

Tips to Encourage Reading at Home

1. "Read me a story!"

Whether snuggled under the covers with peanut-butter sandwiches, or following along with a book on tape while on a road trip, reading together is a powerful tool in motivating your child to read. Use silly voices, laugh out loud at the funny parts, and show your child how much you enjoy reading.

2. Keep it fun, for everyone

If children are going to enjoy reading, the experience has to be enjoyable. Try saying, "We get to start our reading time! Let's grab our favorite books and get comfy!" After reading, ask your child questions about his/her book: What was your favorite part? Do you like the characters? Why or why not? Were there any parts that were confusing? How would you change the story?

3. "I want *that one*!"

Reading should be a choice, not a chore. Children should be given lots of opportunities to choose their own books: whether at the library, at a bookstore or at Goodwill.

Comics or joke books may not be your first choice to boost literacy, but the reality is they can be very motivating. Don't worry that these texts may not be substantial enough. They can help kids understand some fundamentals, like how events take place in a sequence and how stories are laid out. They also help build vocabulary and show that books can be visually appealing. Once your child is comfortable with the experience of reading, you can encourage other literature selections with a variety of challenging content.

Sometimes electronic books (e-books) can help get reluctant readers reading. When your son or daughter becomes interested in a book, regardless of the format, help make connections between the story and your child's own life. Start conversations that will build a love of reading and learning.

5. Read and reread.

Many kids reach for the same books over and over again. That's not only okay, it's a good thing! Through repetition, children learn the text and eventually read it with ease and confidence. Each new reading of the book also may help them notice something new and understand the story a little better. And that positive experience can inspire children to give new books a try.

6. Keep books everywhere!

On bookshelves, in baskets in every room, in your car, in your purse, in their backpacks...make it REALLY easy to find a good book to read wherever you are!

7. Hey, everyone! What time is it?

Regardless of how motivated your child is, he or she will not read if there isn't any time to do so. Carve time out of the busy day and dedicate it to reading, both together and on your own. By setting aside specific times, rather than trying to squeeze it in between soccer and dance lessons, you send the message that reading is an important activity, and something your child will enjoy.