

FOR THE LOVE OF READING

Easy ways to enhance parent-child book time

Reading aloud to your children helps them develop many skills including listening, critical thinking, and inspiring imagination - just to name a few.



What do Chelsea Clinton, Caroline Kennedy and Jenna Bush have in common? They all had powerful mothers who read aloud to them! Reading to children is not just a bonding activity but also an essential part of childrearing. It prepares the child for future success in learning and reading.

Why read aloud? Because in this simple activity the child develops many skills: listening, developing vocabulary, critical thinking, and inspiring imagination - just to name a few. Perhaps more importantly, when done daily, reading aloud promotes attachment between parent and child, a critical part of a child's development. Reading aloud every day to your child -

by Lynne Waithe,
Read To Me International

even for only 10 to 20 minutes - can make a huge difference in his or her language and vocabulary development. A child can't help but feel special when sitting in close proximity with a parent, snuggled with a book between them.

Follow these tips to help make reading one of your child's favorite activities.

Read before you read aloud.

Don't assume that you can read any book you pick up. You'd be surprised how sophisticated the vocabulary can be in

some picture books. You'll want to be sure you know the meanings of the words you read and how to pronounce them. Besides, pre-reading your book allows you to "hear" your inner voice reading the story, allowing you to know what voices to use, when to slow down, and when to raise your voice.

"Sell" the book before reading it.

Share an experience or a thought that will lead into the story to pique your child's interest. For example, when sharing No David by David Shannon,

you might say, "When I saw this book, it reminded me of your Uncle Tom when he was a little boy. In this story, David is always giving his mom a hard time with his naughty little pranks. Let's

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see if you know a boy like the David in this story." Your introduction will also encourage your child to talk to you about the story, helping to develop his or her language skills.

Always introduce the title, author, and illustrator.

Introducing who wrote and illustrated the book teaches your child that different authors and different illustrators have different styles, which will result in your child's becoming a more discriminate listener and art critic. When reading a picture book, have your child guess what the story is about by looking at the cover. This teaches your child to predict and look for clues in the story, an important element of reading and critical thinking.

Read with expression.

Ham it up! Enunciate your words carefully. Research shows that people listen more carefully to speakers when they use a clear, audible voice and speak with precision. Use different voices for different characters and bring the story alive. Read at varying tempo and volume in order to set the right tone and mood. And don't forget that children love it when grown ups get silly sometimes. Just have fun reading with your child!

Follow up with an activity that relates to the story.

Bake gingerbread cookies after reading The Gingerbread Man by Jim Aylesworth. Write a letter to Grandma or plant some seeds in hand-made planters after reading The Gardener by Sarah Stewart. Visit the elderly and "talk story" with them after reading Mem Fox's Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge. By making the read-aloud experience fun, your child will look forward to reading, inspiring a lifelong love of books and stories.



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