

MOTIVATING KIDS TO READ:  
Children Who Can Read, But Don't...



Studies show what common sense tells us: the more kids read, the better they read and the more pleasure they get out of reading.

Unfortunately, the reverse also holds true: children who read very little usually have poor reading skills. Reading is a struggle for them, and they avoid it whenever possible.

Is there anything that you can do to encourage your children to read? First, it's helpful to know your child's reasons for not liking or wanting to read. These reasons can help you decide what will work best in motivating your child to discover or rediscover how much fun reading can be.

**Why Some Kids Don't Like to Read**

Do any of these statements have a familiar ring? They are the reasons children frequently give for not reading:

- **It's boring.** Don't despair if your children have this response to reading that is assigned at school. You can expose them to another kind of reading at home that is related to their interests.
- **I don't have the time.** Kids are busy. School, friends, sports, homework, television, and chores all compete for their time. Some children need your help in rearranging their schedules to make time for reading.
- **It's too hard.** For some children, reading is a slow, difficult process. If your child is having a hard time reading, talk with his or her reading teacher. Ask about how you can find interesting books and materials written at a level that matches your child's reading ability.
- **It's not important.** Often children don't appreciate how reading can be purposeful or relevant to their lives. Parents can take it upon themselves to find reading materials on subjects that do matter to their kids.

- **It's no fun.** For some children, especially those who have difficulty reading, books cause anxiety. Even for children with strong reading skills, pressure from school and home that emphasize reading for performance can make reading seem like a chore. Our advice: take the pressure off reading so that your children can enjoy it.

If you or someone else in your family has had problems reading, there is a greater likelihood that your children will experience these difficulties too. Speak to a reading teacher if you have reason to suspect a learning problem. Early testing administered at your child's school can identify a learning disability and alert the school to your child's need for special teaching.

### What Won't Work

Parents have told us that the following tactics only strengthen a child's resistance to reading:

- **Nagging.** Avoid lecturing about the value of reading and hounding a child who is not reading. Your child will only resent it.
- **Bribing.** While there's nothing wrong with rewarding your child's reading efforts, you don't want your youngster to expect a prize after finishing every book. Whenever possible, offer another book or magazine (your child's choice) along with words of praise. You can give other meaningful rewards on occasion, but offer them less and less frequently. In time, your child will experience reading as its own reward.
- **Judging your child's performance.** Separate school performance from reading for pleasure. Helping your child enjoy reading is a worthwhile goal in itself.
- **Criticizing your child's choices.** Reading almost anything is better than reading nothing. Although you may feel your child is choosing books that are too easy or that treat subjects too lightly, hide your disappointment. Reading at any level is valuable practice, and successful reading helps build confidence as well as reading skills. If your differences are simply a matter of personal taste, respect your child's right to his or her own preferences.
- **Setting unrealistic goals.** Look for small signs of progress rather than dramatic changes in your child's reading habits. Don't expect a reluctant reader to finish a book overnight. Maybe over the next week, with your gentle encouragement.
- **Making a big deal about reading.** Don't turn reading into a campaign. Under pressure, children may read only to please their parents rather than themselves, or they may turn around and refuse to read altogether.

### 20 Ways to Encourage Reading

We've told you why some kids don't like to read and what other parents believe will not succeed in changing their minds. Now for some ways to turn a young reader's reluctance into enthusiasm:

1. Scout for things your children might like to read. Use their interests and hobbies as starting points.
2. Leave all sorts of reading materials including books, magazines, and colorful catalogs in conspicuous places around your home.
3. Notice what attracts your children's attention, even if they only look at the pictures. Then build on that interest; read a short selection aloud, or simply bring home more information on subject.

