



Connect with Kids

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Attendance and Achievement: Model Reading

Video Overview

A study conducted by the National Literacy Trust says that children as young as age seven are more likely to own a mobile phone than a book – fueling fears for a further decline in reading skills. If you believe kids learn by example, parents should open more books and read together as a family.

Twins Edward and Thomas are in the third grade, and they love books. “They read at over the fifth-grade level right now,” says their mom Jogie. “And they’ll just pick up and read whatever.”

A history of the Civil War, for instance, which is what 8-year-old Thomas is reading now. “I like to read because after you read a book more than once, it gets more interesting because you understand it a little more.”

How did Thomas and his brother learn to love reading? There are two answers: Mom and Dad.

“For me, one of the neat things about reading is the pictures that it puts in your mind and how you can see certain things,” says Jogie.

For 20 minutes every day, all you’ll hear in their home is silence. No television, no video games, no phone, just a book. “Twenty minutes of reading, but I usually do more,” says 8-year-old Edward.

“Seeing adults read (and) having fun, (tells kids) this is something I want to do too,” adds reading specialist Linda Stokes from Sylvan Learning Centers. But there are fewer role models than ever. “Parents are certainly not reading. We’re all very busy.”

Experts say parents should re-prioritize and put reading near the top of their list. Whether a toddler or a teenager, parents should show their child that reading is important. Take them to the library, have books available and read and discuss books with them.

What Parents Need to Know

Experts say reading aloud with your child is one of the best ways you can help him/her grow into a successful reader. When you make reading a joyful, fun activity, kids will keep coming back for more.

As you discover adventures between the covers of a book, you discover things about each other as well. And with every turn of the page, your child expands his or her vocabulary, comprehension, reasoning and grammar skills. To maximize the benefit your child gains from reading:

- Create a “Reading Ritual” by reading together every day at the same time in a special place.
- Cuddle with your child while reading together so your child will associate reading with a sense of security. Children learn better when they feel safe.
- Use silly voices and sound effects to peak your child’s interest.
- Follow along with your finger as you read to show how text moves from left to right. This will help your child connect to the text you are reading.
- Point out the pictures in the book and talk about what you see.
- Point out different kinds of words around you like shopping lists, store signs and labels.
- Ask open-ended questions about the stories you read together.
- Children like and need to hear favorite stories over and over. It helps them recognize and remember words and gives them confidence about reading.
- Let your child touch and hold the book. Ask him or her to help you turn the pages.
- Don’t push your child to read beyond his ability. Choose age-appropriate books and congratulate any progress he or she makes with his or her reading skills.

Resources

[National Literacy Trust](#)

[Reading Rockets](#)