

Reading to Your Child: 5 Secrets

You want your child to know the magic and wonder that only reading can bring. Here's 5 simple things you can do to improve your child's love of books.

1. A secret to boosting your child's love of books is to read at different times of the day. In other words, don't just leave it 'til bed time. Make reading an activity. Make it fun. Create a comfortable environment. Pull up a few pillows and relax. Let your child pick her favorite books, and you pick several also. It should be a breeze to generate enthusiasm for reading---it is one of the most parent-child friendly activities you can pursue.

2. Another secret to elevating the status of reading is to do it everyday. You want your child to know the magic and wonder that only reading can bring. Why? Because you know she's capable of enjoying all the advantages of a tenacious life-long reader. So read to your child everyday---she's more likely to identify with the characters, follow what's going on, and exhibit confidence and comfort toward reading generally.

3. Encourage relatives to purchase books for gifts. They almost always get more miles than flashy toys. Great books include the ones you loved as a child---Grimm's Fairy Tales, Aesop's Fables, Mother Goose, Curious George, Dr. Seuss, Beatrix Potter, Shel Silverstein.

4. Let your child choose her favorite books for you to read, and among the ones you choose, choose a book that's slightly more advanced than she would pick on her own. If you adopt this habit, then your child is constantly growing into literature, not growing out of it: the events on the page remain relevant, interesting and significant. Be careful not to over shoot the mark. Reading college level classic literature to your preschooler won't turn her into a genius. It'll just frustrate her. A more appropriate leap for a preschooler might be to go from Clifford, the Big Red Dog to Madeleine.

5. Don't read to your child with the objective of quickening her ability to read on her own. The idea isn't to pressure your child into becoming an early reader, but rather to make reading as enjoyable as possible so she has the best chance to become a skillful, life-long reader. By the time she's writing essays, it won't matter whether she was an early reader. What will matter is whether she loves to read.

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