help them develop a love of books. It can also be a special way to spend time with your child.

Here are five tips from Jim Trelease, author of *The Read-Aloud Handbook*, for making read-aloud time successful:

- 1 Set aside time each day to read to your child.** For many families, a bedtime story is the perfect ending to a busy day.
- 2 Mix things up!** Take turns deciding what to read. When it's your turn, choose a wide variety of reading materials, including fiction, nonfiction and poetry.
- 3 Ask and answer questions.** Keep your child involved by asking questions as you read, and stop to answer any questions your child asks you.
- 4 Enjoy illustrations.** If a book has pictures, sit so your child can see them as you read. Allow time for your child to explore the pictures.
- 5 Eliminate distractions.** Silence and put away phones and turn off the TV while you read to your child.

## Books Make Idle Time Productive

**W**hen children are bored, they may automatically reach for a snack or the remote control. Keep interesting books on hand, and you'll encourage your child to combat boredom by reading instead. If your child fills idle time by getting lost in a book, it may be less tempting to snack between meals or have screen time.

You can use the same idea about idle time to motivate your child, too. When your child *just can't wait* to get back to a good book, schoolwork and chores will get done promptly—and screen time will decrease.

You know your child better than anyone. No matter what your child's interest, you can find exciting books on the subject.

## Does Your Child See Well?

**O**ne reason some children do not like reading—and do poorly in school—is that they have vision problems. Ask your family doctor, school counselor or school nurse to recommend someone to test your child's vision regularly.



## Check Out Your Library

**O**ne of the best ways to encourage your child to read is to visit the public library on a regular basis. Here are some tips:

- **Start early.** Make sure your child has a library card. Try to visit the library weekly.
- **Learn what's available.** Some libraries offer story hours for younger children and book clubs for older ones. Others sponsor reading contests. Most have computers available for use. Still others lend audiobooks. Challenge your child to learn as much as possible about what the library has to offer.
- **Get to know your librarian.** If you want to find a book on a special subject ... or learn more about an author ... or track down a missing fact ... your librarian can help.



Of all the things you can do to reinforce learning, helping your children learn to love reading may be the most important. Get your children "hooked on books" and you'll help them succeed in school—and in life!

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