**10 Tips for Choosing Books for Children of All Ages**

* Have children choose their own books as soon as they start showing a preference for one over another.
* Find the children's section of your local library. Get to know the librarian, who can be a great resource.
* Find out what your child is interested in, and help choose books that are related to his or her interests.
* Ask friends, family, and teachers what books their children have enjoyed; try a book swap.
* If your child does not like a book you are reading together, put it away. Reading is a fun time to share, not a time to fight.
* Again, Again, Again! Children may want to read the same book many times, even if you think they have outgrown it.
* Use book lists generated by various literacy organizations; they usually have good suggestions. For example: American Library Association, International Reading Association, Children's Book Guild
* Look for books that you will like reading aloud. Your enjoyment will shine through and become contagious.
* Try out different kinds of books to see what appeals to your children.
* Have fun! Show your children the joy of reading and how it can open up a brand new world!

**How to Nurture a Growing Reader**

**Here are a dozen tips for nurturing your growing readers:**

1. **Read with your children at least once every day.**
2. **Make sure they have plenty to read.** Take them to the library regularly, and keep books and other reading materials in their reach.
3. **Notice what interests your child**, then help find books about those things.
4. **Respect your child's choices.** There's nothing wrong with series fiction if that's what keeps a young reader turning the pages.
5. **Praise your children's efforts** and newly acquired skills.
6. **Help your child build a personal library.** Children's books, new or used, make great gifts and appropriate rewards for reading. Designate a bookcase, shelf or box where your children can keep their books.
7. **Check up on your children's progress.** Listen to them read aloud, read what they write and ask teachers how they're doing in school.
8. **Go places and do things with your children** to build their background knowledge and vocabulary, and to give them a basis for understanding what they read.
9. **Tell stories.** It's a fun way to teach values, pass on family history and build your children's listening and thinking skills.
10. **Be a reading role model.** Let your children see you read, and share some interesting things with them that you have read about in books, newspapers or magazines.
11. **Continue reading aloud to older children** even after they have learned to read by themselves.
12. **Encourage writing along with reading.** Ask children to sign their artwork, add to your shopping list, take messages and make their own books and cards as gifts.

**The following are some ways to turn a young reader's reluctance into enthusiasm:**

**1.**  Scout for things your children might like to read.  Use their interests and hobbies as starting points.

**2.**  Leave all sorts of reading materials including books, magazines, and colorful catalogs in conspicuous places around your home.

**3.**  Notice what attracts your children's attention, even if they only look at the pictures.  Then build on that interest; read a short selection aloud, or simply bring home more information on the same subject.

**4.**  Let your children see you reading for pleasure in your spare time.

**5.**  Take your children to the library regularly.  Explore the children's section together.  Ask a librarian to suggest books and magazines your children might enjoy.

**6.**  Present reading as an activity with a purpose; a way to gather useful information for, say, making paper airplanes, identifying a doll or stamp in your child's collection, or planning a family trip.

**7.**  Encourage older children to read to their younger brothers and sisters.  Older children enjoy showing off their skills to an admiring audience.

**8.**  Play games that are reading-related.  Check your closet for spelling games played with letter tiles or dice, or board games that require players to read spaces, cards, and directions.

**9.**  Perhaps over dinner, while you're running errands, or in another informal setting, share your reactions to things you read, and encourage your children to do likewise.

**10.**  Set aside a regular time for reading in your family, independent of schoolwork, the 20 minutes before lights out, just after dinner, or whatever fits into your household schedule.  As little as 10 minutes of free reading a day can help improve your child's skills and habits.

**11.**  Read aloud to your child, especially a child who is discouraged by his or her own poor reading skills.  The pleasure of listening to you read, rather than struggling alone, may restore your child's initial enthusiasm for books and reading.

**12.**  Encourage your child to read aloud to you an exciting passage in a book, an interesting tidbit in the newspaper, or a joke in a joke book.  When children read aloud, don't feel they have to get every word right.  Even good readers skip or mispronounce words now and then.

