

Raising a Child Who Loves to Read

Educators know that a child with precocious reading and language skills automatically enjoys a huge headstart over his peers at school. The trick is for parents to help their children associate books and reading with pleasure and entertainment, instead of just exams and homework. How can you do this?

- Even before children acquire reading skills, they can be encouraged to love books and the stories they contain, and to want to read. Environment plays a big role. Children who are raised in a household where books are plentiful and reading is the norm typically learn to appreciate and respect both.
- Libraries are a priceless resource. But also, whenever possible take your kid shopping at a good bookstore and make her a present of storybooks and children's magazines. Educational studies in the UK and US have reiterated the importance of buying books for children, not just borrowing them. This practice allows them to think of books as permanent resources in the home, and to form lasting relationships with them over the years.
- Limit your kid's dependence on TV or video games for entertainment. Don't let them do the babysitter's job. Reading for fun and pleasure carries the added benefits of exercising your child's intellect as well as developing his vocabulary and language skills.
- Lastly and perhaps most importantly, read to your child and with your child. What kinds of stories does she like to hear? Look at the words and illustrations together, and make the act of reading (at bedtime or any other time) an enjoyable and interactive experience. Set aside 30 minutes each day, more if possible, to bond with your child through the magic of stories; by demonstrating your interest in reading to her you'll also be setting an excellent example.

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Coming next month:

Tips for improving your child's comprehension skills.



Elly Sim is a Child Development Specialist (B.Sc) who was trained and qualified in the US in Child Development and Psychology. She co-founded the school Jan & Elly in 1995 and continues to design and develop its highly-acclaimed English programmes.

Ask Elly anything regarding your child's English language challenges. Email her at elly@jan-elly.com