

Raising a Child who Loves to Read

Developing a love of reading in your child is one of the best things you can do as a parent. However, while some children seem to naturally take to reading, for others it can be a chore and something which they struggle with. There are many ways to overcome this negative attitude towards reading and to make reading a fun part of everyday life. These ways can also add an extra dimension to reading for the child who already loves to.

Practising Reading on a Shopping Trip

Have children find what they need on the store directory.

Ask children to compare several brands of juice, cereal and so on in terms of price, contents and container size.

Point out recognisable logos and explain that manufacturers use such logos so that people can find their products at a glance. Even your pre-reading children can locate favourite brands by “reading” the logos.

Request that children select brands based on certain criteria that you give them e.g. cereal that they like with the least amount of sugar.

Practice Reading while Cooking Dinner

If you are using a cookbook, ask your child to read the ingredients list or locate the ingredients on the shelf.

With help, have your child read and follow the steps of a recipe.

Point out the reading tasks as you go. Besides the recipe you also need to read packaging, time and temperatures and measuring tools.

For a reading extravaganza ask your child to select a favourite recipe, make a shopping list of the ingredients needed, visit the shop and find the ingredients and then help you cook the meal.

Other Ideas to Promote Reading

Take books with you wherever you go, particularly if you might have to wait at all.

Allow children to choose books as a reward.

Subscribe to children’s magazines.

Make library visits a family routine.

Watch for TV or movie tie-ins.

Let your children see you reading and talk about reading with them.

Encourage active reading by asking the child questions about the story as you

go along e.g. “Why did he do that?”; “Would you have done the same thing?”; “What is going to happen next?”.

Take delight in words and share this sense of fun in words with your children – books of limericks, tongue twisters, riddles, the Dr Seuss etc are fun books and the rhymes and sayings may well become part of your family’s language and folklore.

Using Long Car Trips as Adventures in Reading

Long car trips overwhelm most parents, no matter how patient they are. You can, however, find ways of keeping your children occupied in ways which can be educational as well as fun.

Assign a child to navigate

Depending on each child’s age, s/he could read the map; read highway signs, mileage signs and street signs, or look for a turn-off or landmarks. When you are planning a lunch stop assign children to look for the logo of the fast food place of their choice.

Look-out-the-window games

License plates are fun: Find three state license plates; invent words or sayings starting with the letters of the plate; find plates in alphabetical or numerical order. Also, find the silliest billboard, strangest town name or the sign for the most amazing “must see” tourist thing etc.

Read aloud

Your child can read the guidebook aloud where you plan to visit. Vote on sights you’d like to see, places you might eat.

Word games

Come up with a category; say animals. Name and animal: lion. The next person must name an animal that starts with the last letter of your word: N. Also, give children the name of the town you are driving through and have them work with paper and pencil to make as many words as possible from the letters in that name.

Play travel-related games

Try working as a family to name all the state capital towns along your route, rivers in NSW etc.

Have children invent games

Give the children five minutes of collaborating to come up with rules for a game that everybody in the car can play. You will be surprised how many of these invented games, with rules improved and elaborated over time, become family favourites that continue to entertain trip after trip.

Sue Driscoll & Sue Roy, taken from Telopea Park’s newsletter (adapted from “50

Simple Things you can do to Raise a Child who Loves to Read" by Kathy A Zahler)