

## How can I encourage my child to like reading?

**BE ENTHUSIASTIC!!!** Share your love of reading and your excitement about your child's learning.



**Read and enjoy books together.** It is important to read **to** your child both before she begins to read on her own and as her reading skills develop. Reading to her will allow her to experience more complicated books than she can read on her own. It will also allow her to focus more on enjoying and understanding the book.

Choose books, authors, and topics that she likes.

Discuss and enjoy the things you read. Some ideas to prompt discussion during and after reading include:

- Talk about what the characters are doing and why.
- Make guesses about what will happen next in the book and then read to find out if your thinking and/or your child's matches the author's thinking.
- Compare characters, events, and/or information from different books and people and events in your own life.
- Share your feelings about what happens in the book and ask your child to share her feelings as well.

**Read with your child.** When your child begins to read books on her own, be encouraging and enthusiastic. Listen carefully to her reading and help her when she gets to rough spots. Even though you may, at times, be surprised that your child has trouble identifying some of the words, be careful not to make her feel pressured or anxious.



**Avoid asking your child to read when she is tired.** For beginners, reading takes a lot of concentration and effort. Asking a tired child to read can lead to an unpleasant reading experience. If these unpleasant experiences occur often, the child might come to think of reading as being unpleasant (rather than reading while tired being unpleasant).



**Help your child understand the purposes for reading and writing.** To encourage interest in learning to read and write, help your child to understand that people use reading and writing every day and in

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all kinds of ways. A child needs to know that people read to get **information** AND for **pleasure**. Try engaging your child in reading and writing for everyday purposes such as: leaving/sending messages, making and using shopping lists, making plans, etc.

**Promote intrinsic motivation.** Motivation plays an important role in reading development and in learning more generally. We want children to be



“intrinsically” motivated to read – to want to read because of the pleasure and satisfaction that it brings, rather than because it is something they are required to do. Many of the ideas offered in the booklet “Helping Your Child Become a Reader” (such as being enthusiastic, giving your child some choices about what to read, and providing lots of opportunities for easy reading) will help to promote intrinsic motivation.

In addition, it is important to avoid offering rewards to your child for reading. We want children to see reading as a source of pleasure and as a form of entertainment, but rewarding children for reading can send just the opposite message. Instead of saying, “Let’s get your reading done and then you can watch TV.” (which makes reading a job and TV the reward), you might say, “Let’s get this room cleaned up and then we’ll have time for two books!” (which makes cleaning up the job and reading the reward).



Praise can also help to promote intrinsic motivation. When praising your child for her reading, be specific and focus on her effort. Tell your child exactly what it was that she did well. For example, rather than saying, “Great reading!” you might say “I like the way you tried using the letter sounds and then you checked the picture to see if the word made sense.”

Encourage your child to think about how her reading is improving. It might also help to remind her of how easily she now does things (like walking or riding a bike) that once took a lot of effort. Help her to understand that this will happen with reading too ... the more she reads, the easier it will get.