4. Let your children see you reading for pleasure in your spare time.
5. Take your children to the library regularly. Explore the children's section together. Ask a librarian to suggest books and magazines your children might enjoy.
6. Present reading as an activity with a purpose—a way to gather useful information for, say, making paper airplanes, identifying a doll or stamp in your child's collection, or planning a family trip.
7. Encourage older children to read to their younger brothers and sisters. Older children enjoy showing off their skills to an admiring audience.
8. Play games that are reading-related. Check your closet for spelling games played with letter tiles or dice, or board games that require players to read spaces, cards, and directions.
9. Perhaps over dinner, while you're running errands, or in another informal setting, share your reactions to things you read, and encourage your children to do likewise.
10. Set aside a regular time for reading in your family, independent of schoolwork—the 20 minutes before lights out, just after dinner, or whatever fits into your household schedule. As little as 10 minutes of free reading a day can help improve your child's skills and habits.
11. Read aloud to your child, especially a child who is discouraged by his or her own poor reading skills. The pleasure of listening to you read, rather than struggling alone, may restore your child's initial enthusiasm for books and reading.
12. Encourage your child to read aloud to you an exciting passage in a book, an interesting tidbit in the newspaper, or a joke in a joke book. When children read aloud, don't feel they have to get every word right. Even good readers skip or mispronounce words now and then.
13. On gift-giving occasions, give books and magazines based on your child's current interests.
14. Set aside a special place for children to keep their own books.
15. Introduce the bookmark. Remind your youngster that you don't have to finish a book in one sitting; you can stop after a few pages, or a chapter, and pick up where you left off at another time. Don't try to persuade your child to finish a book he or she doesn't like. Recommend putting the book aside and trying another.
16. Treat your children to an evening of laughter and entertainment featuring books! Many children (parents, too) regard reading as a serious activity. A joke book, a story told in riddles, or a funny passage read aloud can reveal another side of reading.

17. Extend your child's positive reading experiences. For example, if your youngster enjoyed a book about dinosaurs, follow up with a visit to a natural history museum.

18. Offer other special incentives to encourage your child's reading. Allow your youngster to stay up an extra 15 minutes to finish a chapter; promise to take your child to see a movie after he or she has finished the book on which it was based; relieve your child of a regular chore to free up time for reading.

19. Limit your children's television viewing in an effort to make time for other activities, such as reading. But never use TV as a reward for reading, or a punishment for not reading.

20. Not all reading takes place between the covers of a book. What about menus, road signs, food labels, and sheet music? Take advantage of countless spur-of-the-moment opportunities for reading during the course of your family's busy day.

**Source:** RIF Parent Guide Brochure.

## 20 Ways for Parents to Encourage Reading

— Reading Is Fundamental  
Updated on Jul 26, 2007

### **The following are some ways to turn a young reader's reluctance into enthusiasm:**

1. Scout for things your children might like to read. Use their interests and hobbies as starting points.
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3. Notice what attracts your children's attention, even if they only look at the pictures. Then build on that interest; read a short selection aloud, or simply bring home more information on the same subject.
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5. Take your children to the library regularly. Explore the children's section together. Ask a librarian to suggest books and magazines your children might enjoy.
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8. Play games that are reading-related. Check your closet for spelling games played with letter tiles or dice, or board games that require players to read spaces, cards, and directions.
9. Perhaps over dinner, while you're running errands, or in another informal setting, share your reactions to things you read, and encourage your children to do likewise.

- 10.** Set aside a regular time for reading in your family, independent of schoolwork, the 20 minutes before lights out, just after dinner, or whatever fits into your household schedule. As little as 10 minutes of free reading a day can help improve your child's skills and habits.
- 11.** Read aloud to your child, especially a child who is discouraged by his or her own poor reading skills. The pleasure of listening to you read, rather than struggling alone, may restore your child's initial enthusiasm for books and reading.
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- 20.** Not all reading takes place between the covers of a book. What about menus, road signs, food labels, and sheet music? Take advantage of countless spur-of-the-moment opportunities for reading during the course of your family's busy day.

All of these methods may not work with every student, but some may be the key for some students. These are geared toward parents, but apply well to teachers. But don't take our word for it; check out this [encouraging kids to read PowerPoint template](#) that reinforces what we are asserting on this page. Great minds think alike (and idiots seldom differ). We're constantly scouring the public domain for material

you might find useful, so don't be surprised to find other PowerPoints referenced here.