**13.**  On gift-giving occasions, give books and magazines based on your child's current interests.

**14.**  Set aside a special place for children to keep their own books.

**15.**  Introduce the bookmark.  Remind your youngster that you don't have to finish a book in one sitting; you can stop after a few pages, or a chapter, and pick up where you left off at another time.  Don't try to persuade your child to finish a book he or she doesn't like.  Recommend putting the book aside and trying another.

**16.**  Treat your children to an evening of laughter and entertainment featuring books!  Many children (parents, too) regard reading as a serious activity.  A joke book, a story told in riddles, or a funny passage read aloud can reveal another side of reading.

**17.**  Extend your child's positive reading experiences.  For example, if your youngster enjoyed a book about dinosaurs, follow up with a visit to a natural history museum.

**18.**  Offer other special incentives to encourage your child's reading.  Allow your youngster to stay up an extra 15 minutes to finish a chapter; promise to take your child to see a movie after he or she has finished the book on which it was based; relieve your child of a regular chore to free up time for reading.

**19.**  Limit your children's TV viewing in an effort to make time for other activities, such as reading.  But never use TV as a reward for reading, or a punishment for not reading.

**20.**  Not all reading takes place between the covers of a book.  What about menus, road signs, food labels, and sheet music?  Take advantage of countless spur-of-the-moment opportunities for reading during the course of your family's busy day.

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**Tips for Reading Aloud With Babies**

**Read aloud so babies can:**

* Associate reading with warm, pleasant feelings.
* Hear sounds, rhythms, and words.
* Use their senses--listening, seeing, touching.
* Make their own sounds--cooing, gurgling, babbling--which will eventually become talking.
* Point to pictures that you can name.
* Begin to understand that pictures represent objects.

**Choose books that babies like:**

* Very young babies love to hear your voice. You can read anything to them, but they especially like nursery rhymes and other stories with set rhythms.
* Choose board books with simple, bright pictures against solid backgrounds.
* As babies learn to grasp things, pick light, washable cloth and vinyl books.
* When babies are older enough to hold things, provide brightly colored board books featuring only one or two objects per page.
* As babies become interested in what's inside a book, read books with bright pictures of animals, babies, and familiar objects.
* As babies begin to do activities for themselves, read simple stories about routine events -- eating, taking a bath, or going to bed.
* As babies begin to talk, read books that invite them to repeat rhymes, words, and phrases.
* When older babies want to join in, read books with textures, things to touch, flaps to lift, tabs to pull, and holes where they can poke their fingers.
* Babies of any age enjoy homemade books and family photo albums.

**Try these read-aloud tips:**

* Hold the baby in your lap; make sure he or she can see the pictures.
* Play with words, sing, and make up rhymes; include the baby's name.
* Expect babies to touch, grasp, and taste -- that is how they learn.
* Offer the baby a toy to hold and chew while listening to you read.
* Read one or two pages at a time; gradually lengthen the number of pages.
* Let the baby turn the pages if he or she is more interested in the book than listening to you read. He or she will still be learning about books and enjoying your company.
* Point to, name, and talk about things in pictures. Describe what's happening.
* Ask the baby: "Where's the...?" "What's that...?" Wait for a response.
* Encourage a baby to join in -- moo like a cow or finish a repetitive phrase.
* Stay on a page as long as a baby is interested.
* Put the book away and do something else when the baby loses interest.

**Tips for Reading Aloud With Toddlers**

**Read aloud so toddlers can:**

* Continue to associate reading with warm, pleasant feelings while learning about words and language.
* Expand their listening skills.
* Build their vocabularies with words they understand and can use.
* Consider books as fun and valuable play materials.
* Link pictures and stories in books to the real world.
* Gain a sense of competence by "mastering" repetitive rhymes and phrases.
* Begin creating pictures in their minds while listening to stories.
* Begin understanding print concepts, such as, pictures and print as symbols for real things and that we read words, not pictures.

