

8 Actions to encourage your child to read

Not all children take to reading immediately. As a parent, you may struggle to get your child to read. There may be reasons they aren't reading beyond just being stubborn. The below list can help you with these non-readers.

1 – Get them checked: The reason many kids don't read isn't because they may not want to, but because they have a physical issue. If there is a problem with their eyes, it may be very difficult for them to read, so of course they don't want to. There are many issues a child may be having with their eyesight that may interfere with their reading. Get checked by a qualified ophthalmologist, not just a quickie eye doctor. If you suspect an eye disorder, it is worth your time to find someone truly qualified to check your child. You may also want to have your child checked for dyslexia. For someone with undiagnosed dyslexia, trying to read can be frustrating and turn them off to reading at all.

2 - Make sure the book is interesting: Not all kids like to read the same thing. Just because Harry Potter is super popular, doesn't mean every kid likes to read about wizards. Find something that they're interested in. There are so many books available that you can find something for everyone. Visit a library and let them find and choose a couple books, and don't be over harsh on trying to guide them away from some books and toward something else. I'm not saying to let them choose something that isn't appropriate but let them choose a book that you may think isn't the best. If they are reading, it's better than not reading.

3 - Try books based on movies or shows: I bet there are some shows that your kids like – a tv show, cartoon, or a movie. Guess what? There are probably books available based on the show. Star Wars, Marvel, Gravity Falls and even video games like Sonic and Five Nights at Freddy's, all have books that expand on their universe. They might not want to read the books you read as a child, but they might devour some of these books.

4 – Comics: Have you tried comics? There is a wide variety of comics available for all ages. And many of them are available at the libraries – so you can try out a bunch of them and not be afraid you're wasting your money. You might be surprised and find that you enjoy some of them also. And you don't have to get individual issues, most get collected into trade paperback, which is like a bigger, magazine sized comic book. I've seen many kids get excited about reading comics which leads to reading other books.

5 - Listen to audiobooks: Audiobooks are on the rise and they are no longer the multi-cassettes or even cd's of yesteryear. You can get audiobooks digitally, just like ebooks. You can even use Overdrive or Hoopla on your phone or tablet to digitally check them out of the library (with your local library card). And the libraries themselves may have playaway audiobooks. These are taking the place of cd's for listening. Many kids find listening to a story to be easier than the actual reading and it's a good way to introduce them to different types of books.

A neat feature of kindle is that you can get a book and the audiobook and they will be linked. You can listen to part of the audiobook and when you go back to reading, it will be where the audiobook left off. So, you can get the best of both worlds. This really works well when you listen to part of a book with your child and then take turns reading parts of it to each other. Which brings up ...

6 - Go back to reading with them and discuss the story: I know you may have done this when they were little, but you probably stopped doing it as they got older. Try it again. You probably weren't pushing the reading as much when you weren't a part of it, and the kids may have gotten out of the habit. Plus, it's still a great bonding experience with your kids. And don't just read – discuss the story. Ask them what they think is going to happen. Have them retell a part of the story -kids love to tell things with sound effects. You can find books that you enjoy also. I started reading the Harry Potter books to my kids. When we were halfway done with book 4, they informed me that they had already read the whole book themselves and were on book 5. Ok then.

7 - Engage their imagination: By this I mean do something outside the book. Make a meal of food similar to the food in the book. Create a poster they can hang up. Have them make puppets and act out the stories from the book. My favorite – have your child create more stories based on the characters and locations in the book. I did this with Star Wars while growing up. There were so many characters and places, that I could think of a million different things that would happen. Try a dress up like the characters. This is called cosplay and is very popular.

8 – Try out Mad Libs and choose your own adventure: Remember Mad Libs? It's where one person asks for things like nouns and adjectives and writes them into a story – but the people giving the nouns and adjectives have no idea what the story is. You end up with some very silly, but fun, stories. And kids love to ask the adults to give them words. Get silly and creative, don't be a stuffy adult. If they ask for a noun, say platypus. I like to use things like creamy purple for colors. Use some fun adjectives like noxious, turbulent, or zealous. Have the kids look them up if they don't know what it means.

I hope these suggestions help you to get your kids reading. I write because I want kids to have plenty of interesting stories to read. I also try to work with them to become writers – creators of stories. If you'd like to check out more of my resources to help kids write – visit my website: <https://www.saschneider.com>.