1. Research on reading generally agrees that the most critical aspect of reading is how a child feels about reading. Positive reinforcement from parents and teachers helps. Children need to know that adults in their lives care about reading.
2. Research also agrees that in most cases, forcing a child to read will yield no positive results. Most children should not be REQUIRED to read each day, especially if it's forced reading for pleasure. Some families find that having a reading time when the whole family reads works. Even if the child is reluctant, he knows that the time is reserved for reading. Let him choose to read light material, if nothing else.
3. A book allowance is a good idea. In addition to whatever other allowance a child may receive, provide an allowance for books. Even if the allowance allows for the purchase of one paperback book or magazine a week, you've helped encourage reading.
4. Regular visits to a good magazine rack, coupled with purchases, provide reading material. Parents will probably want to exercise some judgment on reading purchases, but magazines your child shows some interest in and which you approve are a good way to provide material and encourage reading.
5. Subscriptions to a magazine or magazines for your child or student are a good idea. There's a certain amount of excitement in "ownership" and a for many students it's very exciting to receive mail.
6. Model reading. Children who see their parents reading, often become readers and come to accept that reading is a matter-of-fact activity.
7. If your child is willing, whatever his or her age, don't be afraid to read aloud. Reading to children is one of the best ways to encourage interest in reading. Older brothers and sisters can read to younger children. If you're child is too old to be read to (some would suggest that no one is too old to be read to), just read articles aloud from the newspaper from time to time.
8. Establish a place in the child's room for his or her books. A feeling of ownership, again, is important.
9. Schedule regular family visits to the library--even if your child doesn't seem interested in taking out books.

10. Introduce your child to the librarian. Librarians are anxious to help children look for interesting reading material. Make sure your child knows the school librarian too.
11. By all means recommend books to your child. Tell the child how difficult the books are (or are not) and let the child decide if he or she wants to read them.
12. If your child starts a book and doesn't want to finish it -- ok. Hasn't that happened to you? Some advice I've heard recommends that you abandon books that don't "grab" you in the first 60 pages... because life is too short. My threshold is lower than 60 pages.
13. Buy books for yourself and let your children know you do it.
14. If your child decides to read something to YOU...be patient and let him or her read to you.
15. Don't forget book browsing on the World Wide web. Try Amazon.com as a great starting point.
16. You might find that kids will read pages on the world wide web. Help them find pages with content that fits their own personal interests.
17. It's important that children have hobbies or interests. Help your children develop such interests and make sure they have or seek reading material about their interests.
18. Praise your child for his or her reading when appropriate. For example, praise the child when a long or difficult book is completed.
19. When a topic of interest develops which involves the whole family--an upcoming trip or vacation, for example--bring home some books on the topic to share with the family.
20. Attend used book sales at libraries and other places where good books can be had inexpensively.
21. Discuss with your child any book he or she is reading for a class at school. Read the book yourself.
22. When you and your child are working on something together have him or her read the directions. Many models and construction kits turn out better when a child reads the instructions aloud.
23. Discuss ideas in books your child reads. For that matter, where appropriate, discuss ideas in books you read. For that matter, read the books your children read.

24. Display good books somewhere in your home. Let children know that books have an important place in the home. And don't limit the books to a few essentials...have a generous selection of a wide variety of books.
25. Look for computer programs which encourage reading.
26. Check out text adventure games...an old computer game genre which required a lot of reading and thinking. A search on "text adventure games" on a major World Wide Web search program should yield many choices. Check the Creative Teaching Links page for good places to look.
27. Have your child put his name in his books. Ownership is important! Some parents even recommend bookplates or custom bookplates.
28. Help your child develop a non-sports hobby. Then provide him with books on the hobby. Hobbies help develop curiosity.



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25. Look for computer programs which encourage reading.
26. Check out text adventure games...an old computer game genre which required a lot of reading and thinking. A search on "text adventure games" on a major World Wide Web search program should yield many choices. Check the Creative Teaching Links page for good places to look.
27. Have your child put his name in his books. Ownership is important! Some parents even recommend bookplates or custom bookplates.
28. Help your child develop a non-sports hobby. Then provide him with books on the hobby. Hobbies help develop curiosity.

