

## 6 Ways to Keep Kids Reading

How do you keep kids reading? It is an important question as we find many kids can read but they are choosing not to. Illiteracy, or not being able to read, is a big problem for many Americans but “alliteracy,” or choosing not to read, can also be detrimental. Here are some ideas to promote reading as a lifelong habit:



**Read a book series** - yes, it may seem that all the Junie B. Jones or the Nate the Great books are the same, but they help build confident readers. The characters become familiar so readers know what to expect. Remember reading Nancy Drew books or the Little House on the Prairie series? These are still good reads for kids and help a reader get into a new book quickly because they have some background knowledge about the setting and characters from the previous books. Devouring a dozen of the same type books is fine – much healthier than other obsessions we might have. A good book makes you want more when you are finished reading and book series provide that.



**Read for information** – If your kid is into motocross, he will devour books and magazines about the sport. Find something your kid is passionate about – or help to start a passion – and supply reading materials about the activity. Your kid becomes an expert on the topic – and you become a hero!!

Many kids prefer reading information text to fiction. Reading information text is an important skill to develop in the early grades; by time kids are in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, they are reading more info text than fiction books and by 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the vast majority of reading is info text (remember those giant history books? They may be online but there is still a lot of reading assigned). Kids

need to be able to find information through the use of the table of contents or an index. They can use headlines in the text to zero in on their interests and just read sections. Oftentimes, information books are not read straight through but there are information-type storybooks that provide a storyline that makes the text more readable (remember the Magic School Bus?). Be sure to include information text in your daily read alouds!



**Limit screen time.** You know this and you try. You can't eliminate it because so much of our social lives and activities depend on knowing about things happening online. The key is setting limits (for TV, video games, Internet, Facebook) and having alternatives. Maybe you have cut cable and now are getting your news only through your news feed – this just gets you looking more at your handheld screens than the big screen TV and the news is not a communal activity; when you do watch the news together, you can be explaining things that your child does not understand (but it is quite understandable that you do not want your kids exposed to what's on the news these days). Kids can get sucked into their screens as much as

you can. Be an example and set limits on your screen time as well. Make spaces and times where no screens are allowed – especially for family meals. Look at Facebook after the kids have gone to bed.



**Hook 'em with comic books!** You might have been that kid who hid comic books from your parents and read them under the covers with a flashlight – now be that parent who not only allows this but encourages it. Comic books and graphic novels can engage readers in ways that printed text alone cannot. From superheroes to historical fiction to illustrated classics, there are graphic novels and comic books for all ages. And admit it, you like 'em too – otherwise there would not be so many versions of Batman movies made!



**Read with a buddy** – Reading with a friend can make a book more enjoyable. A book buddy can be a friend, a parent, a sibling, a grandparent, a pet – even a stuffed animal. Take turns reading passages as you buddy read a favorite or new book.

**Organize a book club** – Get several of those book buddies together for a fun social time. Together with your child, invite 3-4 friends to meet at your house. As a group decide on the books everyone wants to read. The books can be purchased through book offers through the school (those weekly inserts in your kid's folder) or online sources or just borrowed from the library (multiple copies can be had through the library network system). Teachers might be able to supply a reading group with the same book to read outside of class time. Book clubs work well when everyone reads the book so just read during the book club time. Nobody feels left out if they don't remember to read the book!



**If your child has difficulties with reading or has become resistant to reading,** it might help to get a tutor, such as an experienced reading teacher who can bring many different ways to address the needs of your child. In-person, one-on-one tutoring that addresses your child's needs can help get your child on the right track and begin a lifelong love of reading!

Dr. Judie Harrington, an experienced college professor, elementary teacher, and reading teacher, provides the one-on-one attention that your child needs. Conveniently located, NRICH Tutoring has a comfortable environment as well as the resources for hands-on, minds-on learning

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