Parent-proven tips to get kids reading

Try these ideas from GreatSchools parents to get your child excited about reading.

More ideas from readers

The budding illustrator: "If your child is not interested in reading you may want to read to him and then let him draw a picture of the story. My son now enjoys books and stories because he has learned to listen to the story and then put it on paper."

The budding author: "I have my children write their own book about a subject that interests them.

"First, I take blank paper and cut it into quarters. Then I staple the book together along the longer side. My children, ages 5 and 7, then pick something they like, (i.e. spiders, sharks, flowers, butterflies, etc.). They write a title and draw a title picture on the front. Then on each left page they write a fact about the subject. And on the right page they draw and

By GreatSchools Staff

Thanks to our Parent Advisor newsletter readers who shared their tips for inspiring children to read. Some readers suggested favorite books and others described reading games. Read on to learn creative ways to encourage your own children to read.

Take turns reading aloud with your child

One reader from Ohio notes the only way she can get her 12-year-old daughter to finish a book is by taking turns reading with her. After she reads a chapter, they discuss it, and then they switch roles for the following chapter. Another reader suggests that by reading aloud together the parent is able to determine the child's level of
comprehension. And several of you wrote about the added benefit of sharing quality time with your kids by reading together.

Offer an incentive program

A parent in Alabama allows her children to stay up an extra 30 minutes past bedtime, provided their time is spent reading. TV is the reward incentive for an Illinois parent who offers her son one minute of television for every one minute he spends reading. Once her son begins reading, he ends up not wanting to watch TV, or he saves minutes when he knows friends are coming over so he can watch a movie. Another family in Ohio keeps track of the minutes spent reading and then every couple of weeks the family chooses a "free activity" for what they call a "double reward" day. During this special day they might picnic at a water-splash park, go bike riding and go out to lunch or go fishing.

Create your own "library days"

One family in North Carolina spends two days a week reading and writing book reports during what they term their "library days." The family determines a reading list and the children write book reports on the books they have completed.

Read on the go

Play a word game in the car. Each person takes a turn reading as many words as he can from street signs, billboards, store names, garage sale signs, etc. The player reads the words aloud as quickly as he can. It's a fun exercise and even though it's not a book, it gets kids reading.

Beyond books
Although many educators worry that children who spend time at the computer aren’t reading books, some of our readers argue that the computer has vastly increased opportunities to read. Not only does the Internet provide a deluge of material, but video games, multimedia software and even instant messaging provide virtually non-stop reading opportunities.

A reader in Texas writes, "Video games can be something a parent can love." She suggests buying video game guides to your child's favorite game and subscribing to video game tips magazines to encourage reading.

Two parents suggested reading software programs that help struggling readers by utilizing text-to-speech software so the reader can hear what she is reading. Texthelp and Read Please offer software programs that can be useful tools for helping new readers.

A nonprofit program entitled Adopt An Author offers reading and writing curriculum for teachers that is designed for teenagers. Best-selling thrillers along with author appearances in classrooms, interactive Web sites and classroom phone calls from authors are some of the ways this group inspires teens to read.

**Importance of the book series**

We heard from many of you how important the introduction of a book series was to fostering your own child's interest in reading. For many new readers, discovering books that pique their interest can be the beginning of a lifelong interest in reading. Here are a few titles that were mentioned as some of your children's favorites:


These titles were also recommended by a parent whose 9-year-old enjoys the ridiculous:


(See our best book series for preK-K, 1st-3rd grade, 4th-6th grade, and young adults, too.)

**Set a good example**

We were also reminded by some of you that it's important for parents to be readers. The impact that your own behavior can have on your children can't be underestimated. "Talk about what you are reading with your children. Share what you find most interesting and explain why. Ask your kids to share the parts they like with you from whatever they are reading. And talk about what you are reading with each other," offers a mom in California.

**It's never too late...**

And finally, a young reader confirms that reading, even during the summer is actually a good thing:

"I'm a 13-year-old girl and every summer, I would never touch a
book because, hey! It's the summer! But this article has encouraged me to read more. Now, I'm into Stephen King's books! In fact, I've even read my big sister's books too. One of them is *October Sky*. I finished it within three days.