## Helping Struggling Readers

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Did you know that learning to read is a challenge for almost 40 percent of kids? The good news is that with early help, most reading problems can be prevented. The bad news is that nearly half of all parents who notice their child having trouble wait a year or more before getting help. Unfortunately, the older a child is, the more difficult it is to teach him or her to read. If a child can't read well by the end of third grade, odds are that he or she will never catch up. And the effects of falling behind and feeling like a failure can be devastating.

Early identification is crucial. Please, if you suspect a problem, don't hesitate. Learn about reading difficulties, get your child assessed, find out what you can do to help your struggling reader, and don't give up!

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# Tips for Encouraging Kids to Read

## 1. "Read me a story!"

Nearly every suggestion sent in by our tip-sters had this message at its core. 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.

## 2. Beyond books

Our tip-sters were quick to point out that reading material comes in many different shapes and sizes, some of which may be more accessible to a new reader. Video games, magazines, and comic books all provide opportunities for reading practice. Other suggestions for sneaking under a wary child's reading radar include playing board games that involve written instructions, corresponding with a pen pal, and turning on the closed captioning on your television. To illustrate the practical side of reading, have your child help you with the grocery list, or leave reminder notes for your child to discover throughout the day.

## 3. Keep it fun, for everyone

Another message that came through loud and clear was that if kids are going to enjoy reading, the experience has to be enjoyable. As you read with your children, keep them involved by asking questions about the story, and let them fill in the blanks. You can also create activities related to the stories you're reading. In one household, reading *Little House on the Prairie* prompted lively games of "wagon-train" and discussions about life on the frontier. Another family likes to create mini-plays, acting out the stories they read. While her grandson "helps" in the garden, one grandmother spells words for him to write out using a muddy stick. Once the word is complete, the two of them sound it out together, wipe the word away, then move onto the next. This reading game keeps her grandson occupied for hours.

## 4. "Look at what I did!"

Another successful approach to motivating your child is to use some sort of visible record of achievement. A chart or graph that marks the number of books a child has read gives him or her a sense of accomplishment. To spice it up a bit, choose a theme that goes along with your child's interests. One example would be a Reading Olympics, where the child goes for the gold by reading a certain number of books.

A similar method can be used to help expose your child to the wide variety of genres available for exploration. Create a Bingo card or Passport where each space can be filled in by reading a mystery book, or a piece of non-fiction, to give a few examples. Once the goal has been reached, reward your child with something to celebrate his

or her special achievement. It doesn't have to be anything elaborate – one-on-one time with a parent or teacher, or an ice cream cone are suggestions from our tipsters – just something that lets your child know how proud you are of his or her accomplishment.

## 5. "I want *that one!*"

Reading should be a choice, not a chore. Make sure there are a variety of books, magazines, and other materials available for your child to choose from, wherever your child may be. Let your child's interests guide his or her reading choices. While it's fine to make suggestions, don't force your conceptions of what your child should be reading onto your child. And, keep an eye on the reading level of the books your children choose. Let them stretch to the best of their ability, but be ready to help if they get discouraged.

## 6. Something to talk about

Reading doesn't have to stop when you put the book down. Talk to your child about books you've read and books you think he or she might enjoy. Point out similarities between everyday events and stories you have recently read. If your child has a favorite author, help your child write him or her a letter. For a more structured discussion, consider joining, or starting, a parent/child book club.

## 7. Hey, kids! 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.

***How do you define yourself as a reader?*** Are you an avid reader who reads every chance you have outside of work? Or would you rather define yourself as more of a newspaper or magazine reader? Just like us, every one of our students possesses different reading interests. Not every student is realistically going to devour every single Harry Potter book or excitedly head over to your classroom library to peruse the historical fiction books about World War II. Additionally, not every student is going to understand every word he or she reads. Their fluency or prosody may be strong, but their comprehension may be a struggle. Here are some ways you can make reading better for your students and enhance their comprehension in the process:

### **GENRE EXPOSURE / GRAPHIC NOVELS**

First, **expose your students to several genres and styles of literature**. Writers use different tones when they write specific genres, particularly historical fiction. It is interesting to study word choice used in descriptions, dialect, and implied feelings through quotations. Keep your classroom library rich with literature; this year, I have found it particularly useful to organize the books by categories in bins. For those students interested in *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, for example, they have ventured to read other similar

books by searching through the bins of fantasy books. They have also become interested in particular authors; I have heard a few students in conversation saying these exact words, "I want to head over to the Andrew Clements bin because I like his style of writing."

