

# HOW (AND WHY) TO GET YOUR CHILD TO READ MORE

You need to read more. At least that's what the research says.

Reading is an essential skill that contributes to the development of literacy comprehension skills, communication skills, and overall academic performance.

However, young people today are [reading fewer books for pleasure](#) compared to previous generations. Some teachers suggest this is because of an [increased pressure](#) to read books students often don't choose themselves at school.

[Research suggests](#) that parents play a vital role in their child's reading development, but only 2% report reading to their children every day. Because of its impact on learning and child development, here's more insight into the research as well as tips to turn even the most reluctant reader into a bookworm.

## WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

[A large scale study](#) followed the lives of more than 17,000 people from birth to adulthood, documenting their reading habits and academic performance. Their habits were then compared to other children and took into account socioeconomic status and cognitive test scores.

They found that children who read frequently for pleasure by the age of 10 and more than once a week by the time they were 16 years old performed significantly better academically than those who didn't read as much. Independent reading was also found to promote a more [proactive approach](#) to learning.

However, not only was reading linked to better literacy skills, but better mathematical performance as well. In fact, reading regularly was four times more impactful on mathematical ability than having parents with graduate-level degrees.

The researchers concluded that reading introduced young students to new words, new ideas, and helped develop their understanding of how to process new concepts or information in the classroom.

Better reading comprehension in children also results in:

- Better [empathy skills](#)
- Improved [cognitive development](#)
- Higher levels of imagination and [creativity](#)
- [A better understanding](#) of the world around them
- An [ability to make links](#) between truth and fiction
- Greater [concentration](#)
- Improved [academic success](#)

## HOW CAN I ENCOURAGE MY CHILD TO READ?

Encouraging our kids to read can be a challenge, especially if they don't have a natural love of reading. So, here are 8 tips to make reading more enjoyable and develop better [reading habits](#) in your child:

### **1. Dedicate time towards reading**

Make reading the norm in your house by dedicating 30 minutes to 1h to just reading a book every day. That way, it won't seem so alien a task to your kids. You can even make a dedicated reading area with the help of your children such as a bean bag chair, lots of books, and quirky little accessories so it's a place they want to stay in.

### **2. Be a role model**

Your kids should be reading, but so should you. It's not new information that children learn by observing other people's behaviours and copying it. If your child sees that you're also reading a book or magazine, or even a newspaper, it'll show them that it is both important and a lifelong skill.

Perhaps even use the time as a way to bond with your kid by asking if they want you to read their book to them or if they want you to read together in silence. [Research shows](#) that reading to a child between 4 and 5 years old 6 to 7 days a week has the same effect on their cognitive development as being a year older.

### **3. Read and then watch or vice versa**

One way to encourage even the most reluctant of readers is to get the movie version involved. Choose a classic such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *The BFG*, or *Harry Potter* and either read the book together for younger kids or encourage older kids to read it on their own.

When they've finished reading a book, put together a family movie night where you can all watch the film version. That way, it brings the characters to life and allows them to compare both versions, encouraging a more reflective style of learning.

### **4. Have a reward system**

[Research shows](#) that, to encourage further reading, parents should put a reward system in place. For example, for every 10 books that are read and summarised, your child can get a small reward such as choosing what they want for dinner or getting a treat from the store.

### **5. The 'Book Fairy'**

This is more for the younger kids, but an effective way of getting children to sit down and read is by adding an element of magic to the task. Being visited by the book fairy every time they write a review or behave well will encourage kids to read more and provides a fun outlook on what some would consider a boring task.

How kids get a visit from the Book Fairy is up to you. One example of implementing this at home is when your kid writes a review of a book they just finished, they can write a letter to the Book Fairy about what book they would like to read next.

### **6. Encourage reading to their siblings**

Older siblings reading to younger siblings and vice versa can have a huge impact on reading comprehension skills. It can also lead to a [stronger bond between siblings](#).

Not only does this encourage a sense of responsibility in older siblings and allows them to practice reading out loud in a non-judgemental setting, but it can be beneficial for the younger siblings too. It can help boost their confidence, knowledge of vocabulary, pronunciation and language fluency.

### **7. Let them choose the book**

Research shows that [reading for pleasure](#) is extremely important for educational success and personal development. The number of children reading these days is decreasing due being forced to read a text they don't enjoy; however, [73% of student report](#) that if they were able to find a book they liked, they would read more.

So, although it is okay to make suggestions, you shouldn't force your kids to read books that they don't want to – especially if they are reluctant readers. Once your child has finished the book of

their choice, ask them questions about what they liked or didn't like about the book and ask them to write a short review. Not only will this develop your child's comprehensive skills, but it'll help them (and you) figure out what types of books they like.

### **8. Use Technology**

Technology is becoming a staple part of our children's lives and is changing the way they are exposed to information. So why not use it for reading? This way, children can be exposed to books in a way they are familiar with and provide quick access to millions of stories – one of which is sure to inspire even the most reluctant of readers.

[E-readers such as Kindles](#) also provides kids with learning difficulties or visual impairments an opportunity to feel the benefits of reading. For example, the font can be made larger or even changed to suit those who struggle with dyslexia. It also allows children to be in charge of their own learning, strengthening their reading skills by reading at their own pace, having a better sense of autonomy, and overall enjoyment.

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

The importance of reading should not be ignored. Not only can it benefit young people's social and cognitive development, but their education as well. [Parents play an essential part](#) in developing their child's reading skills so it is important to foster a home environment where reading is encouraged.

If your child doesn't like to read, it is important to find out why so you can address the issue. When children don't like reading when they're younger, it is unlikely they will be motivated to read when they're older.

However, don't force your kid to read things they don't want to. Books should transport your kids into imaginary worlds, making them smile or laugh or even cry as they get invested in the story. It shouldn't be a chore - don't make it one.