

6 Ways to Get Kids Reading

How can you help your child to love reading? Here are some ways that help to grow good readers.



Read with your kids every day – and not just when they are little! Have a family reading time where family members take turns reading. Picture books are great for young and old. You might get tired of reading *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* but your child loves it! As they get older, reading a novel that your kids can't read on their own yet will teach them to listen, to create images in their minds, and to fall in love with books. Share the classics like *Peter Pan*, *Winnie the Pooh*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and *Oliver Twist*, as well as newer novels like *Holes*, *The Westing Game*, and *M.C. Higgins the Great* to help them develop the joy of language.



Let your kids see you read – and not just your iPhone! When kids see adults reading and enjoying it, they learn that reading is important and valued. Get a morning paper at your house and share the stories you come across in it. Do you remember reading the funnies when you were a kid? Your kids will enjoy them, too! You can get the paper online but there is something more engaging about the paper version. Have your kids help with your grocery list by looking at the food store circulars and clipping coupons for good deals. All of these things develop literacy skills!



Bring a book when you go out – and you will always have something to keep the kids occupied. Waiting in the doctor's office, the hair salon, or the car repair shop – all are easier to deal with when you have a good book! Bring an assortment for the littles and let them make their choices. For older kids, talking about books over croissants and tea at the local café can build your teen's understanding of how to read more mindfully. You can connect as you share your insights and listen to theirs.



Linger at the library – Go to the library often and spend time there browsing, not just picking out a couple books and leaving. Your kids may pick out more books – maybe even get engrossed in something completely new. Librarians can make book suggestions and you can order books from other libraries if you cannot find the book you want locally. The library often has programs and activities for kids to join in as well. Your library card is your ticket to great books of all types, and it's free!



Make a reading nook in your home. Shelves and baskets for books create organization while comfy seating helps make a welcoming retreat. Make a place just for reading with pillows, stuffed animals, and blankets for snuggling with a good book – both with a parent and independently. Besides, where else are you going to put those bean bag chairs you’ve had since college and have them look good? Include books for all ages and purposes – be sure to have non-fiction and information books about things your children are interested in. You’ll hook ‘em quickly with books about things they like – horses, insects, space, sports – the list is endless! You can increase your book collection through used books stores, thrift shops, and garage sales. And be sure to give books as gifts!



Play board games – they help build skills across the board 😊: reading, speaking, listening, math, and social skills. Let your child read the directions for the game and be the arbitrator of the rules. If the game involves reading, kids learn to read for a purpose and to follow directions. Word games like Scrabble and Bananas help your child play with words and build vocabulary. If the game involves dice and keeping score, math comes into play. Card games also involve math and strategy, as well as “reading” the other people playing (Uncle Joe is bluffing when he makes a little smirk). When kids follow the little cards involved in Monopoly or make guesses in Clue, they are using literacy skills with a purpose. Watch out, though, you might get sucked into a board game marathon!

Reading to your child is the number one way to grow a reader! Make it a ritual in your home and be sure to continue after your child is reading on their own – whoops, I’m repeating myself – but this needs to be reinforced. Too many parents stop reading to their kids once they get in school, thinking that the only reading their child needs to do is what they are learning in school. However, they need to be stretched and they need to hear good literature (which is not usually the case with the easy readers in the early years – *The Cat on the Mat* is great for beginning readers but not such great literature).

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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