Show your students that there are so many **non-fiction books** that connect to what they are learning in science and social studies. The DK books are superior, as are educational comic books, that illustrate the concepts students are learning:

- [Chester Comix](#)
- [The Graphic Classroom](#)
- [Max Axiom science comic books](#)
- [Tremendous Book- Into the Volcano](#)

[American History Comic Books](#) from Scholastic are some of the greatest books I have ever purchased for my classroom. I particularly enjoy using the comic about the American Revolution after reading the selection with my students in the social studies book. Students come to understand the Boston Tea Party through illustrations and humorous anecdotes.

Besides that, it is imperative that you **read to your students often**. I try to read several chapter books with my students every year. This year, we have already read *Indian in the Cupboard* by Lynne Reid Banks and *No Talking* by Andrew Clements. I try to focus on a variety of genres. Some other choices I focused on last year and may focus on again this year are *Number the Stars* (historical fiction), *The Ghost's Grave* (mystery), and *The Westing Game* (mystery). We will be reading other choices above and beyond these this year as well.

### **BECOME A MAGAZINE COLLECTOR**

The only magazine my classroom subscribes to is Scholastic *Storyworks*, yet I have also acquired issues of *OWL*, *Ranger Rick*, *Boys' Life*, *National Geographic Kids*, *National Geographic Explorer*, and more through Friends of the Library sales, thrift stores, and other teachers. Acquiring magazines in your classroom can help engage students who are not enthusiastic about reading longer books. Additionally, magazines are full of text features that can help your students to become great "previewers."

Scholastic [Storyworks](#), in particular, has online resources that you can use in conjunction with the articles in the magazine. Most recently, my students read the *Yesterday and Today* article comparing Krakatoa and Mount St. Helens. The resources I found [here](#) were superior because they focused on a plethora of vocabulary and comprehension strategies.

### **ESSENTIAL VOCABULARY (Schema and Text Features)**

Two resources in particular have helped me to become a stronger reading teacher over time, *Mosaic of Thought* by Ellin Keene and *Guiding Readers and Writers* by Fountas and Pinnell. After reading those two books in the summer of 2006, I focused on teaching my students about the terms, **schema** and **text features**. Often, I tell my students that they are "**building their schema**" by searching for specific text features before they read. They are asked about titles, illustrations and captions, and any vocabulary that is italicized, bolded or highlighted every time they read. Particularly in science, I tell my students it is important to search for diagrams and flow charts. In social studies, it is most important to search for any maps or timelines. Ask your students from there, "How do these text features help you to determine the main idea or author's purpose of the selection?"

[Readinglady.com](#) is a website that exposed me to several amazing lessons and methods I have used in my classroom since reading the aforementioned books.

### **ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO RESPOND TO LITERATURE IN VARIOUS WAYS**



Encourage students to respond to literature in a variety of ways. Sometimes give them the freedom to make a choice about how they respond to literature. Other times, you may desire for them to do something specific. Encourage your students to become writers, and prove to them that you are a writer as well! Here are some links that focus on ways your students can respond to literature:

- [91 Ways to Respond to Literature](#)
- [58 Literature Responses](#)
- [Read.Write.Think.](#)

#### **WRITE TO PEOPLE AND PLACES**

My students have written to the Department of Tourism in various states and requested materials like brochures and maps. They were immensely excited when they were able to learn more about their "states of choice." You can have your students write to authors, scientists and politicians as well. They can also request information from particular museums, aquariums, state parks and theme parks across the United States. You can at least have your students **try**; the possibilities of who you can write to are endless. You may be extremely surprised at the wonderful materials your students receive through the mail!



