

What Parents Can Do To Nurture Lifetime Readers

Steven L. Layne, Ed.D.
Educational Consultant and Children's/Young Adult Author

- We do not need to burn books to kill our civilization; we need only to leave them unread for a generation.

- R. M Hutchins



1706 Waverly Circle
St. Charles, IL 60174
630/443-6363.com
WWW.STEVELAYNE.COM

Keeping the Lamp Lit at Home_____

What Research Says About Parents' Impact on Reading

- **Research has repeatedly shown that parents of successful readers:**
 - a) believe they can have an impact on their children's literacy development
 - b) impart a sense of both the joy and the value of reading to their children
 - c) spend time, money, and effort to nurture their children's literacy
 - d) read to their children *throughout* the grades
 - e) exhibit the characteristics of good reading role models for their children

Parent List of Do's and Don'ts for Promoting Reading at Home

The following things can help to build a love for reading and books in your child.

DO . . .

- * read to your child from wonderful children's literature! Ask librarians and teachers for recommended titles. Read about things that interest your child: ballet, dump trucks, etc. Remember that children can listen and comprehend things well beyond their silent reading level.
- *schedule a family reading night/time on the calendar just like soccer practice or piano lessons.
- *read a book as a family then watch the movie and discuss the differences.
- * allow your child to have at least one magazine subscription if at all possible. It is important that the magazine arrive in his/her name – not in yours! For suggestions see your public library!
- * take your child to the public library often! If he/she doesn't have a library card, make it a big deal to go get one. Everyone in the family should have one; everyone in the family should use it. Kids respond to adult modeling.
- * let your child see other family members reading, often! Parent and teacher modeling is the second most influential factor in promoting a love of reading in young people!
- * give a "no reason gift certificate" to your local independent bookstore (where they sell books not crumpets and CD's).
- * keep a "bag of books, magazines, comics, etc." in each of your cars. Stock it with some favorite material for each family. Stock every room in the house with books– bathrooms, too!
- * (if your child is old enough) offer to read a book that he/she loves and write your thoughts about it. Then, share them with your child. You can also keep a dialogue journal where you and your child write to one another as you independently read the same chapter book.
- * read a book aloud as a family on vacations.

The following things can help **DETER** a love for reading and books in your child.

DON'T . . .

* turn reading aloud to your child into a “quiz bowl” of comprehension questions. This is a time for building *enjoyment* with books.

* worry if your child wants to “read” something that you believe is too complex. Allow him/her to look at the material as long as it is appropriate in content. For example, if your child loves dogs and wants *Dog Fancy* magazine, and you can't find another magazine about dogs that is written at a lower level – let your child “read” *Dog Fancy*. No harm will be done, *some* reading will be attempted, and your child will build confidence.

* make your child read out loud for you and correct his/her errors. Fluency is best handled by professionals.

* give books as a gift in place of the sweater she really wanted for her birthday.

* make critical comments about your child's reading ability. Don't give him/her the idea that you are trying to “fix” his/her problem. If the rest of the family doesn't model reading, talk about books, etc., then don't expect your reluctant reader to start exhibiting these behaviors.

* criticize your child's choice of reading material. As long as the content is appropriate, allow your child to choose what he/she likes. Comic books, series books, etc. have value as reading material.

* force your child to read “classic” pieces of literature because you think he/she is ready. Many of the works now thought of as classics were not written for the audiences we give them to in the first place. They were also written in a time and with a voice that only further isolates today's students unless they are being grounded in the period and social customs before reading.

* read books to your child or encourage him/her to read books that are not developmentally appropriate. No matter how “gifted” a child may be in terms of decoding, fluency, or comprehension, he/she should not be encouraged to read books with content appropriate for someone much older.

Benefits of Reading Aloud

It is fun

Listening skills are improved

Reading skills are improved and reinforced

Positive attitudes are fostered toward books

It broadens interests and tastes

Imagination is exercised/background knowledge is built

Reading maturity develops

Reading independence is promoted

Lifelong readers may be developed

- Dr. S. Layne