

ENJOYING BOOKS WITH RELUCTANT READERS (GRADES 1-6)



Some children are reluctant to read for many different reasons. For example, new readers may be hesitant to make mistakes, mispronounce words, or incorrectly use grammar. This is a perfect opportunity to read to your child and model reading. Taking turns with your child during reading time can build stamina and make it engaging for your child. For more experienced readers, letting your child read to you more will improve their fluency, or the flow of their reading.

Here are some tips that can encourage your child to invest in reading and begin to enjoy it:

Allow your child to choose books and where to read them. Children can be more engaged and motivated to sit for a book if they are genuinely interested in the topic. Allowing your child to choose where to read their books can also help encourage them to read.

Incorporate movement. Some children may avoid reading because they simply do not like being in one position for a long period of time. Allow your child to move around while reading or take breaks every few pages to get up and move about freely. Adding movement to reading time may increase focus and engagement.

Incorporate art. Creating art, such as drawing or collage, about the book, allows your child to express understanding of the story in a fun way. You can join in on the fun and use a variety of art tools such as crayons, colored pencils, or paint.

Use different reading materials. Literacy is everywhere. Engage with reading in different modalities, such as audiobooks, poems, magazines, recipes, game instructions, video game manuals, podcasts with transcripts, graphic novels/comics, listicles, or online quizzes.

Make it part of routines. Reading every day for 20 minutes has many benefits, like increasing vocabulary and reading stamina. You can build to 20 minutes over time by starting with 5 minutes and increasing time spent reading every few days.

Talk about the cover. Before opening a new book, talk about what both of you see on the cover and any predictions you may have for what the book is about. If it's a favorite book, discuss any favorite parts of the story.

Read over and over. While still exploring new books, it is okay to keep your child's favorite book in storytime rotation. Repetition can help increase fluency, and by doing so, your child will become familiar with words that once seemed difficult the first time around. This can also help them build their overall vocabulary.

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Get into character. Change your voice to fit the word and actions of the character. Dress up like the character. Use objects and furniture to pretend you are where the character is.

Read different types of books. Try to include all types of books. For instance, read stories about princesses and dragons, but also read books to learn about the ocean or the invention of airplanes.

Create a family bookshelf. Children learn from the adults in their life. Model the reading behaviors you want to see. If they see you get excited about going to the family bookshelf and reading with enthusiasm, they may develop the same love for reading. If you read on a device or a kindle, create folders for each member of the family within a family folder.

Guiding Questions

Guiding questions can be used throughout the entire reading time, from looking at the cover to the very last page. Whether you're reading to your child or your child is reading independently, these questions can jumpstart your child's critical thinking about what they read and help them discover what they like to read.

- Before you read the book, explore the book!
 - Look at the cover: What do you see?
 - Read the back blurb: Why did you choose this book?
 - Make predictions: What do you think the book will be about?
 - Flip through the pages and find any images: What information do the images give you?
- While you read about the book, think about the book. Ask the questions as you go along.
 - What do the different characters look like? What kind of people are they?
 - What are the major events in the book? Why do you think these events happened?
 - What do you think the characters will do next? What would you do?
 - What does that remind you of?
 - What would you have done?
- When you finish the book, share your thoughts about the book.
 - What did you like about the book? What didn't you like? Why?
 - How does the book connect to your life? To other books? To the world?
 - What would you have changed in the story?
 - What new fact or life lesson did you learn from the book?
 - Would you like to read similar books? Why or why not?

Now, what do you want to read next?