### **WHY, OH WHY, OH WHY?**

Are your students curious? All right, that wasn't the greatest question. Students *obviously* are curious about many topics. Have them develop "why" questions and encourage them to type in their questions to Google.com or another search engine to find answers.

### **THE KINESTHETIC APPROACH**









Come up with as many hands-on learning opportunities as you can, time and money permitting, of course. Putting hex nuts in balloons last week to create "spooky sound effects" helped my students to learn about centrifugal force. Also last week when they made atomic slime, they learned about what PVA solutions were as well as polymers. When they dissected owl pellets early last month, they learned about dichotomous keys and classification. We also learned about anthocyanins, chlorophyll, and carotenoids when completing a chromatography experiment. Besides that, we demonstrated "core samples of the Earth" with JELLO. Even if my students forget these precious scientific terms (ehh... they just might have; they are major words for a fourth grade student), I can definitely review the words with them easily because they remember what was neat about each of those experiences.

We also put on a play late in the school year that reviews the history of St. Augustine and build thatched huts that resemble the wigwams of the Timucuan Indians.

#### **ONLINE FIELD TRIPS**

[Taking online field trips](#), too, develops schema.

#### **"ROLE MODEL" IS THE WORD**

Encourage your students to become role models by starting a Book Buddies program with a younger class,

(grades K-2, depending on the age of your students). My students have been Book Buddies with a kindergarten class since the fall of 2005. When we head to Book Buddies once a month (as much as twice a month), my students read a variety of literature, encourage the kindergarten students to write with details, teach them science concepts, and complete hands-on math activities with them. We always try to accompany our lessons with some sort of literature connection. Though my students are not reading books on their level when they read to the younger students, they learn how to be teachers and find ways to help their kindergarten students to understand what they are explaining to them.

### **Children Who Can Read, But Don't...**



Studies show what common sense tells us: the more kids read, the better they read and the more pleasure they get out of reading.

Unfortunately, the reverse also holds true: children who read very little usually have poor reading skills. Reading is a struggle for them, and they avoid it whenever possible.

Is there anything that you can do to encourage your children to read? First, it's helpful to know your child's reasons for not liking or wanting to read. These reasons can help you decide what will work best in motivating your child to discover or rediscover how much fun reading can be.

### **Why Some Kids Don't Like to Read**

Do any of these statements have a familiar ring? They are the reasons children frequently give for not reading:

- **It's boring.** Don't despair if your children have this response to reading that is assigned at school. You can expose them to another kind of reading at home that is related to their interests.
- **I don't have the time.** Kids are busy. School, friends, sports, homework, television, and chores all compete for their time. Some children need your help in rearranging their schedules to make time for reading.
- **It's too hard.** For some children, reading is a slow, difficult process. If your child is having a hard time reading, talk with his or her reading teacher. Ask about how you can find interesting books and materials written at a level that matches your child's reading ability.
- **It's not important.** Often children don't appreciate how reading can be purposeful or relevant to their lives. Parents can take it upon themselves to find reading materials on subjects that do matter to their kids.
- **It's no fun.** For some children, especially those who have difficulty reading, books cause anxiety. Even for children with strong reading skills, pressure from school and home that emphasize reading for performance can make reading seem like a chore. Our advice: take the pressure off reading so that your children can enjoy it.

If you or someone else in your family has had problems reading, there is a greater likelihood that your children will experience these difficulties too. Speak to a reading teacher if you have reason to suspect a learning problem. Early testing administered at your child's school can identify a learning disability and alert the school to your child's need for special teaching.

