

Reading aloud to your child is still important



Even though your child may be able to read on his own, it doesn't mean you should stop reading aloud with him! When you read stories that are slightly above his reading level, you expose your child to new vocabulary and ideas. It stretches his imagination and his understanding of the world.

To make reading aloud to your child a positive learning experience:

- **Make it a routine.** Children look forward to having special time with their parents. Plus, once you're both hooked on a book, you both will be looking forward to what comes next!
- **Be willing to repeat books.** Repetition helps children learn, especially when it's a favorite book. What's more, you know your child will like it!



- **Take your time.** Stop to talk about what you've read and make predictions.
- **Have conversations.** Ask questions, but don't quiz your child. Give your child time to think and answer thoughtfully.
- **Read with enthusiasm and expression.** Your child will be hooked on your reading!
- **Choose a variety of materials,** such as picture books, chapter books or magazines, that appeal to both you and your child.

Add some mystery to family read-alouds



Reading a thrilling detective novel aloud can keep your child wanting to hear more. Find an age-appropriate mystery at the library, and spend some time each night reading a chapter or two aloud.

Then, to make the mystery even more engaging:

- **Challenge everyone in the family to “out-detect”** the detectives in the story. Can anyone solve the mystery before the characters do?
- **Encourage each family member to become** one of the characters. You might even wear simple costumes. (A great way to do this is to look for old hats or other items at thrift stores or garage sales.) Have that person try to get inside the head of the character and think about their traits, motive and reactions. What is their character’s alibi? Do they think their



character could have committed the crime? Why or why not?

- **Just before reading the last chapter,** let each person tell their character’s side of the story. One by one, characters state their alibis or their confessions. After you’ve heard from all the characters, switch roles. Pretend you’re detectives. Take turns trying to solve the crime. Who did it? Vote on your family’s prediction. Were you right?

Encourage your child to read by making it fun



Some children seem to have their noses constantly in a book. But other children haven't yet discovered the joy of reading.

Here are some fun things you can do with your child to create more enjoyable experiences while he reads:

- **Find high-interest books.** From scary stories to adventures, there are books that appeal to every child's taste. Ask your librarian or your child's teacher for recommendations of titles that he may like.
- **Track the books your child reads.** Create a sticker chart and add a sticker for each book your child completes. Or, encourage him to make a paper chain—one link for each book. Can he make a chain long enough to stretch around his entire room? The whole house?



- **Listen to audiobooks.** There are wonderful recordings of books available at most public libraries. Sometimes hearing the words to a book can encourage a child to go back and read it later.
- **Go on a library scavenger hunt.** Make a list of questions that require your child to use different books to find the answers, such as the average temperature at Disney World or how many books there are about Peru.

Spread reading material around your home



When reading materials are easy to access, children are more likely to pick something up and start reading. Make your home one where books and magazines at your child's reading level are plentiful everywhere.

To get your child reading:

- **Always have reading material on hand.** Make library visits a regular family activity, and encourage your child to check out several books and magazines with each visit. You can also keep an eye out for great deals on used books at library fundraisers, yard sales and thrift stores.
- **Organize reading materials in containers,** such as baskets or magazine racks. These can fit in small spaces: next to beds, couches and tables—even on a kitchen shelf. The more opportunities



your child has to read, the better. Include graphic novels, comics and other items your child will like.

- **Create a special reading nook.** This can be in your child's bedroom, on a pillow in the living room or anywhere she finds a special spot. Make sure it's a cozy place with good lighting. And, of course, keep lots of books handy!

Learning doesn't end when the book does!



Some of the best reading times take place after you've closed the book. Once your child has finished some reading, either on his own or with you, you can extend the learning and boost his reading skills.

To help your child continue learning and processing a book he has read, ask him to:

- **Tell you the story** in his own words.
- **Explain what he would do** if he were in the story. What would he have done in Hugo's place in *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*? Who would he like to be in *The Magic Treehouse* series? You can always follow up questions by asking, "Why?"
- **Discuss what he liked** and what he didn't like. Why?
- **Make connections** to his own life. Has he ever felt the way one of the characters did in the book? What made him feel that way?



- **Think about different points of view.** How would a fairy tale be different if told from the Big Bad Wolf's perspective?
- **Talk about lessons** he has learned from the book. For example, what did he learn about accepting people with differences from *Wonder*?
- **Find locations where books are set.** Get out maps or a globe. Find the countries or cities mentioned in favorite books.

Help your child develop important writing skills



Reading and writing go hand in hand. Improving your child's writing skills will also help her with her reading. And when your child enjoys writing, she'll enjoy reading more, too!

To help make writing special and fun for your child, you can:

- **Give her a writer's tools.** Provide more than the standard school supplies of lined looseleaf and pencils. Stock special paper and pencils and pens that write in different colors and widths.
- **Encourage your child to keep a diary or journal.** This is a unique way of telling your child, "I believe you are a writer. What you have to say is important."
- **Help her make personalized stationary.** Show her how to make stationary on a computer or decorate the front of blank notecards. This is a first step in



encouraging a tradition of writing thank-you notes and letters to relatives.

- **Exchange notes with your child.** Put notes of thanks and praise in her lunch box. Invite her to surprise you with notes of her own.
- **Display her writing** on a family bulletin board or on the refrigerator.
- **Surround your child with good examples.** Visit the library often and check out books written by talented writers.