

Reading Together: Everything You Need to Know to Raise a Child Who Loves to Read

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Eleven Essential Elements—to raise a child who loves to read

1. A child's desire to learn to read comes from being read to.
2. Enthusiasm and passion for stories are contagious. Don't waste precious time trying to convince your child of the importance of reading—just read them good stories.
3. Children need confidence to be good readers and confidence comes from understanding a story.
4. Be creative and find other times in a day—not just bedtime—when reading can happen. How about a poem with breakfast? How about a short story with a snack? How about one chapter with dessert at dinner?
5. A child's reading will improve the more they enjoy reading.
6. Conversations are where children first learn many of the skills they need to learn to read. Talk with children about the story, the pictures, and their reaction to the book.
7. Offer children books that speak to both their reading level and their developmental readiness for the story.
8. Expect your child to love reading and support that expectation by helping them find their “home-run” books—books that tap into their curiosity and interests, stories where they care about the characters and what happens to them.
9. Keep the love of story alive. While your child hones his/her reading skills, encourage him/her to return to the picture books and early reads he loved when he was little—you are never too old to read a 32-page picture book!
10. Don't interrupt the reading of the story with explanations or editorials. A child can easily become annoyed and frustrated with too many interruptions.
11. Slow down. Encourage your child to read fewer books and know them well. Children need comprehension—not speed—to be good readers.

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