### **What Won't Work**

Parents have told us that the following tactics only strengthen a child's resistance to reading:

- **Nagging.** Avoid lecturing about the value of reading and hounding a child who is not reading. Your child will only resent it.
- **Bribing.** While there's nothing wrong with rewarding your child's reading efforts, you don't want your youngster to expect a prize after finishing every book. Whenever possible, offer another book or magazine (your child's choice) along with words of praise. You can give other meaningful rewards on occasion, but offer them less and less frequently. In time, your child will experience reading as its own reward.
- **Judging your child's performance.** Separate school performance from reading for pleasure. Helping your child enjoy reading is a worthwhile goal in itself.
- **Criticizing your child's choices.** Reading almost anything is better than reading nothing. Although you may feel your child is choosing books that are too easy or that treat subjects too lightly, hide your disappointment. Reading at any level is valuable practice, and successful reading helps build confidence as well as reading skills. If your differences are simply a matter of personal taste, respect your child's right to his or her own preferences.

- **Setting unrealistic goals.** Look for small signs of progress rather than dramatic changes in your child's reading habits. Don't expect a reluctant reader to finish a book overnight. Maybe over the next week, with your gentle encouragement.
- **Making a big deal about reading.** Don't turn reading into a campaign. Under pressure, children may read only to please their parents rather than themselves, or they may turn around and refuse to read altogether.

### **20 Ways to Encourage Reading**

We've told you why some kids don't like to read and what other parents believe will not succeed in changing their minds. Now for some ways to turn a young reader's reluctance into enthusiasm:

1. Scout for things your children might like to read. Use their interests and hobbies as starting points.
2. Leave all sorts of reading materials including books, magazines, and colorful catalogs in conspicuous places around your home.
3. Notice what attracts your children's attention, even if they only look at the pictures. Then build on that interest; read a short selection aloud, or simply bring home more information on the same subject.
4. Let your children see you reading for pleasure in your spare time.
5. Take your children to the library regularly. Explore the children's section together. Ask a librarian to suggest books and magazines your children might enjoy.
6. Present reading as an activity with a purpose—a way to gather useful information for, say, making paper airplanes, identifying a doll or stamp in your child's collection, or planning a family trip.
7. Encourage older children to read to their younger brothers and sisters. Older children enjoy showing off their skills to an admiring audience.
8. Play games that are reading-related. Check your closet for spelling games played with letter tiles or dice, or board games that require players to read spaces, cards, and directions.
9. Perhaps over dinner, while you're running errands, or in another informal setting, share your reactions to things you read, and encourage your children to do likewise.
10. Set aside a regular time for reading in your family, independent of schoolwork—the 20 minutes before lights out, just after dinner, or whatever fits into your household schedule. As little as 10 minutes of free reading a day can help improve your child's skills and habits.
11. Read aloud to your child, especially a child who is discouraged by his or her own poor reading skills. The pleasure of listening to you read, rather than struggling alone, may restore your child's

initial enthusiasm for books and reading.

12. Encourage your child to read aloud to you an exciting passage in a book, an interesting tidbit in the newspaper, or a joke in a joke book. When children read aloud, don't feel they have to get every word right. Even good readers skip or mispronounce words now and then.

13. On gift-giving occasions, give books and magazines based on your child's current interests.

14. Set aside a special place for children to keep their own books.

15. Introduce the bookmark. Remind your youngster that you don't have to finish a book in one sitting; you can stop after a few pages, or a chapter, and pick up where you left off at another time. Don't try to persuade your child to finish a book he or she doesn't like. Recommend putting the book aside and trying another.

16. Treat your children to an evening of laughter and entertainment featuring books! Many children (parents, too) regard reading as a serious activity. A joke book, a story told in riddles, or a funny passage read aloud can reveal another side of reading.

17. Extend your child's positive reading experiences. For example, if your youngster enjoyed a book about dinosaurs, follow up with a visit to a natural history museum.

18. Offer other special incentives to encourage your child's reading. Allow your youngster to stay up an extra 15 minutes to finish a chapter; promise to take your child to see a movie after he or she has finished the book on which it was based; relieve your child of a regular chore to free up time for reading.

19. Limit your children's television viewing in an effort to make time for other activities, such as reading. But never use TV as a reward for reading, or a punishment for not reading.

20. Not all reading takes place between the covers of a book. What about menus, road signs, food labels, and sheet music? Take advantage of countless spur-of-the-moment opportunities for reading during the course of your family's busy day.