



Bring On The Books!



Being hooked on books is magical and one of the best things that can happen to children. And parents know if they read the same books over and over to babies, toddlers, and preschoolers, kids get hooked at a very young age! Raising kids who love books is a giant step on the road to becoming a lifelong reader. The benefits are enormous. Kids who love books gain creativity, build vocabulary, memorize and repeat story lines, appreciate rhythms of rhyming words, and learn to comprehend concepts beyond their immediate surroundings and frames of reference.

Books are irresistible to children and inexpensive to collect. Buy them at yard sales, bookstores or thrift

stores, or swap them with friends. Highlight the importance of children's books by arranging them on low shelves that are easily accessible. Shelves of books warm up rooms.

Reading books together offers a time to cuddle and be close. These moments of sharing offer opportunities for communication and discussion on all sorts of topics. When books are read and discussed openly, you may find out that your little one really, really wants a dog, or that your school-ager is being bullied.

Books are a treasure. If parents treat books with respect, chances are their children will, too. Of course, babies put everything

in their mouths, including books, so it's best to provide sturdy cardboard books for them to "read." Help preschool children learn to turn the pages of books carefully so they don't get torn. Fine muscle skills needed for this task develop with maturity, so patience is required. Before beginning a book, point to the title and the author's name. This helps children understand that someone wrote it and wants them to enjoy it. In picture books, the illustrator is also very important because pictures are important for carrying the story line.

Going on an outing to the library reinforces a love of books. Visiting the library is like paradise for a book lover, and children can't get there without you! Why shouldn't visiting the library become a regular routine like watching a favorite TV program or playing a favorite game? When a library is close by, there's no reason children can't have plenty of books around to enhance their creativity and advance their reading ability. Take advantage of story hour and book signings. Involve your child in the entire process of selecting a book and checking it out. Choose a special

location at home for the borrowed books to be kept after they're read, so they can easily be rounded up when they're due.

Loving books is a precursor to reading books, and reading, even if it's for only a few minutes a day, builds brains in children and bonds in families.

"There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate's loot on Treasure Island." Walt Disney

"There are many little ways to enlarge your child's world. Love of books is the best of all." Jacqueline Kennedy

"The things I want to know are in books. My best friend is the man who'll get me a book I haven't read." Abraham Lincoln

"So please, oh PLEASE, we beg, we pray, Go throw your TV set away, And in its place you can install, A lovely bookshelf on the wall." Roald Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

PERSONAL PARENTING

Cloud Watching

It's the perfect time of year to observe clouds. Share a few facts with your children first:

- ✓ Clouds need wind to move across the sky.
- ✓ There are different kinds of clouds:
 - Stratus clouds are low clouds. Fog is a stratus cloud at ground level.
 - Cirrus clouds are high and wispy, and they're made of ice crystals.
 - Cumulus clouds are the fun ones that take on shapes of their own.



After observing, ask children what the clouds look like to them. Mashed potatoes? People? Animals? Dragons? Flowers? Offer them a sheet of paper to draw what they see. Check out more weather information on the Mount Washington Web site, www.mountwashington.org.

Bedtime Snack

Children need snacks because their tummies can hold only a small amount of food. About 30 minutes before lights out is the perfect time for a bedtime snack.

Some good choices are:

- Cheese and whole grain crackers
- Yogurt, with a piece of nonacidic fruit such as bananas or pears
- Graham cracker spread with applesauce
- Whole grain cereal and lowfat milk

Toddler Treasures

Toddlers love to explore. Old purses or brief-cases provide safe fun when filled with interesting things. Tiny fingers can search inside for empty boxes, a bracelet, clothespin, toothbrush, comb, and key chain. A discarded wallet with a change purse that snaps and pockets that are filled with business cards and Post-it notes prove irresistible to a curious toddler. When you're cleaning out drawers, look for interesting new items to add. Think safety first, and always make sure that what you put inside is large enough not to be a choking hazard.



Online Reading Resources:

www.readingrockets.org At this Web site, you will find everything from hints on helping struggling readers to free reading guides that help parents select good books for children. It features a daily lit quiz, writing contests, and blogs so you can get your voice heard.

www.rif.org. RIF stands for Reading Is Fundamental. This organization offers a network of literacy programs in nearly 19,000 locations across the United States. Check it out to find a program near you.



Germ: Shut That Lid!

Germ: Shut That Lid!
Germ: Germs are lurking in the bathroom, as you would suspect. But there's something very simple you can do to cut down on those mean, nasty, no-good germs: Teach kids to close the lid on the toilet before they flush. Why is this so important? Because toilet spray travels a long way and can land on walls, floors, towels, soap, and even toothbrushes.



"People who say they sleep like a baby usually don't have one." Leo Burke

"Before I got married I had six theories about bringing up children, now I have six children and no theories." John Wilmot

Family Connections: Family Fun With A Plan

It's important for families to spend time together and connect on a regular basis. Scheduling family nights is one way to put families first. Families can pack a lot of fun and nurturing in an hour or two a couple nights a month.

Family Fun In 15 Minutes Or Less

Families can pack a lot into 15 minutes, if time is tight.

- Recite nursery rhymes and act them out.
- Play a game of hide-and-seek.
- Make hot chocolate.
- Do jumping jacks and sit-ups.
- Blow bubbles.
- Take your dog on a quick walk.
- Pop popcorn.
- Share knock-knock jokes.



Family Favorites

Families are bound to know a few things about each other.

See how much you know by asking these questions. Ask the questions again a few months later.

- What's your favorite food?
- What's your favorite color?
- What's your favorite family pet?
- What's your favorite restaurant?
- What's your favorite family vacation?
- What's your favorite family memory?



Family Stories

Stories make families unique. Family stories build identity and live on in our memories. Children love to hear, "When you were a baby..." They also like to hear funny stories like the time Jennifer tried to give the dog a haircut or how Carlos thought he could plant birdseed and tiny birds would grow. Don't forget to tell stories about your own childhood—how mom's job was to pick the strawberries every summer and one time she got a tummyache because she ate so many, or how Dad got skunked when he got too close to the black-and-white creature.

Family Tree Night

Whether you're a beginner or an advanced family historian, building a family tree is a fun project for parents and kids. Discovering your family history has never been easier.



There are hundreds of Web sites to check out, but here are two national sites to begin with.

- National Genealogical Society—www.ngsgenealogy.org
- National Archives and Records—www.nara.gov/genealogy/genindex.html

Family Performance Night

Children like to perform, and any corner of a room serves as a stage. Provide interesting dress-up clothes, puppets, and a microphone. All parents have to do is sit back, relax, and enjoy the show. This is a great way to pay attention to children and applaud them for their creative efforts. Kids are very talented!

Family Game Night

Sitting around a board game such as Candyland, Chutes and Ladders, Sorry, or Monopoly for older children is a cherished family past time. Playing cards is another treat for kids. They like to master games, and there are so many simple ones such as Go Fish, Crazy Eights, and Hearts. Ever try building a house of cards? It's fun too.

