Let's Read Together!

Connect • Discover • Enjoy

Reading together with family is a child's first introduction to reading. Children like it when their families read with them, even when children can read on their own. Reading together connects children to the people they love and more.

Key messages:

- Reading together is a special time for families. Sharing a book is a positive experience that helps build close relationships and family memories.
- Reading together helps children (and adults) discover new people, places, things and ideas. It can help them find out how to do things.
- Reading together is fun! It helps children learn that reading is a pleasurable activity.

"[Read-aloud] is a prescription for lifelong success for the child and a dose of deep well-being for the family."

— Pam Allyn in Scholastic's *Kids & Family Reading Report: The Rise of Read-Aloud* (2019)

What do children learn when you read together?

Oral language

- Children hear the sound and rhythm of language, even before they know what all the words mean.

Print awareness

- Children see letters and how they make words. They see how words make sentences. They connect sounds to letters and words. And, they see how print is organized on a page and how a book works.

Vocabulary

- Books introduce words you might not use in everyday conversations. The more words they hear, the more words children know, and this helps them when they're learning to read.

Background knowledge

- Reading is a way to learn about the world. Reading helps you do things. Building background knowledge from an early age helps children understand what they're reading when they are older.

Reading is fun!

- Children who enjoy reading together are more motivated to learn to read. They can identify as a reader, even before they are reading.

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Tips for Families

- Set aside time to enjoy reading together.
- Try to read together every day.
- Find a comfortable place to read.
- Let your child choose what to read.
- Read with feeling.
- Talk about what you're reading, before, during and after.
- Read and talk in your home language.
- Focus on enjoyment.

What else can families do to encourage reading?

Read on your own. Apart from reading together, if your child sees you reading for enjoyment or learning, it underlines that reading is an important activity. Your child will want to do what you are doing.

Have books in your home. Research shows that having books at home has an impact on children's literacy skills. And, there is some evidence that this continues right through adulthood.

Visit the library. Increase your child's access to books by making regular visits to the library. The library has so many titles to choose from, so many books to explore. And, you can get help choosing books.

Make your own books. Some children like to draw, dictate or write their own stories, and then read them with you. Or you can use family photos to make a story about your family.

Talk about what you're reading and doing. Activities at home and in the community are opportunities to ask and answer questions. The more background knowledge children have, the easier it will be for them to understand words in print.

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