

How to help children develop a LOVE of reading



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Children who read for pleasure are likely to do significantly better in formal exams than their peers.

Reading for pleasure was found to be more important for children's cognitive development than their parents' level of education. [For more information.](#)

Not only does reading for pleasure improve academic success it has been shown to improve: emotional intelligence, empathy, creativity, confidence, well being..... The list of benefits goes on and on. [More research can be found here.](#)

Today children have so many entertainment options available to them that struggling through reading isn't attractive. [Evidence](#) suggests that most children say that they don't enjoy reading.

If for whatever reason a child struggles learning to read, expecting them to read for pleasure is ambitious.



Here are some top tips for parents of reluctant readers.

Top Tips to Develop a Love of Reading

01

Negotiate a later bedtime that can only be used for reading together.

02

Don't force a child to finish a book they don't like, find books they enjoy.

03

Buy books where their names appear, or where the main character has something in common with them.

04

If you struggle to find books children enjoy, try comics or graphic novels as the illustrations can be far less intimidating.

05

Don't make a child read, read to them. It is important to make reading an enjoyable shared activity **not** an opportunity to improve reading skills. If children are willing to read, perhaps they could read every fourth page, this keeps the pace of the story engaging. [Check out this video to learn from my mistakes in this area.](#)



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When children do read themselves, if they stumble on a word, quickly supply it. This keeps the flow otherwise, the story is not as easy to understand and is less enjoyable.

07

Resist the temptation to get children to 'spell out' difficult words. Remember reading for pleasure is NOT an opportunity to teach children how to read. For some, these are mutually exclusive activities.

08

Make sure child(ren) see you read for pleasure.

09

Take child(ren) to the library regularly. It could be to participate in a library holiday program. Take advantage of the many brilliant schemes libraries have to encourage reading.

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Don't be distracted by your phone or other devices when reading to child(ren), they need to see you model putting books before devices.

11

Some children find reading on a device (eReader or tablet) less intimidating than a physical book, as they are not overwhelmed by how thick the book is.

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Another advantage of reading on a device, is readers can experiment with different fonts, backgrounds and colours, For some, these small changes can make reading much easier and more enjoyable. To see an example of how this is done check out the [video Dyslexia Friendly Kindle Functionality](#)

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Where parents struggle to read out loud well, why not listen to audiobooks together instead.

Children are perceptive, if parents aren't enjoying reading chances are they will pick it up.

There are many great options to listen to together these include CDs audio library books, radio programs, YouTube videos, Read-Along apps, Immersive Reader to name but a few.

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For children that strongly resist sitting down to read together, try a captivating audio book when on a car journey. Hopefully, the story will hook them (when it is the only entertainment available), then finish the book at home.

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Stop to ask what the child thinks will happen, what would have been a better ending, this helps develop creativity.

Praise their ideas, it will encourage them to do this more and more

16

Read (or listen to) books that have been made into movies and then watch the movie and do a comparison. I suspect most times the book will be preferred.

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This tip significantly improves reading in a way children love.



Turning on the subtitles while children are watching television has been shown to double the chances of a child becoming good at reading. Find out more <https://turnonthesubtitles.org>

So simple and effective!



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When listening to a book together, consider following along with the print version, particularly if there are illustrations. Read-along books sync the text and illustration with the accompanying professional narration.

-  Libraries often supply Read-along books free of charge.
-  Many Read-along book apps are available on tablets.

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Check out Immersion Reading from Amazon. This syncs the Kindle eBook with the Audible book such that each word of the text can be highlighted while listening to the professional narration. [Watch a video to see Immersion reading in action \(as well as other dyslexia friendly Kindle functionality\).](#)

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Make reading a happy time by accompanying it with a treat children love. My three enjoyed hot chocolate with whipped cream and marshmallows. When I made it they knew it was time to enjoy a book together.

