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As your child's first and most important teacher, you can be a powerful force in your child's efforts to become a skillful reader. Whether your child is already a proficient reader, or is a struggling or reluctant reader, your positive encouragement can help him/her make continuous strides toward success. Here are some suggestions on how you can support reading at home.



READING TIPS FOR HOME

Let your child choose what to read. While you may cringe at his preferences, he may never touch a title if it's force-fed.

Talk about what she reads. Ask her what she thinks of a book and make connections with ideas or issues that are relevant to her life.

If he's struggling or bored with a book, let him put it down. Forcing him to stick with a difficult or dull book that's intended for pleasure will reinforce the idea that reading is a chore.

Subscribe to magazines that will interest her. Ask her to choose one or two titles and put the subscription in her name.

Read the news (online or newspaper) together. Whether it's for 15 minutes over breakfast or on weekends, establish a routine and discuss what you each read.

Be flexible with bedtime and chores when your child is reading. Within reason, avoid asking your child to stop reading.

Play games that utilize reading. Word- and vocabulary-building games like Scrabble or Boggle are great, but many board games provide reading opportunities (even if it's just the instructions). Crosswords provide opportunities for learning new words and spelling practice, too.

Encourage your middle-schooler to read to a younger sibling. Letting him take over ritual reading at bedtime once a week will ensure he reads something, and he may find his sibling's enthusiasm for stories contagious.

Visit the library together. Try to make it an event where you share some quality one-on-one time and both choose a few books.

Find an outlet for your child to "publish" a book review. When she finishes a book, encourage her to write it up for a family or school newspaper, magazine, or Web site. She could also try posting a review at a local bookseller or an online retailer.

Ensure he has a good reading space. He should choose where it is, but you can make sure it's well lit and inviting so he stays a while.

Keep up on what she's reading. If you can, read a few pages of her books yourself so you can discuss them with her.

Encourage writing. Whether it's via snail- or e-mail, suggest that he keep in touch with distant friends or relatives. Keeping a journal or chronicling a family vacation will also provide reading practice.

Provide a good dictionary. She may not want to ask for your help with words anymore, so make sure she has a good reference.

Suggest books from movies he liked. He may enjoy getting even more detail in the book.

Listen to audiobooks in the car. If you're heading on vacation, or even back-and-forth to school, try listening to a novel that will appeal to everyone.

Model reading. Your pre-teen will still follow your reading habits (though she'll never let you know it!). Let her see you reading, make comments, and share interesting passages with her.

Promote success with "Monthly Reading Log" assignments. Be engaged on a daily/weekly basis. Record and sign!