**Choose books that toddlers like:**

* Toddlers are learning to cope with feelings. Look for books with characters handling typical emotions and experiences.
* Toddlers feel competent when they can participate. Read books with rhymes and predictable words they can remember.
* Toddlers can pay attention -- for a while -- if they are interested. Read picture storybooks with brief, simple plots and only a few words per page.
* Toddlers are curious. Read books about special interests and books about new people, places, and events.
* Toddlers are increasing their vocabularies and listening skills. Read books a few levels above their current vocabulary that introduce new words and ideas. Also look for books with lots of pictures of things to name.
* Toddlers are beginning to make sense of concepts such as size, color, shape, and time. Read simple picture-concept books that reinforce their learning.
* Toddlers are learning self-help skills. Read books about daily routines such as using the toilet, washing hands, and taking a bath.
* Toddlers are doers. Read books with flaps to lift and textures to feel.

**Try these read-aloud tips:**

* Read the same books again and again, if asked. A toddler will let you know when he or she has had enough of a book.
* Read slowly so the toddler can make sense of what's happening in a story.
* Offer crayons and paper to occupy the toddler who finds it easier to listen when he or she is busy.
* Vary your voice to fit the characters and plot.
* Use puppets and other props related to the story.
* Repeat interesting words and phrases.
* Stop often to comment, ask questions, and look closely at the illustrations.
* Encourage a toddler to join in: turn pages, name things in pictures, make sounds, repeat rhymes and phrases, and think about what might happen next.
* Talk about the pictures and point out details a toddler might miss.
* Talk about the book and how it relates to a toddler's real life experiences.

**Read aloud so preschoolers can:**

* Continue to associate reading with warm, pleasant feelings; learn about words and language; and expand listening skills.
* Pay attention to the language of books and begin to notice how it differs from spoken language.
* Listen to the sounds in words and notice how some are the same and some are different.
* Build their vocabularies with words they understand and can use.
* Gain background knowledge about a variety of topics.
* Talk about the characters, settings, and plot and relate them to their own lives.
* Learn more about print concepts, such as, print is spoken words written down, the letters in words are written in a certain order, and written words are separated by spaces.

**Choose books that preschoolers like:**

* Preschoolers feel good about their growing skills and accomplishments. As they learn new concepts and self-help skills, read stories about young children who have similar experiences.
* Preschoolers have good memories. Read stories with simple plots children can retell in their own words (to themselves, a stuffed animal, or a friend) and pattern books with repetitive and predictable rhymes, phrases, and story lines that let children participate.
* Preschoolers are building their listening skills and attention spans. Read longer picture books and begin chapter books that last for several sessions.
* Preschoolers are curious. Read information books with facts, explanations, and new people, places, and things.
* Preschoolers know a lot about their own world. Read books that let them use their knowledge to understand books that introduce new topics, facts, and ideas.
* Preschoolers have vivid imaginations. Read folk tales and books with animal characters that think and talk like humans.
* Preschoolers are learning about the sounds of letters and words. Read books with rhymes and alliteration.

**Try these read-aloud tips:**

* Introduce the book: read the title, author, and illustrator; look at the cover; talk about what the book might be about; suggest things to look and listen for.
* Run your finger under the text, while reading.
* Answer questions related to the book; save other questions for later.
* Talk about the story during and after a read-aloud session.
* Use information and reference books to answer children's questions.
* Ask children to look closely at the pictures to help them understand the story and make predictions about what might happen next.
* Repeat interesting words and rhymes while reading a book and at a later time.
* Pause and wait so children can say the word that ends a repetitive or predictable phrase.
* Stop to ask thinking questions: "What might happen next? Where did he go? Why did she do that?"
* Follow up on the story. Invite a child to talk; draw or paint; pretend to be one of the characters; and so on.

**Tips for Reading Aloud With Elementary-School Children**

**Read aloud so elementary-school children can:**

* Continue to associate reading with warm, pleasant feelings; learn about words and language; build listening skills; expand vocabularies; talk about the characters, settings, and plot then relate them to their own lives; gain knowledge about a variety of topics.
* Gain exposure to a variety of writing styles and structures.
* Explore social and moral issues and behaviors.
* Become more skilled independent readers.
* Discover which authors and writing styles they like.
* Be motivated to read on their own.

**Choose books that elementary-school children like:**

* Children are becoming independent readers. Read easy readers that they can reread on their own.
* Children are expanding their language skills, vocabulary, and attention spans. Read chapter books with developed characters, plot twists, and descriptive language.
* Children are learning to monitor their own behavior. Read longer picture books and chapter books with messages about how to handle problems and cope with difficulties.
* Children are curious about the world beyond their immediate experiences. Read reference books that match their interests.
* Children sometimes identify with characters and situations. Read series books featuring the same characters engaged in new experiences.
* Children begin to pay attention to current events. Read junior versions of popular magazines, such as *Sports Illustrated for Kids*, and topical magazines written for children, such as *Ranger Rick*.
* Children develop special interests, preferred types of books, and favorite authors. Read some books that match the child's preferences--mysteries, science fiction, adventure stories, anything Beverly Cleary--and some you love that will introduce something or someone new.

**Try these read-aloud tips:**

* Set the stage before you begin reading. Discuss what you read yesterday and what might happen next. Take turns reading aloud; for example, each of you can read a page in an easy reader.
* Use the tips for younger children that are also appropriate for this age group.
* Defer questions until after you finish reading, if possible. This helps children get fully engaged in listening to a story.
* Summarize, adapt, or skip parts of books that are too far above a child's level of understanding.
* Relate a book you are reading to one read in the past. Talk about how they are alike and how they differ.
* Ask a child to imagine what he or she might do in a situation similar to that faced by a character.
* Provide materials and activities that let children expand their understanding of a character, historical event, or situation.
* Talk about what you have read. Books often evoke strong feelings that need to be shared. Offer your reactions and invite a child to do the same.
* Stop reading at a suspenseful point in the book. This encourages a child to be eager for tomorrow's read-aloud time.

**Tips for Reading Aloud With Preteens and Teens**

**Read aloud so preteens and teens can:**

* Continue to associate reading with warm, pleasant feelings; learn about words and language; build listening skills; expand vocabularies; talk about the characters, settings, and plot and relate them to their own lives; gain knowledge about a variety of topics; explore social and moral issues and behaviors; become more skilled independent readers; be motivated to read on their own; discover which authors and writing styles they like.
* Stay connected to their families.
* Establish a lifelong commitment to reading.

**Choose books that preteens and teens like:**

* Preteens and teens are increasingly interested in local, national, and international current events. Read editorials and articles from the newspaper and news magazines.
* Preteens and teens are defining what makes them unique individuals and learning how they fit in the world. Read novels, set in the past and in the present, with young characters who are experiencing and coping with the challenges of growing up.
* Preteens and teens question authority. Read classic and modern novels that deal with "big" issues such as when the needs of a community are more important than those of individuals.
* Preteens and teens are striving for independence, yet still want to be connected to their families. Read your favorite books and explain why they are important to you and read books that let you share laughter, a good mystery, an action-packed adventure, a science fiction journey.
* Preteens and teens are gradually learning to think abstractly and understand the reasons behind views that differ from their own. Read books that challenge them to think "out of the box" and see the world beyond their daily experiences.
* Preteens and teens are thinking about what they will do in their lives--college, careers, and more. Read books that introduce a wide range of opportunities and experiences.

**Try these read-aloud tips:**

* Continue to read at regular times and spontaneously: "I just read a great quote about last night's game. Can I share it?"
* Respect preteens and teens by letting them keep their views to themselves, when they wish. It's perfectly normal for this age group to want to maintain privacy about some things.
* Vary the read-aloud menu from light, engaging items to longer, thought-provoking ones.
* Model thinking about what you read by stopping to discuss a key point. "I never thought of it that way. What do you think?"
* Stimulate discussion by asking open-ended questions that don't have right or wrong answers, but instead, invite thinking and learning: "How do you feel about...?" "What was your take on...?" "When did you realize she was going to...?"

**Garrett Heights Elementary Middle School**

**Literacy Night**



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